

From: Laura Whitman
Sent: Monday, August 12, 2019 9:46 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: Tony Thurmond; JIAC
Subject: Feedback on ESMC

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

I am deeply concerned by the proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I support the idea of teaching an ethnic studies class, but urge you to make major revisions or a significant rewrite of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, consistent with the recommendations from the California Legislative Jewish Caucus letter, Stand With Us, Jimena, Amcha and others.

The ESMC omits any mention of antisemitism, although there are three times as many hate crimes in America against Jews as against Muslims. The most recent FBI statistics record 938 antisemitic incidents and 273 Islamophobic incidents, including mass shootings at Jewish Synagogues. Hate crimes against Jews rose by 37% according to 2018 FBI statistics, accounting for over half of religious-based hate crimes in the United States. Though a great deal of curriculum is devoted to Islamophobia, there is absolutely none devoted to anti-Semitism.

The over-emphasis of the Israeli Palestinian conflict and the definition of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) in the ESMC are both framed entirely from the vantage of proponents of BDS and fail to adhere to curriculum guidelines that require content to be taught in a manner that is “balanced”, “inclusive”, and reflective of “different perspectives”. While Jews are an indigenous ethnic group to modern day Israel, and a significant minority in America, our voices are omitted in all curricular references to the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

I personally request that you make major revisions or a significant rewrite of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum to address these concerns.

Thank you,
Laura Whitman