

From: David, Congregation Beth

Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 12:34 PM

To: Ethnic Studies; [redacted emails]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposed Model Curriculum/Ethnic Studies Course Outlines

To Whom it May Concern-

As a former secondary English and Ethnic Studies teacher I was thrilled to see that California is instituting a mandatory Ethnic Studies component to K-12 public schools. This is long overdue and sorely needed as we gain understanding and appreciation of the various cultures that make up our state and nation. I have been reviewing the proposed curriculums with great excitement.

I am alarmed by the wording for "Unit 6: Irish and Jewish Americans: Redefining White and American" In this proposed curriculum you are ignoring the very real issue of anti-Semitism and the Jewish experience in America. It was not that long ago when my grandparents, moving to Burbank from New York, were subjected to a petition by their neighbors to "keep the community Christian" and not allow Jews. According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) which tracks anti-Semitic acts, America has had a significant uptick in anti-semitic threats, acts, and violence in the past three and half years. Events such as the synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, the Charlottesville "Unite the Right" rally, and anti-Semitic acts show that we as a nation have a long way to go in accepting Jews to the table. Sadly, and most alarmingly, the proposed curriculum institutes a systemic anti-Semitism that will not only further the cause of white supremacists, but give them legal charge to further their hatred to my people. **It is clear that the framers of this curriculum are themselves either very ignorant and/or very anti-Semitic.**

Are you including other ethnic groups with such verbiage? For example, many Asians communities have immigrated to the United States, integrated and have been highly successful. I noted that there is a charge to "look closely at the Japanese internment camps of WWII and how the treatment of Japanese Americans population differed from different Axis American groups." While Jews were not "rounded up" in America at this time, they were subjected to strident housing restrictions, immigration quotas, and were excluded from many jobs, schools and institutions due to our religion. Why is there no mention of this in your curriculum?

I urge you to re-think this component of your curriculum and hire a representative of the Jewish community for input on the entire curriculum.

For reference, this is the disturbing wording:

Unit 6: Irish and Jewish Americans: Redefining White and American

We will examine the differences between the reception of Jewish and Irish immigrants to what it means to be Jewish and Irish now in the twenty first century. We will discuss parallels between language used to describe Irish and Jewish immigrants to those used

in the early years of the United States to describe Native Americans. Students will investigate labor disputes and how they were ended and how that relates to the redefining of white. Posing questions on who gets to decide those that get to join the 'club' and why. Students will write a paper detailing certain events in American history that have led to Jewish and Irish Americans gaining racial privilege. They will be asked to think critically about why and who is allowing this evolution in white identity and how this shift is affecting the identity of Irish and Jewish Americans.

L'Shalom--

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