

**From:** Nicole Karon  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 23, 2020 1:50 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Hello,

I am writing to you as a parent of young Jewish children, who was raised in a family of educators and administrators, with regard to the proposed ethnic studies curriculum for the state of California. First I'd like to acknowledge the significant improvements in this second round of proposed curriculum - thank you immensely for removing the sections promoting the anti-semitic Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement against Israel.

I remain concerned that without further safeguards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may make its way back into teaching materials. While it is an important topic, it is extremely complex, and to be studied with care requires facts and perspectives from all sides of the conflict since inception so students are able to form their own critical thinking as it pertains to social justice and social responsibility. In theory this is worthy lesson, but in practice I greatly fear that personal politics and resistance movements will skew the material. Time and time again I have witnessed this topic forge into anti-semitic territory, whether intentionally or not.

In addition, I strongly urge you to include a thorough lesson on anti-semitism both globally and in America. Jews as an ethnic group have historically faced intense discrimination and genocide, and remain the target of increased hate crimes. The curriculum should include a section on Middle Eastern Jews and other Middle Eastern minorities - we are a quite diverse group with a large number of people of color amongst our ranks, and to ignore them injects the mischaracterization that Jews enjoy "racial privilege". More than half of California's Middle Easterners are not Arabs and they should be represented in an ethnic studies course they are required to complete.

I myself experienced anti-semitism in the classroom and it was demeaning, caused me to feel intensely misunderstood, and at times caused fear. It shaped who I am today and made an impact on the choices I've made in adulthood. I wouldn't wish this experience for my kids, and I especially fear history repeating itself if our next generation isn't provided with inclusive instruction that brings these issues to the forefront.

Let me be clear that I wholeheartedly and enthusiastically support an ethnic studies course as a step toward eradicating racism and creating a more empathetic and understanding generation. My concern is how Jews are simultaneously removed from and misrepresented in the material.

Thank you immensely for your consideration.

Best,

Nicole Karon