From: Ilana Shupper
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 9:57 AM
To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concern over Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Soomin Chao
Chair, Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education

RE: Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Chairwoman Chao:

I share great concern regarding the curriculum proposed for Ethnic Studies and am in complete agreement with the following letter.

We write to share our alarm and concern over the current version of the state's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC). We urge the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to make substantial revisions to the curriculum to ensure it meets the goals of the ESMC's authorizing statute AB 2016 (Chapter 327 of the Statutes of 2016) to "prepar[e] pupils to be global citizens with an appreciation for the contributions of multiple cultures."

ADL is a leading anti-hate organization that was founded in 1913 in response to an escalating climate of anti-Semitism and bigotry. Today, ADL is the first call when acts of anti-Semitism occur and continues to fight all forms of hate. A global leader in exposing extremism, delivering anti-bias education and fighting hate online, ADL's ultimate goal is a world in which no group or individual suffers from bias, discrimination or hate.

ADL is on record supporting AB 331, Assembly member Jose Medina's bill requiring completion of a semester course in Ethnic Studies for California high school students. We wrote the following in our letters of support:

As a leading provider of anti-bias education, ADL's A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute recognizes that attitudes and beliefs affect actions, and that each of us can have an impact on others, and ultimately, on our communities. Adding ethnic studies to California's high school curriculum will, among other things, promote respect among students as they learn about the diverse histories and contributions to our nation of their peers. However, as supporters of the initiative, we were shocked by the proposed ESMC's manifest indifference, and even hostility, to the American Jewish experience and community. The curriculum erases American Jewish history by failing to include Jews in a meaningful way, and it neglects any discussion of anti-Semitism.1 Further, it incorporates harmful anti-Jewish stereotypes in its completely inappropriate and biased criticism of Israel in a curriculum intended to focus on American ethnic groups.

Jewish identity encompasses not just a connection to a faith tradition; it is also an ethnic and cultural identification. Jews are a distinct and diverse American ethnic group deserving fair and respectful inclusion in any Ethnic Studies curriculum. The ESMC as it is currently drafted, however, fails to impart these basic lessons.

We note that ADL is far from the only organization expressing its concerns about the treatment of Jews in the ESMC, and in particular we draw your attention to the detailed comment already

submitted to you by the Jewish Public Affairs Committee, Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa, and every member of the Legislative Jewish Caucus. This broad range of critical Jewish voices should demonstrate to you and your fellow IQC members that major revisions to the ESMC's treatment of the Jewish community are necessary.

California's high school students will benefit from a pedagogically sound course in Ethnic Studies. As AB 2016 states, "the state's educational standards should be guided by core values of equity, inclusiveness, and universally high expectations." We ask that you implement all necessary revisions to meet this standard by including Jewish culture and history, teaching about anti-Semitism, and avoiding irrelevant and inflammatory polemics relating to Israel.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to providing you with any further input you may request from us.

Sincerely

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