

From: Ethan Wiseman  
Sent: Sunday, August 11, 2019 7:45 PM  
To: Ethnic Studies  
Cc:  
Subject: Do Not Endorse: Proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

I am extremely concerned by the heavily flawed proposal for the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I support the idea of teaching an ethnic studies class, but urge you to make major revisions or a significant rewrite of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, consistent with the recommendations from the California Legislative Jewish Caucus letter, Stand With Us, Jimena, Amcha and others.

A few years ago, my sister's high school class was assigned to read an essay about Passover that was filled with misinformation and falsehoods leaving her and her Jewish friends feeling attacked and degraded. This essay was originally presented as truthful when, it was in fact filled with anti-Semitic lies and propagated "blood libel" propaganda against Jews. With support from concerned parents (both Jews and non-Jews), the principal and teacher were able to understand that this essay, while having the appearance of being academic, was from a very biased perspective and had significant anti-Semitic elements that left students feeling attacked and unsafe in their classroom. The teacher was able to engage the class in a discussion about bias instead of leaving the seeds for prejudice with the students. This is precisely the type of incident that this Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum should be trying to prevent but the current content ignores Anti-Semitism even though half of religious-based hate crimes in the United States are against Jews. These deficiencies will lead to attacks on Jews who have been subject to discrimination like many others in the US.

One cannot assume that stakeholders in every school where this proposed curriculum would be taught will have the cultural context and public voice necessary to educate students on the challenges faced by minority groups not included in this curriculum. It is the Board of Education's responsibility to "prepare students to live, work, and thrive in a multicultural, multilingual, and highly connected world" (CDE Mission Statement); Jews are a part of that world described and thus it is irresponsible for this curriculum to disregard Jews, just as it would be irresponsible for the curriculum to disregard any other culture or ethnicity. As a progressive, a Jew, and most importantly a Californian, I am devastated to see this Commission take a model as flawed as this under consideration, and I strongly urge you not to accept it. As Holocaust survivor and Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel aptly stated, the opposite of love is not hate, but indifference. I urge you not let indifference become a tacit endorsement in this case.

Please do NOT endorse the current version of the curriculum; instead please make major revisions or a significant rewrite of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum to address these concerns.

Thank you,  
Ethan Wiseman  
Mountain View, California