

From: Debra Mendelson
Sent: Sunday, August 9, 2020 11:49 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: [email redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Curriculum

I am a former parent and current grandparent of 4 beautiful grandchildren being educated in California. I wrote to you last year to oppose the suggested new **ESMC guiding values and principles** because they:

- Do not reflect California's shared values, nor those laid out in AB 2016.
- Advocate a narrow political philosophy.
- Establish an "us vs them" agenda.
- Encourage "solidarity" and "linkages" with BDS and anti-Israel narratives harmful to Jewish students.

The second draft does not prevent teaching offensive politically indoctrinating and anti-Israel elements from ESMC's first draft, so I would suggest using Elements of Balanced Curriculum from the LA Unified School District's Ethnic Studies Curriculum to provide solid ground rules for course development.

The few references to Jews are misleading and offensive. Any narrative should:

- Include Mizrahi and other Jews of color
- Remove links to and group advocacy of virulently anti-Israel, pro-BDS sites with malicious slander about imaginary genocide
- Add a definition of antisemitism that addresses sinister stereotyping and double standards against Jews and Jewish institutions from all parts of the political spectrum.

References to Middle Eastern communities should not favor one community over others.

- Change your reference to Middle Eastern communities as "Asian," which is an inaccurate label for much of the population.
- Include the lesson plan, "Antisemitism as the Middle Eastern-American Jews," covering contemporary issues of antisemitism, bigotry, and the Middle Eastern-American Jewish experience produced by the Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA).

The ESMC should be revised to accurately and equitably represent the cultural and racial diversity of California so it is balanced, as required by SBE standards and ESMC Guidelines

- If it represents religions, it should represent religious minorities proportionately (2% Buddhist, 2% Hindu, 2% Jewish, and 1% Muslim).
- If the ESMC includes ethnic groups from the Middle East, it should include Mizrahi Jews and other Middle Eastern communities proportionately.

In this day and age when we have someone in the White House who continually fuels racism and antisemitism throughout this proud country **comprised entirely of immigrants**, it is crucial that California change the narrative by educating our children with one of inclusivity and understanding for all our wonderful diversity.

Most sincerely,

Debra Mendelson

Mountain View, CA