

From: Ornit Rose
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 11:15 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: [email redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Deep concerns about the ESMC

Dear Members of the Instructional Quality Commission,

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

My concerns begin with the guiding values and principles of the ESMC. As drafted, every lesson plan is informed by these values which advocate a narrow political, "us vs. them," philosophy, and are partly based on the book *Education at War*, which encourages "solidarity" and "linkages" with BDS, and anti-Israel narratives, harmful to many Jewish students. In addition, political indoctrination has no place in the education of our youth. The blatant anti-Israel elements are just that. The curriculum needs to be more balanced and include information from multiple, competing sources to encourage diverse, thoughtful viewpoints. Lastly, I can't understand how an ethnic studies curriculum that focuses on struggles of minorities and historically oppressed groups can all but ignore anti-semitism, both its historical and modern manifestations. Anti-semitism must be acknowledged and understood to be a form of racism and bigotry in the ESMC. I urge you to remove all references to, and group advocacy of, anti-Israel pro-BDS sites. **The ESMC should be revised to accurately and equitably represent the cultural and racial diversity of California so it is balanced, as required by SBE standards and ESMC Guidelines.**

I am a parent of four children at every educational school level. They have already experienced, both personally and through their friends, the violent and hateful ugliness of anti-semitism. As an Israeli native, but having lived the vast majority of my life in California, I fear that my children will be misinformed about their ethnic identity and forced to choose between agreeing with (or at least showing support for) the anti-Israel promoting curriculum or losing their friends. They should never be put in that position or in the position of defending their culture and people to their teacher (who will only be following a terribly misguided curriculum).

I urge you to make significant further revisions to the ESMC to address these concerns. With the widespread condemnation of the original draft, this second draft has not gone far enough to address the shortcomings of the ESMC. 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. At this point in American history, as much as ever, we need to unite and support our fellow citizens, not encourage division.

Thank you,
Ornit Rose

San Mateo, California