

From: Tina Rosenblum
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 5:14 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concerns about the ESMC

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

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

Here are my major concerns:

The "Guiding Values and Principles" of the ESMC directly reference and are partly based on specific

pages from a book called *Education at War*. The relevant

section of the book effectively encourages teachers to "develop solidarity and create linkages" with anti-Zionism, BDS, and anti-Israel narratives. The guiding values and principles should be revised to ensure that they cannot be used to justify promoting

such hateful agendas in the classroom.

The relevant section of

Education at War

also states, "Schools are battlefields where war is waged..."

Based on the problematic “Guiding Values and Principles,” the ESMC promotes and romanticizes specific

political ideologies with no counterbalancing perspective. Guidelines should be added, and the sample lessons revised, to ensure that ethnic studies courses focus on a thorough understanding about ethnic groups, social issues, and civic engagement, without

political proselytizing. A cursory look at the bibliography reveals a preponderance of the proselytizing version

of Ethnic Studies authors (Cuauhtin, Tintiangco-Cubales, Sleeter), combined with the glaring omission of the seminal texts of the balanced version of the subject (Takaki, Shaefer, Banks).

The experiences of Mizrahi Jews, Iranians, Kurds, Assyrian-Christians and other immigrant communities

must be represented on an equal basis with Arab Americans in the ESMC. They should not be simply lumped together as, “Arab Americans

and other Middle Easterners”.

The current language unwittingly reflects a long history and ongoing reality of imperialist oppression and erasure of non-Arab and non-Muslim ethnic and religious groups in the Middle East.

I am a parent of a multi-ethnic, Jewish son, and want his school experience to represent one of deep thinking, global awareness, historical accuracy, and intellectual objectivity. I grew up being warned by my parents and grandparents about the dangers of anti-Semitism and always thought, “I’m not experiencing any of these problems.” I was quite fortunate, and the thought that anti-Semitism is currently rising rapidly and dramatically is concerning, disheartening, upsetting, and frightening. I believe our schools should be the venue for sharing knowledge, not political perspectives. I know we can do this, and ask for your leadership.

I urge you to make significant further revisions to the ESMC to address these concerns. 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.

Thank you,
Tina Rosenblum
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