

**From:** SUSAN HOOTKINS

**Sent:** Friday, September 18, 2020 4:45 PM

**To:** Ethnic Studies

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comments on Second ESMC Draft

Dear Members of the Instructional Quality Commission,

I support the following recommendations of the ADL in their comment letter of August 11, 2020.

The new ESMC could be further improved, however. For example, we recommend the curriculum include a definition of antisemitism. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition and contemporary examples are well-regarded. As respected experts, ADL refers to it explicitly in our guide Antisemitism Uncovered ( <https://antisemitism.adl.org/>) and more broadly in our resources and lesson plans on antisemitism.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the U.S. State Department has used this definition since 2010, along with the European Union and others. The definition may be found at [www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism](http://www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism).

Moreover, we suggest that the ESMC recognize that the American Jewish community includes people of color and that many Jewish Americans trace their family roots to the Middle East and North Africa. For example, we draw your attention to a suggested lesson plan entitled "Irish and Jewish Americans: Redefining White and American."<sup>2</sup> The title and description give the impression that American Jews are uniformly of European descent and as such have all attained "white identity" and "racial privilege," to quote the lesson plan. It is an ironic conclusion as white supremacists explicitly reject the "whiteness" of any Jew. Indeed, their hate-filled worldview sees Jews as a critical player in the destruction of the "white race." Failing to acknowledge the ethnic diversity of the Jewish community will mislead students about the complexity of contemporary Jewish identity and the hatred targeting Jews.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on important changes to the proposed curriculum.

Susan Hootkins

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