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August 13, 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 Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, 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.

Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust was founded in 1961 by a group of dedicated survivors who sought to provide free Holocaust education to our community in Los Angeles, and beyond. As the oldest Holocaust museum in the United States, the commitment to our founders is honored in the museum's commitment to Holocaust commemoration and education. Free school tours are given every day, and in the 2018-2019 school year the museum welcomed over twenty-thousand students.

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"

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We observed firsthand the exuberance of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee, whose meetings began with a unity chant. Unfortunately, that spirit did not translate into the draft, where we found content that is disunifying, exclusionary, and, at times, even delegitimizing. 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.

We are 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,

Beth Kean

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Chief Executive Officer

Michele Gold

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Board Chair