

From: Michael Cohen

Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2019 2:41 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: Comment on the Draft 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear CDE, IQC, and State Board of Education,

In response to your call for public comment on the Draft 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, I am submitting the following input:

While I strongly agree that an ethnic studies curriculum is warranted, I am extremely concerned by the content of the new proposed curriculum, which presents biased and one-sided views on the subject of Jews Israel. I have an elementary school student in the California school system, and I am concerned that this curriculum will be put into place and negatively affect me and my child in the future.

I have found the following specific examples concerning:

- * The sample lesson plans suggest that teachers examine the boycott/divestment/sancitons movement from a distinctly one-sided perspecting, presenting no criticism of BDS at all (p 234)
- * It also makes a strong equivalence between Israel's security-related border policies and US policies on the border with Mexico (p 234)
- * Uses language that implies "Israel-Palestine" as a whole is an Arab country (p. 237).
- * Frames the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as a fact, with no alternative perspectives (p. 242).
- * Encourages teachers to use an anti-Israel poem which insinuates Jews control the media and use it to manipulate the public - a common antisemitic slur (p. 256, 264-269).
- * A glossary for the curriculum includes a definition of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel. It claims the purpose of BDS is to, "establish freedom for Palestinians living under apartheid conditions", without any critical perspectives from those who dispute its true purpose
- * In general, Jewish concerns appear to be dismissed or given short shrift, at a time when Jews are increasingly under assault by anti-semitic hate.

It is my hope that you will respond to the avalanche of criticism you have received on this issue by recreating this curriculum in a way more inclusive of Jews and jewish perspectives. Add lessons on anti-semitism. Do not present anti-Jewish narratives from other groups uncritically as facts.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael Cohen

Foster City, CA, father of a kindergartener at Parkside Elementary