

From: Kim Green  
Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 8:15 AM  
To: Ethnic Studies  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment on 8A: Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum: Nov 18-19

Dear IQC members,

I am writing to implore you to address rather than abet rising antisemitism by including JIMENA's lesson\* "Antisemitism and Middle Eastern Jewish Americans" in your new Ethnic Studies curricula for California students.

Any true accounting of California's vibrant communities of Middle Eastern heritage must include all Middle Eastern minorities represented in California, including non-Arab, non-Muslim groups--an estimated 500,000 Californians whose histories are egregiously erased by lumping us together as simply "other Middle Easterners."

Antijewish hate is obviously spiraling out of control, in California and around the world. California prides itself on being progressive. You have the power to make that claim more than political gamesmanship and jargon. Will you stand on the side of truth here for one of the world's tiniest dispersed minorities?

Antijewish hate is REAL. Whether it takes the form of constant harassment of Jewish students on California's college and K-12 campuses simply for being Jewish or refusing to renounce our heritage, throwing us out windows in Paris, beating us on the streets of NYC or macheteing us in New Jersey, antijewish hate is a real and growing threat, both to Jews and civil society.

Obviously, I have personally experienced antisemitism--or, as it should, correctly, be termed--antijudean racism. My children have experienced antijewish hate in San Francisco public schools, where the administrative response ranged from tepid to downright hostile.

Just as it is for California's diverse BIPOC communities, acknowledgment of the complexity and reality of Jewish peoplehood in a formal educational setting is key.

I support amending the Ethnic Studies curriculum to present an honest, true accounting of Jews' history within and without California for the following reasons:

- California's BOE rules require that Ethnic Studies curricula portray peoples proportionately and not discriminate in favor of or against nationalities, races, ethnicities and religions. Middle Eastern Jewish Americans and Arab Americans should be treated equally and placed in the curriculum's Asian American Section Chapter 3 ("Asian Americans includes the unique experiences of...Middle Easterners"). Anything less than the "Antisemitism and Middle Eastern-American Jews" lesson\* would be an egregious erasure of Jews' proven history and lived experience.
- Antisemitism and antijudean hate must be addressed. As the fastest rising form of hate in North America and around the world (up 72% since 2016 in California), the third most prevalent ethnic-based form of hate and the #1 "religion"-based hate crime in California according to the most recent FBI data, to ignore it is to tacitly abet and support it.
- Ethnic Studies must include the study of "forms of bigotry including antisemitism" according to the Preface of the model curriculum draft you approved in August.
- The JIMENA model curriculum leads from the definition of antisemitism most widely used around the world, the IHRA's. It is embraced by all mainstream Jewish rights organizations, the Obama administration, the US State Department and a growing list of countries, NGOs, schools and governmental entities.\*\* To reject it is to tell Jews that we're the one minority group that doesn't deserve to define itself or our oppression.
- Superintendent Thurmond shared his hopes for this curriculum in his November 6 press conference: "as we talk about the rise of white supremacy, we must talk about the increase in hate acts and bigotry against the Jewish community, the high level of antisemitism that we see."

Antisemitism is real. Antisemitism is violent. Antisemitism kills. Antisemitism hurts all of us.

As a proud Californian of Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jewish descent, a product of California public schools, and a parent of current California public school students in San Francisco Unified, I hope you will have the courage and intellectual integrity to stand against a biased curriculum and for proportionate representation of all Middle Eastern minorities represented here. I also hope you will extend Jews the same privilege you extend to other minorities and non-minorities represented in the proposed curriculum: the ability to define ourselves, our own lived experiences, our oppression at the hands of majority cultures, and what makes us a distinct people.

Our lives and the lives of our children depend on it.

Regards,

Kim Green

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