

From: Debra Mendelson

Sent: Friday, August 9, 2019 8:31 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: Tony Thurman; Tony Thurmond **Subject:** Proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Attention: Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education

I am gravely concerned by the proposed, rather unbalanced Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), I completely support the idea of teaching an ethnic studies class and am glad inclusion is being considered, but urge you to make some major revisions, or better yet significantly rewrite the current version of the ESMC so that it is consistent with the recommendations of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus letter, Stand With Us, Jimena, AMCHA, and others.

Having raised three Jewish children in the California public school system and having four young family members in it now, I personally know how misinformation or even a lack of information can cause a population of students to grow up with a very distorted view of what it is like for Jewish people living in the U.S. As the CA Legislative Jewish Caucus wrote, "It would be a cruel irony if a curriculum meant to help alleviate prejudice and bigotry were instead to marginalize Jewish students and fuel hatred and discrimination against the Jewish community."

My issues with the ESMC are numerous, but here are just a few of the worst:

- Jews have been excluded from the ethnic groups mentioned.
- Antisemitism has been excluded from mention of hate crimes and discrimination (as evidenced by a 22-page glossary and bibliography which has entries for Islamophobia and racism, but none for antisemitism) **even though half of religious-based hate crimes in the U.S. are against Jews.** This oversight just proves how inbred antisemitism still is in our society.
- The divisive BDS movement, which seeks to erase the state of Israel, is included with no balancing perspective. Israel receives sharp criticism in the draft curriculum, with little background information about the history of the Jewish state. The 1948 Arab-Israeli war, known in Israel as the War of Independence, is referred to as the "1948 Palestine War," and the creation of Israel is referred to as the "Nakba," Arabic for "catastrophe."
- A song with language that suggests Jews control the media is included.

I was born and have always lived in this beautiful state, but feel deeply **ashamed** of our Instructional Quality Commission for proposing a curriculum which will most certainly increase and compound problems for Jewish students with antisemitism when the Commission purports to be building a shared understanding of ethnic groups' perspectives

and engage minority students in school. In this hate-fueled age of terrible gun violence,
WE ALL NEED TO EMBRACE A MORE ENLIGHTENED PERSPECTIVE TOWARD GREATER
DIVERSITY FOR THE VERY HEALTH OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE!

PLEASE, I strongly urge you to either significantly rewrite or make major revisions to the
current version of the ESMC to address these concerns.

Sincerely,

Debra Mendelson