

**From:** Mama Snug  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 1:57 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] 2020 Model Ethnic Studies Curriculum comment

Dear members of the Instructional Quality Commission –

First, thank you for working on an Ethnic Studies curriculum. I believe in the goal: “Ethnic studies should ... help build bridges of intergroup understanding (Ch.1, 246-248).”

Also, thank you for heeding the concerns that the 2019 version contained material mis-representing Jewish American history, disparaging Jews and the state of Israel, and promoting the “Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions” movement.

Jews are not a neatly delineated ethnic group. We are an ancient, far-flung, and multi-cultural people bound by common religion, language, and traditions. We do not fit easily into today’s color-coded, race-based concept of discrimination. Sadly, the 2020 Model Curriculum disregards the Jewish-American minority group and the evil of anti-Semitism/Jew-hatred.

Only one course in the 2020 Model Curriculum attempts to teach Jewish American history. However, it gives a simplistic account of a white sub-group accepted into the dominant society’s “club” (Appx.A, 179-189). No discussion of the waves of Jewish refugees escaping persecution (including my own mother, who survived the Holocaust). No analysis of anti-Semitism, from marginalization to quotas to violence, whether historic or current.

Excluding Jewish Americans from the Ethnic Studies curriculum denies students of other ethnicities the opportunity to learn about us, our culture, our struggles, and our survival in the face of constant persecution around the globe and through the millennia. Without understanding Jewish Americans as an at-risk minority (57.8% of religion-based hate crimes in 2018 were anti-Jewish, per the FBI), California’s students may end up perpetuating anti-Semitic bigotry.

In its current form, the 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is not ready to be implemented in our public schools. It does not yet meet many of its “essential outcomes”:

- Pursuit of justice and equity (Ch.1, 203-210)
- Working toward greater inclusivity (Ch.1, 218-226)
- Developing a better understanding of others (Ch.1, 245-259)
- Recognizing intersectionality (Ch.1, 260-277)

I ask you to continue working on the Ethnic Studies curriculum for California's students.

- 1) Include teaching about the religion, culture, and history of Jewish Americans; about Jews' role in American social development (e.g., Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel with the African American Civil Rights Movement).
- 2) Include teaching about anti-Semitism, using the US Department of State's working definition
- 3) Exclude denigrating material about Jews and Israel, including support for the "Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions" movement.
- 4) Re-commit to transparency in the process of writing the Ethnic Studies curriculum.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly --

Michal Amir Salkin