

From: Jon

Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 11:42 AM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: Curriculum changes

To whom it may concern,

I want to thank the SBE for taking necessary steps to ensure students in California receive the best possible education, free from bigotry and misrepresentation. It is critical in the current environment, in which Jews and the one Jewish state are targets of Antisemitism in both ancient forms and new ones, that students be given accurate information and tools to understand the world around them.

This is not about criticism of Israel. The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) plainly veers into bigotry both in its treatment of the Israeli-Arab conflict, and its disregard of Jews in America and the Jewish perspective. In regard to Israel, ESMC promotes the boycott, divest and sanction campaign that has been rightly identified as inherently antisemitic by numerous U.S. state and municipal governments, the U.S. Congress, and several foreign national governments.

Meanwhile Jewish life in America is virtually ignored. While including an entire American Muslim unit, Jews are mentioned only as an immigrant group. There is no mention of Jews' contribution to California's history, politics, culture, and government. Further, ESMC covers a wide variety of forms of bigotry but omits antisemitism, an indefensible omission in light of rising antisemitism in America and on college campuses, and Jews being the number one victim of religious intolerance in America according to FBI statistics.

My specific comments to the curriculum are attached.

Best regards,

Jonathan Levin, Esq.

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum May 2019 Draft

(Download and use to provide specific recommendations)

Include the chapter of the model curriculum, the page number, and line number(s) to ensure that the California Department of Education and Instructional Quality Commission can reference the content of the document when reviewing your comments. Please email this document as a Word document to ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov. You may contact Kenneth McDonald, Education Programs Consultant, at kmcdonal@cde.ca.gov with any questions regarding this template or the public input process.

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
Glossary	Jonathan Levin	Page 2, lines 30-40 – the definition of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) adopts an anti-Israel viewpoint and ignored that BDS has been identified as antisemitic by local, state and national governments around the world. Use of the word “apartheid” is inaccurate, deceptive, and arguably antisemitic. In addition, BDS leaders have been closely associated with designated terrorist entities, making BDS an economic tactic in an open war.

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Page 2 of 4

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
Chapter 2	Jonathan Levin	<p>Page 234-35, lines 4956-4958, 4964 4970, 4972, and 4974 – the list of potential topics and potentially significant people in relation to the Israel-Arab conflicts reflects and biased perspective. Anti-Israel activists have accused Israel of complicity in anti-Black activity by police as a transparent and bigoted attempt to foment anti-Israel and anti-Jewish hatred. BDS is discussed above. Comparing the US border with Mexico with the Israeli borders with Gaza and/or the West Bank is likewise obviously intended to capture sympathy for immigrants from Mexico and redirect it to the Palestinians. The scenarios are absolutely dissimilar – Mexico is a democracy with generally outstanding relations with the United States, Gaza is controlled by Hamas and the West Bank is controlled by the Palestinian Authority, both of which state openly that they will not allow a single Jew to remain in Israel. Hamas has called to murder Jews all over the world. PA Chairman Abbas is a holocaust denier.</p> <p>The implied comparison here is deceptive and will make students less able to understand both US/Mexico relations and the Arab-Israeli conflict.</p> <p>Linda Sarsour and Helen Thomas are not relevant to the topic at all, except as examples of anti-Semites increasingly being socially acceptable. Likewise, Ilhan Omar is an example of a non-Palestinian who has deployed classic antisemitic tropes in interjecting herself into a conflict she knows nothing about.</p>
Chapter 2	Jonathan Levin	<p>Page 241, line 5138 – Palestine is not a country and is not recognized as a country by virtually any national body or NGO. U.S. national policy for decades has been not to recognize a Palestinian state except as part of a global resolution of the conflict.</p>

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Page 3 of 4

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
Chapter 2	Jonathan Levin	<p>Pages 241-24, lines 5139-61 – This phrasing is both confusing (suggesting that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians emigrated to the United States), and adopts wholesale the Palestinian perspective of a widely disputed issue by referring to the “Naqba” and the “Palestine War” instead of Israel’s war of independence. Further, the phrasing “dispossession and dispersal of many Palestinian Arabs from the new state of Israel” obscures that the vast majority were war refugees like refugees from any other war.</p> <p>There is no reason to go into this heavily politized topic at all, particularly in the context of discussing emigration. To the extent context is desired, phrasing such as “Arab refugees from the Arab-Israeli war following Israel’s declaration of independence in 1948” provides such context and an accurate, impartial statement of facts.</p>
Chapter 2	Jonathan Levin	Pages 268-9, lines 5792, 5802-5803, 5820-5821 – this is blatant propaganda in the guise of lyrics.
Chapter 2	Jonathan Levin	Pages 278, line 6008 – CAIR is a virulently antisemitic and explicitly anti-Israel organization. It is closely associated with Hamas, and was an unindicted co-conspirator in a terrorism funding trail in the United States. It is not a reliable source.