
From: Todd Silverstein

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To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] please revise the CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

CA Ethnic Studies curriculum

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I urge the California Department of Education, Instructional Quality Commission, and State Board of Education to revise the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) to address the following major flaws:

- The last minute addition of a lesson plan solely focused on Arab Americans is discriminatory, and insufficient time has been allotted to collect and consider citizen input. The curriculum should be inclusive of all [Middle Eastern communities in California](#), such as Iranians, Arabs, Jews, Kurds, Assyrian Christians, Coptic Christians, and others. (FYI: In California, Iranian Americans outnumber Arab Americans.) There is no reason to favor just one of these communities over all of the others; in fact, this bias runs counter to the whole purpose of an ethnic studies curriculum. The ESMC should be revised to add an inclusive unit about Middle Eastern Americans, which goes through the same vetting process as the rest of the curriculum.
- Existing references to American Jews should be expanded to explicitly mention the experiences of Mizrahi Jews, Jews of color, Jews from the Former Soviet Union, and other Jewish communities in California whose stories are less widely acknowledged. Furthermore, a section should be added to the ESMC covering various forms of hate, including antisemitism across the political spectrum. In case you are unaware, of all the hate crimes reported in this country (and also in the world), antisemitism is by far the most common.
- The “Guiding Values and Principles” of the ESMC directly reference and are based on specific pages from a book called *Education at War*. The relevant section of the book encourages teachers to “develop solidarity and create linkages” with anti-Zionism, BDS, and anti-Israel narratives. The guiding values and principles of the ESMC should be clarified and revised to encourage critical thinking, in addition to support for struggles for social justice.
- As a general principle, the ESMC must widen its exposure of students to “multiple and often competing sources of information” and ensuring that “diverse viewpoints are respected”.