

From: Rabbi Barry Diamond
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2019 9:19 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: BDS Curriculum: Can This Be True?

I was sent this email below about an ethnic studies curriculum regarding the BDS movement. If the description of the curriculum as describe below is correct, then I share the serious concern about simplifying a complex issue down to a simple one-sided morality play. It is one thing to help students to think more deeply about issues; it is another to simply rehash partisan talking points. I readily support many of Israel's policies but am also very willing to criticize bad policies. This is also the case for the State of California as well. This happens to be a very bad policy.

I am deeply disturbed by the model curriculum currently being reviewed by The State of California, which openly promotes hateful boycotts against Israel and omits antisemitism as a form of bigotry. I am appalled that an educational effort meant to teach students about marginalized communities includes no lessons about Jews as a sizeable ethnic minority and frequent target of racism.

'The implementation of Ethnic Studies presents an opportunity for teachers to enable students to develop a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusion, and aids in the eradication of bigotry, hate, and racism.' Despite this stated goal, the curriculum does not feature a single lesson about the Jewish community, mentioning Jews only in passing.

Glossary		<i>Glossary – includes a definition of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel. It claims the purpose of BDS is to “establish freedom for Palestinians living under apartheid conditions.” It then parrots more BDS talking points while offering no critical perspectives about this campaign of hate, which seeks to end Israel’s existence.</i>
Sample Lesson Plans		<i>Page 234 – Encourage teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine, but no voices critical of their perspectives.</i>
Sample Lesson Plans		<i>Page 234 – Promotes a false equivalence between Israel’s efforts to stop terrorists from entering communities to murder innocent people, and U.S. policies on the border with Mexico.</i>
Sample Lesson Plans		<i>Page 237 – Uses unclear language that implies “Israel-Palestine” as a whole is an Arab country.</i>

Sample Lesson Plans		Page 242 – Frames the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives.
Sample Lesson Plans		Page 256, 264-269 – Encourages teachers to use a poem featuring harsh criticism of Israel, but no content offering a positive perspective about Israel or criticism of Palestinian leaders.

With antisemitism rising and ignorance about the Jewish people still a major problem in our society, the exclusion of Jews from this curriculum is deeply disappointing.

As a California resident, taxpayer and voter, I would hope to see the State of California teaching inclusion and tolerance, rather than BDS, which promotes hate and division



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