

From: Adina Danzig Epelman
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2019 9:29 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: Concern about Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

To Whom This May Concern:

My husband and I have three children attending California public schools, currently in 1st, 3rd and 5th grades. I was born in California and grew up through the public school system. My husband is Israeli and a US Citizen, and also is an involved parent in our public school system.

I just reviewed the documents on the "Comments" page, and I'm surprised, anxious and concerned.

When I was growing up, we all thought Anti-Semitism was a thing of the past. Today, I have to try to explain to my children why their cousin's synagogue in San Diego was targeted by a shooter, who killed one woman, maimed the Rabbi, and terrorized the entire community.

I have to be careful of how much my 1st grader hears in the news about other shootings and demonstrations that target Jews -- whether in Charlottesville, or the shooting at a synagogue in Pittsburgh.

When my children ask me, "But why do people hate Jews?" I have no good answer. I know other minority group parents find themselves in similar conversations with their children.

My children are three of a very small handful of Jews in their school -- a school that is amazingly, wonderfully diverse. There are multiple ethnicities; caucasian students are in the minority. We have Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Seikh, and Jewish children, from all kinds of ethnic and racial backgrounds, and parents whose families come from countries around the world.

Our California public school system, in my personal experience, has done an EXCELLENT job of teaching about the various peoples who make up our wonderfully diverse state and country. There is so much opportunity to help the next generation understand diversity of peoples in a meaningful, positive way that will create tolerant, accepting people who are curious about others, and who understand the tremendous value that living in a diverse society brings.

Alarminglly, it seems that -- unintentionally, I hope -- no one who has a comprehensive understanding of the social and political history and current reality of American Jews was part of the drafting process for these materials. While people have differing political perspectives on Israel, data shows that anti-Semitic incidents have skyrocketed in record numbers recently; and the BDS movement uniquely singles out Israel in a way that presents only one side of an

intractable conflict that involves multiple indigenous populations -- and ultimately seeks to destroy the only Jewish state that exists in the world.

Reading the draft materials causes me fear personally, and makes me highly anxious about what my children and their non-Jewish friends will be taught about Jews and Israel in our public schools.

Please create a more inclusive process in designing this important curriculum so that we are teaching a curriculum that truly builds understanding of each other, rather than one that sustains stereotypes, prejudice and, ultimately, hatred.

With gratitude,
Respectfully,
Adina Danzig Epelman,
Parent at Jensen Ranch Elementary, Castro Valley, CA