

**From:** Maddie Carmel  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 15, 2019 4:07 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Cc:** Tony Thurmond  
**Subject:** Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

Having read the proposed curriculum on Ethnic Studies, I am horrified by the false and negative narrative written about Jews and Israel. Isn't the purpose of an ethnic studies curriculum to promote understanding of cultures in a fair, factual, and non biased way? This curriculum as written would only help fuel the fire of racism and hatred which is exactly the opposite of what this curriculum was developed to accomplish.

As a retired teacher who has worked with a very diverse student population, I wholly support an ethnic studies curriculum, but one that presents each ethnic group's history in a factual way, one that doesn't demonize a group of people or pit one group against another, but rather encourages open discussion based on facts. Over half the hate crimes in America are against Jews, yet this committee has chosen to not only ignore the fact that anti-Semitism is a major problem but refers to the State of Israel as Israel-Palestine (Israel is a country, Palestine is a potential state.) Israel's War of Independence in 1948, when Arab countries attacked the nascent nation, is referred to in the Curriculum as the Nakba ( Arab word for catastrophe.)

Then there is the treatment of BDS as a social movement when, in fact, it stands openly against the very existence of Israel while advocating anti-semitic measures to destroy the Jewish state. . BDS

doesn't simply question Israel's "occupation" of its Jewish biblical homeland, Judea-Samaria. Rather BDS opposes Israel's occupation of the entire Holy Land. The BDS slogan says it all: "Palestine shall be free from the (Jordan) river to the (Mediterranean) sea"—meaning the entire State of Israel. BDS founder, Omar Barghouti admits "if the occupation ends, would that end support for BDS? No it would not."

Please tell me how adding the lyrics of a rap singer denigrating Jews as controlling the media would not demean our Jewish kids. How much more positive it would be to teach students all the contributions Jews have made to the world. I'm sure very few HS kids realize that the chip in their iPhones is an Israeli invention, or that many of the surgical procedures that may some day save their's or their parents' lives were invented by Jews. It's appalling to me how the authors of this curriculum have chosen to hijack the curriculum with their own political agenda.

I have experienced episodes of anti-Semitism throughout my life. Fortunately I am here today because my grandmother had the foresight to emigrate to the US, or she, too, would have perished with the rest of her brothers and sisters in the Holocaust. While in college at USC, the fraternity next door to our Jewish sorority (all other sororities on campus banned Jews) tried to burn our house down after they burned a swastika on our lawn and sprayed "Dirty Jews" on our front walk. My family, because we are Jewish, was restricted from buying a house in many California neighborhoods. Members of my family were close friends of the victims of the Pittsburgh Tree of Life Synagogue massacre. My own synagogue here in California has had to hire security guards to defend us against potential shooters. It amazes me that anti-Semitism, which is once more emerging from the sewers, is not addressed in your Curriculum. The Jewish experience in CA, with so many contributions that the Jews have made, should be celebrated not ignored.

As a grandmother of four grandchildren in the CA school system, I've been concerned about the Anti-Semitism that they will be facing in college. The authors of this ethnic studies program have before them a great opportunity to help heal the racial divides and mistrust among different ethnic groups if they were to put aside their own political agendas and write a factual unbiased curriculum where each ethnic group is taught to respect and understand the other. Unfortunately, the curriculum, as written, does nothing of the sort, but only helps to further widen the racial divide rather than heal it. Putting aside the appalling fact that anti-Semitism is not discussed (except on one intersectionality passage dealing bizarrely with Pacific Islanders,) I found many parts of the curriculum presenting an ethnic group as being victimized whether it be by our Capitalist society or those of "privilege." Could someone from the Board please tell me how this is helpful?

It is unconscionable that those entrusted to educate our youth have chosen instead to hijack the section about Jews and Israel to advance their own political bias. I urge you to revise or rewrite this curriculum to embrace every ethnic group in a factual, sensitive, and balanced way. If a section is to be devoted to the Jewish Experience, it would make sense to recruit a scholar in Jewish Studies to be on the advisory committee. Every other ethnic group is represented by a teacher or professor who is well versed in a particular culture. But an expert on anti-Semitism, which is once again growing at an alarming rate, is woefully missing. Our children are scared and to be singled out as a religion that is taught negatively in our schools, they will be even further targeted. The school board needs to give these kids a curriculum that is hopeful and positive and presents factual, unbiased information. By doing so, they could help to alleviate so much of the polarization, racism, and bigotry that is pulling our country apart. Facing History and Ourselves has done an outstanding job of creating a curriculum on anti-Semitism. Perhaps the advisory committee could look into their curriculum.

Thank you for listening to the community's concerns. This advisory board needs to do better - our students deserve the facts not revisionist history.

Sincerely,

Madelyn Carmel