

From: Leya Leydiker
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 4:38 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: [emails redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC)

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

Thank you for your start to improve the Ethnic Studies model curriculum from its original state. This is a good start, but it is not good enough. The curriculum fails to teach or reference a specific definition of Anti-Semitism and continues to reference BDS and other anti-semitic references.

In the curriculum's definition of Middle Eastern communities and communities of color, there is no reference to Jewish communities of color including Mizrahi Jews and Jews from Ethiopia. This group represents roughly 60% of CA's MENA population (estimated 500,000 Californians).

As Jewish students who grew up in the Bay Area, we want better for our children. My husband and I have both experienced Anti-semitism in our schools with no recourse or resolve for better education. At Bowditch Middle School in Foster City when I was in 7th grade, a boy thought it would be funny to draw a swastika on my notebook while I was in the bathroom. As a granddaughter of a holocaust survivor, I couldn't believe I could experience such a thing in the US, let alone in liberal and inclusive California. When my husband was in college, he transferred from SF State to Cal State Hayward because of a required class where the professor singled out Israel and the Jewish students as an aggressor for the entire semester. The campus was canvased in references to the plight of Palestinians in comparison to the Holocaust.

There is a complete lack of education and tolerance for Jewish people in our public school curriculum. This ethnic studies curriculum is an opportunity for us to do better for our children. I urge you to please continue to revise your curriculum and develop one that is truly inclusive of all races and religions.

Respectfully,

Leya Leydiker
(parent of a 1st grader, San Mateo)