

August 9, 2019

Ms. Soomin Chao
Chair, Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairwoman Chao and Members of the Instructional Quality Commission:

I have three children that attend public schools here in California. I write to add my voice to the thousands of Californians and numerous organizations and coalitions that have expressed alarm over the current draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC). In its current iteration, the ESMC erases, and at times is openly hostile to, the American Jewish experience, and adopts a one-sided misrepresentation of the highly complex and disputed conflict between Israel and the Palestinian people.

Among other things, I am concerned about 1) the omission of Jews as an ethnic group and of anti-Semitism as a form of bias and prejudice; 2) the negative stereotypes of Jews and Israel; and 3) the inclusion of, and support for, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

I hope the Commission will reflect on the deep flaws of the draft and demonstrate the need to introduce revisions. Among these is a sensitive inclusion of California Jewish history and culture, as well as mention of anti-Semitism and the elimination of irrelevant and inflammatory statements about Israel. These revisions are critical to the ESMC's ability to meet its own standards of equity, inclusiveness, and universally high expectations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Finkelstein

State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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