

From: gs <gsolk@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 12, 2020 10:38 PM
To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Ethnc Studies Model Curriculum

**Gregg Solkovits, President
Democrats for Israel -- Los Angeles**

November 13, 2020

Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond
Chief Deputy Superintendent Stephanie Gregson
Instructional Quality Commission Executive Director Shanine Coats
Instructional Quality Commission Members

Re: Comment on Appendix Language

Dear State Superintendent Thurmond, Chief Deputy Superintendent Gregson, IQC Executive Director Coats, and all Members of the IQC:

My name is Gregg Solkovits and I am President Democrats for Israel--Los Angeles and a high school teacher.

DFI-LA supports the California Department of Education (CDE) [recommendations](#) to revise and clarify the state's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC). The current recommendations are much improved with the previous version of ESMC and align with our efforts to better inform the CDE, and the California Educational Community, about antisemitism and the diversity of the Jewish community.

We urge the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to adopt the proposed changes introduced last week with the focus on the four core groups, while also including the proposed appendices.

1. We strongly support the inclusion of Sikh-Americans, Armenian-Americans, and other minority communities. We encourage the CDE to meaningfully include the appendix as an integral part of the model curriculum, and distribute it with the same intentionality as the rest of the curriculum.
2. We continue to support the inclusion of the full IHRA definition of antisemitism and continued conversation with mainstream Jewish communal institutions, which want to help educators to understand antisemitism. The IHRA definition has been widely adopted by the international Jewish community for its comprehensiveness. DFI-LA has been supportive of Ethnic Studies because we know that marginalized communities must define and explain how oppression impacts us. This includes the various multi-ethnic Jewish Communities in our state.
3. We urge you to reject pressure from fringe anti-Israel groups who are attempting to undo progress regarding these recommendations. In particular we urge you to realize that anti-Zionist voices are not representative of the Jewish community, nor are they acting in good faith to stop antisemitism. Contrary to their claims — the framing of Arab Americans is finally inclusive of the entire region. The appendix language does not replicate the oppressive hierarchies present in the Middle East.

I would like to add that personally, as a longtime high school Social Studies teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School District, I have always sought to include units that taught and celebrated the many ethnic groups represented in the 87% minority student body of my high school. The proposed Ethnic Studies Curriculum will make it easier for educators of all levels of experience to teach this important course.

DFI-LA would like to thank you all for your hard work and commitment to making this model curriculum reflective of the many communities who live in California. This draft is finally on its way to fulfilling the core call of inclusion and education of AB 2016.

Please contact me at [email redacted], if you have any questions or wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,
Gregg Solkovits, President
Democrats for Israel--Los Angeles