

From: Joe Nalven

Sent: Saturday, August 8, 2020 8:46 AM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

My name is Joe Nalven. I live in Poway, California. I've reviewed the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I have several comments that lead to the conclusion that the ESMC is still in need of major revisions -- most of which are guided by the objective claimed in the preface, namely, that the goal is inclusivity. That goal needs work.

First, I would like to point out that I had an OpEd published in the Times of San Diego on the revisions needed, particularly in Appendix B. Here is a link to my OpEd:

<https://timesofsandiego.com/opinion/2020/08/06/opinion-californias-revised-ethnic-studies-curriculum-needs-more-revision/#times-facebook-comments>

California's Revised Ethnic Studies Curriculum Needs More Revision

Second, there are several other major areas in need of revision, particularly the lack of understanding of antisemitism. Antisemitism is the number one FBI hate incidence. This needs to be front and center in the ESMC. I believe this should be edited to say "the recent rise in anti-Semitic violence and hatred", to ensure discussions include antisemitic harassment, vandalism, discrimination, and rhetoric which may not fit within the category of "violence". (Page 20, Lines 527-528)

Instead of providing clear definitions for the terms mentioned in the "Guiding Values and Principles of Ethnic Studies", the ESMC includes footnotes for educators to delve deeper into the sources of such terms on their own. Sources mentioned include Maira and Shihade (2006) and Spade (2011), which lead educators to connect social movement principles with the BDS movement. This citation refers to Israel as a "Settler-colonial" state, connects anti-Zionism in the Middle East to anti-racism and anti-imperialist movements in the U.S., and attacks the CDE's partner organization, the ADL.

By not accurately defining these terms within the ESMC, educators will follow the terminology of these problematic references mentioned in the citations, ultimately promoting the hateful content originally removed from the first draft of the ESMC. (Page 9, Lines 179-194).

Many of the problems would be resolved if there were, in fact, "multiple and often competing sources of information". I urge you to strongly emphasize this point in communications to local schoolboards as well as communicate that educators refrain from conveying their own political views and potential biases. (Pages 5, 10, 11)

This sentence is particularly repugnant and misunderstands immigrant opportunity in coming to America. Witness the millions of Africans and Caribbean migrants to the United States in the last several decades. This contrasts with the slave trade of hundreds of years ago. This contrast needs to be explored. "Students will write a paper detailing certain events in American history that have led to Jewish and Irish Americans gaining racial privilege." (Page 6, Line 8166-67)

Third, targeted Jewish communities all across America are currently dealing with antisemitism through the spread of the belief that Jews are responsible for racial and financial inequalities in America. Such a

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chapter falsely representing the Jewish American narrative would only promote such antisemitic rhetoric and instill such ideology.

Fourth, this prompt leads students to the assumption that all Jews are white, rather than taking into consideration the vast Mizrahi Jewish immigrant population that hailed from Arab countries as a result of persecution as well as Black Jews, Spanish Jews, Latino Jews, and Jews from North Africa.

Fifth, also, the reference to “white” Jews (those from Eastern Europe) does not mention that these very “white” Jews are still targeted today in the U.S. by white nationalists and other groups who carry out antisemitic violence. The victims of recent synagogue attacks were murdered because of the perpetrators’ perceptions that they are non-white and are enemies of the “white race.” Irish Americans today do not face this kind of violence by white supremacists.

Note, also, “the unique experiences of Arabs and other Middle Easterners” should include Mizrahi Jews. By not doing so the ESMC will be erasing the narrative of non-Arab and non-Muslim ethnic and religious groups from the Middle East who form the Middle Eastern immigrant communities in America. (Page 20, Lines 527-528)

Given the problems listed above, this should not be the only example of a unit covering the experiences of Jewish Americans that teachers have access to in the ESMC. At minimum, the following materials should be included as well: (Page 6, Lines 8159-69)

Antisemitism and Middle Eastern-American Jews, 9–12

Jewish American Studies Course Outline: The Jewish American Experience in the United States and California

*Thank you,
Joe Nalven, Ph.D. Anthropology*