

**From:** Geoffrey Braswell  
**Sent:** Monday, August 12, 2019 3:13 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies Kenneth McDonald  
**Subject:** Proposed "ethnic studies" curriculum

Dear Mr. McDonald,

I am writing to you now as a Professor of Anthropology at UCSD and as a father. I was greatly dismayed to read the antisemitic content of the proposed new State of California 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. Please allow me to tell you why.

Antisemitism is a particularly insidious form of hatred that is having a strong comeback not only here in California, but around the world. I say "insidious" because it is embraced not only by the far right (such as the demonstrators in Charlottesville) but also as a pet cause of the left. Jews across California, the United States, and the world are particularly under attack now from all sides. Your proposed curriculum will not help.

I am troubled by many aspects of how the current government of Israel treats Palestinians. But this is a complex issue that will not be solved by advocating for the BDS movement, let alone challenging the children of California to advocate for it. There are many places in the world--and I have lived and worked in some of them--where the human rights record is far worse and where there is no democratic government at all. These include countries like Turkmenistan, Saudi Arabia, and many others. Yet the curriculum does not advocate for a BDS movement in nations that regularly hold summary executions and where there are no elections. To pick the only nation in the world governed by Jews is a very telling dog-whistle.

I said I write as a father. My family has felt the insidious effects of semitism in our community. A close friend is a member of the Tree of Life congregation in Pittsburgh. My two sons--both of them--were classmates of the Poway synagogue killer. They knew him and his family since early childhood. I wonder if you have considered the impact that an antisemitic curriculum will have on misguided teenagers like this killer? Or--much more broadly--the negative impact your curriculum will have on the Jews of California by singling them out in this way? Finally, I ask that you consider instead developing a curriculum that will teach about Jews and Judaism in a way that will foster the diversity that makes California strong.

Sincerely, Prof. Geoffrey E. Braswell

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