



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

455 NORTH REXFORD DRIVE • BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA 90210

John Mirisch, Mayor

August 14, 2019

Ms. Soomin Chao
Chair, Instructional Quality Committee
California Department of Education
1420 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum
City of Beverly Hills – OPPOSE

Dear Chairwoman Chao,

As Mayor of the City of Beverly Hills, I write to you in strong **OPPOSITION** to the current draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC). The current draft of the ESMC demonstrates a clear anti-Jewish bias that at times borders on antisemitism. The ESMC, through its inclusion of Anti-Semitic stereotypes, fails to touch on the American Jewish experience and antisemitism.

California is an extraordinarily ethnically diverse state. It is important to ensure California's students learn about the state's ethnic diversity and how that diversity has contributed to this history of this state. The current draft of the ESMC negates this noble and worthwhile goal by selectively choosing to effectively omit the history, struggle, and contributions of Jews to the state of California. The lack of inclusion of the American Jewish experience in the draft ESMC is suggestive of an anti-Jewish bias that is antithetical for ethnic studies coursework, which is meant to teach California's students of the various racial and ethnic groups in the state.

One of the more egregious aspects of the ESMC is the exclusion of any meaningful discussion of Anti-Semitism in its study of hate crimes, white supremacy, bias, prejudice, and discrimination. This blind spot in the ESCM is disturbing, especially given the recent rise in white nationalist and Anti-Semitic violence across the country and the state. While the ESMC Glossary rightfully includes "Islamophobia" among several other forms of discrimination, its failure to include Anti-Semitism as well, is cause for deep concern.

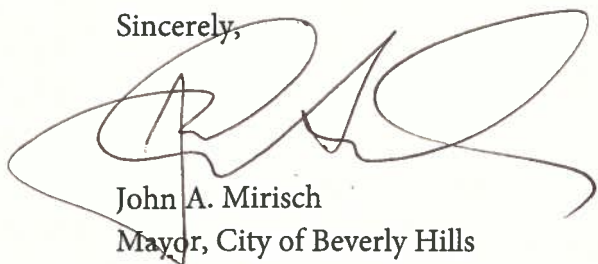
The anti-Jewish bias in the ESMC is also on clear display in its promotion of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement and its one-sided disparagement of Israel. The BDS movement is seen by many in the Jewish community as hostile to Jews, Israelis, and Israeli-Americans. Promoting such a problematic movement focused on international affairs in a curriculum that is meant to focus on domestic civil rights movements is not only inappropriate but when it is seemingly done at the expense of another ethnic minority group it is deeply offensive.

The ESMC as currently drafted marginalizes the Jewish community and casts aside their longstanding contributions to California's history and the diverse nature of this state. Failing to include meaningful discussions surrounding the hate and discrimination the Jewish community faces would fail California's Jewish students who would be deprived of having their unique experiences and ethnic identity reflected in the course curriculum. Furthermore, the ESMC's exclusion of the Jewish American experience denies California's non-Jewish students the opportunity to learn and understand the plight of American Jews and the bigotry and discrimination they experience.

The City of Beverly Hills has a history of condemning Anti-Semitic behavior, including passing a resolution to oppose the United Nations Resolution to deny Jewish historical and religious claims to the Temple Mount and the Western Wall in Jerusalem. Additionally, the City passed a resolution in 2016 to support Assembly Bill 2844 (Bloom), which required companies that contract with state and local agencies to certify that they do not engage in discriminatory boycotts against foreign countries, including the nation and people of Israel. More recently, our City condemned Airbnb for their pro-BDS actions taken against Israel.

For these reasons, as the Mayor of Beverly Hills, I must firmly oppose the current draft of the ESMC. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John A. Mirisch', is written over a large, stylized, and somewhat abstract signature graphic that fills the space of the signature line.

John A. Mirisch

Mayor, City of Beverly Hills

cc: Members of the Instructional Quality Commission
The Honorable Ben Allen, 26th Senate District
The Honorable Richard Bloom, 50th Assembly District
Andrew K. Antwih, Shaw / Yoder / Antwih, Inc.