

From: Steve Weiss

Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 11:26 AM

To: Ethnic Studies; [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concerns with ESMC

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

I, Steve Weiss, appreciate some improvement in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), but I am outraged by the imposition of the offensive, one-sided political ideology that still remains in this proposed draft of California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

I am a California voter, parent, and UC Berkeley alumnus. I enjoyed the American Cultures course I took and would love high school students to enjoy their Ethnic Studies courses, and learn to appreciate cultures and religions, not pick and choose the ones to hate.

The "Guiding Values and Principles" of the ESMC directly reference and are partly based on specific pages from a book called *Education at War*. The relevant section of the book effectively encourages teachers to "develop solidarity and create linkages" with anti-Zionism, BDS, and anti-Israel narratives. The guiding values and principles should be revised to ensure that they cannot be used to justify promoting such hateful agendas in the classroom.

The experiences of Mizrahi Jews, Iranians, Kurds, Assyrian-Christians and other immigrant communities must be represented on an equal basis with Arab Americans in the ESMC. They should not be simply lumped together as, "Arab Americans and other Middle Easterners". The current language unwittingly reflects a long history and ongoing reality of imperialist oppression and erasure of non-Arab and non-Muslim ethnic and religious groups in the Middle East.

I strongly urge you to make significant further revisions to the ESMC to address these concerns. Please revise the Guiding Values and Principles of the ESMC to use more precise and inclusive terminology, to align with the ESMC Guidelines, to build bridges of intergroup understanding, and to ensure critical thinking. Then adjust the lessons and sample topics accordingly to match the revised principles.

Thank you,

Steve Weiss