

**From:** Morgan Blum Schneider  
**Sent:** Monday, August 12, 2019 4:51 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Cc:** Anita Friedman  
**Subject:** Comment on the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear California Department of Education,

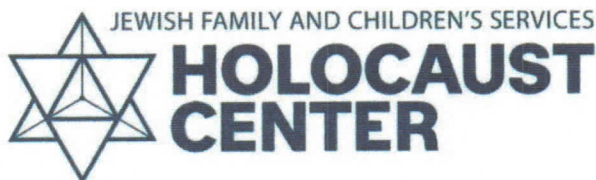
On behalf of the Jewish Family and Children's Services Holocaust Center, we appreciate the work of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee (MCAC) in producing a multi-chapter CA 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) draft. We greatly value the opportunity to comment on this draft. The attached review provides recommendations aimed at ensuring accuracy, inclusion, and pedagogical rigor for California's students. Given that AB-331 would make a one-semester high school Ethnic Studies course a requirement for graduation in California, we believe it is all the more important to ensure that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is of the highest quality and adheres to California values, standards, and law.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with further information.

Regards,

Morgan

Morgan Blum Schneider  
Director  
JFCS Holocaust Center



JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

# HOLOCAUST CENTER

**HOLOCAUST CENTER AND  
TAUBER HOLOCAUST LIBRARY**

2245 Post Street  
PO Box 159004  
San Francisco, CA 94115

TELEPHONE:  
**415-449-3717**

EMAIL:  
**HolocaustCenter@jfcs.org**

ON THE WEB:  
**holocaustcenter.jfcs.org**

**COUNCIL OF CHILDREN  
OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS**

Dennis Albers  
Riva Berelson  
Robert Blum  
Elliott Felson  
Adean Golub  
Moses Libitzky  
Susan Lowenberg  
Joyce Newstat  
Paul Orbuch  
Karen Pell  
Dave Pell  
Lydia Shorestein  
Laura Talmus  
Ingrid Tauber  
Sam Tramiel

**3GSF LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

Fraidy Aber  
Steven Green  
Zoe Goldfarb  
Robert Kaufman  
Jennifer Rosenthal  
Maayan Stanton  
Batya Ross  
Aaron Tartakovsky

A DIVISION OF JEWISH FAMILY  
AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
OF SAN FRANCISCO, THE  
PENINSULA, MARIN AND  
SONOMA COUNTIES, SERVING  
THE BAY AREA SINCE 1850.

August 12, 2019

Ms. Soomin Chao  
Chair, Instructional Quality Commission  
California Department of Education  
1430 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

Dear Ms. Chao:

On behalf of the Jewish Family and Children's Services Holocaust Center, we appreciate the work of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee (MCAC) in producing a multi-chapter CA 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) draft. We greatly value the opportunity to comment on this draft. The enclosed review provides recommendations aimed at ensuring accuracy, inclusion, and pedagogical rigor for California's students. Given that AB-331 would make a one-semester high school Ethnic Studies course a requirement for graduation in California, we believe it is all the more important to ensure that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is of the highest quality and adheres to California values, standards, and law.

The JFCS Holocaust Center is Northern California's primary resource for Holocaust education, research and remembrance. Annually we serve more than 20,000 students, teachers and community members. Our work increases awareness about Jewish history and the causes and consequences of antisemitism, racism, and discrimination. Through a deeper understanding of the Holocaust and patterns of genocide, our goal is to inspire moral courage and social responsibility in future generations.

The JFCS Holocaust Center is often the first organization notified when an antisemitic incident occurs on a Bay Area school campus. Our records show that there has been a 125% increase in cases reported to the JFCS Holocaust Center in the 2018-2019 school year. Teachers, administrators, parents and students have expressed a great concern in this surge of antisemitic incidents. The JFCS Holocaust Center coordinates educational efforts to facilitate Holocaust education, and a study of historical and modern day antisemitism. The JFCS Speakers Bureau of Holocaust and genocide survivors speaks to more than 10,000 students and teachers on an annual basis.

We have observed a great need and interest in education about Jewish history, which includes a study of antisemitism, Israel and the Holocaust. For example, our Annual Day of Learning attracts more than 700 students and teachers from over 125 different schools in California. Our hope is that the creation of a course on Ethnic Studies incorporated into the California curriculum would include and complement the work of the JFCS Holocaust Center, not exclude this essential history and narrative. We believe that accurate education is the strongest tool against racism and prejudice.

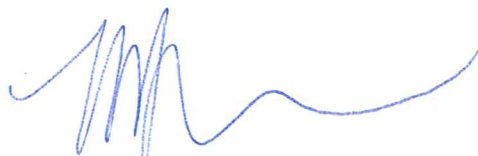
We appreciate the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Guidelines, which set high standards of quality, accuracy, and inclusion for the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. However, the content and pedagogy of the current draft of the ESMC does not adhere to the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Guidelines that require the curriculum to:

- "Be written in language that is inclusive and supportive of multiple users"
- "Encourage cultural understanding of how different groups have struggled and worked together, highlighting core ethnic studies concepts such as consciousness raising and knowledge building, identity development and self-determination, justice and social change, and love, respect"
- "Be inclusive by creating space for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, or citizenship to learn different perspectives"

We ask that the IQC address these matters before sending the draft to the Board of Education for approval. The latest California History-Social Science Framework directs that instructional content maintain academic rigor, historical accuracy, and consistency. The body of knowledge presented in classrooms should not be prejudicial, and must be balanced, so that our students can develop the reasoning, problem-solving, communication, and analytical thinking skills necessary for the future. The model curriculum must adhere to California Education Code sections 60044 and 51500, which explicitly prohibit instructional materials and instruction that reflect or promote discriminatory bias on "the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation, occupation." At present, due to errors of omission and commission, the current ESMC draft threatens both sections of the Education Code for Jewish American students.

The JFCS Holocaust Center is grateful to you, the members of the Instructional Quality Commission, for your consideration of the recommended changes detailed in the enclosed review. Thank you for your commitment to accurate and representative education for all California students. We appreciate your timely attention to this matter. We look forward to participating in the process and appreciate the opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,



Morgan Blum Schneider, Director  
JFCS Holocaust Center



Lydia Shoreinstein, Chair  
JFCS Council of Children of Survivors