

From: steven kornfeld

Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 1:41 PM

To: Ethnic Studies; [emails redacted]; Tony Thurmond

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please Revise CA Ethnic Studies Curriculum Proposal to Promote Inclusion, not Divisiveness

Dear CA Ethnic Studies Team, Superintendent Thurmond, Senator Hill and Assemblyman Berman,

I am writing to request that you further revise the proposed CA Ethnic Studies Curriculum to provide balance and eliminate the clear biases and "agenda" that is still implied in this new proposed curriculum. I appreciate the work that has been thus far to reverse some of the hateful and anti-Semitic intent in the original proposal. However, I think there's still work to be done to ensure balance and equity.

My request is that our tax-payer funded schools should not have a "political agenda" to stimulate bias for or against certain peoples, but rather present objective historical and cultural information. The current, revised proposal still harbors many hate-filled, biased messages that are hurtful to many communities, including the Jewish community. For example:

- ESMC "Guiding Principles": These principles directly reference and are biased by extremist sources including, Education at War, which explicitly seeks to turn classrooms into battlefields to promote a biased agenda and promote divisiveness between communities.

- Bibliographical References: The resource references for teachers to use appear to reference works from authors with established "agendas" (Cuauhtin, Tintiangco-Cubales, Sleeter) rather than well established moderate sources (Takaki, Shaefer, Banks).

- References to Middle Eastern Cultures: It is shameful that people from the Middle East are called "Arabs and others" when there are numerous other middle eastern cultures dominantly represented in California, including Mizrahi Jews, Druze, Persians, Coptic Christians, Marionite Christians, and others. Of course, this designation is even more problematic given that Arabs in the middle east have been the source of widespread discrimination and ethnic cleansing of non-Muslim cultures such as those listed as "others," which only makes this biased "others" description even more painful to these communities. This seems to be the pinnacle of hypocrisy.

- Hateful Source References: There are several references to 3rd party information references, including some that uniquely target Israel and Jews as racists, apartheid states, et cetera.

See: <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2017/bringing-black-lives-matter-into-the-classroom-part-ii>

I request that you please consider the awesome power that the State of California has in proposing this Ethnic Studies Curriculum, especially given the impact on other states. Please take action to eliminate these (above and others) clearly biased content that seeks to drive a wedge between our communities.

An Ethnic Studies program should seek to bring together and develop empathy between peoples, NOT create divisions and hate.

Respectfully,

Steven Kornfeld
Atherton, CA