

From: Peg Nash
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2021 7:24 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC)

State Board of Education
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov

RE: Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum – Third Revision

Dear Members of the State Board of Education:

We support the work of The Anti-Defamation League and their comments on the third draft of the revised Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) released in November 2020. We are taking these comments from those previously submitted by the ADL.

ADL endorses the teaching of Ethnic Studies and was an early supporter of last year's Assembly Bill 331 (Medina) which would have made it a mandatory course for high school students. Adding Ethnic Studies to California's high school curriculum will, among other things, foster respect between students and an appreciation for our nation's diverse history. As we seek to create a more just and inclusive society, our ultimate goal is a world in which no group or individual suffers from bias, discrimination, or hate.

In addition, we are grateful that the draft recognizes antisemitism as a form of historical and continuing bigotry, and that it contains two lesson plans in Appendix A covering the Jewish experience and antisemitism – Lesson 40: Antisemitism and Jewish Middle Eastern-Americans and Lesson 41: Jewish Americans: Identity, Intersectionality, and Complicating Ideas of Race. Both lesson plans provide definitions of antisemitism, and Lesson 40 offers two – a short definition from ADL's website, and the opening portion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition. ADL recommends that educators use the full IHRA definition. This legally non-binding working definition and its contemporary examples are well-regarded and provide guidance for capturing the ever-evolving manifestations of antisemitism. The U.S. State Department has used this definition since 2010, along with the European Union and others. ADL refers to it explicitly in the guide *Antisemitism Uncovered* and more broadly in the resources and lesson plans on antisemitism, including *BINAH: Building Insights to Navigate Antisemitism & Hate*, the new suite of free online lessons about antisemitism for high school students.³ We respectfully suggest that you include BINAH as an additional resource in the ESMC.

The ESMC would also benefit from adding an overarching statement to the preface similar to the Introduction to the Los Angeles Unified School District's "Elements of a Balanced Curriculum." In particular, we recommend this language from the guide: At the college and university level, ethnic studies and related courses are sometimes taught from a specific political point of view or frame of reference. In K-12 education it is imperative that students are exposed to multiple perspectives, taught to think critically and form their own opinions on these and other issues. Such guidance is a useful tool in addressing this complex subject.

Finally, we are grateful that the revised draft includes ADL's educational programming in Appendix B's Lesson Resources for educators.⁴ ADL Education Division professionals work tirelessly to develop lessons that "promote[] critical thinking and

learning around historical and current events topics through the lens of diversity, bias and social justice.”⁵ We are pleased that the materials can be a resource to California students and teachers.

As we have written before, a pedagogically sound Ethnic Studies course incorporating “core values of equity, inclusiveness, and universally high expectations” will enrich California students’ understanding of American history and current events. The revised ESMC draft is another significant step towards achieving that goal. We look forward to following the ESMC review process and providing additional comment, as warranted.

Sincerely,

Peg and Archie Nash

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: ADL Central Pacific

To: "[email redacted]"

Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2021, 06:12:49 PM PST

Subject: Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC)

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Serving Northern California, Utah & Hawai'i

Dear ADL Leaders and Friends,

Public comment to the State Board of Education (SBE) on the [Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum](#) (ESMC) draft is open through January 21 (TOMORROW.) Email comments to ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov. Make your voice heard:

1. Voice appreciation for two lesson plans on Jewish Americans and references to antisemitism.
2. Ask SBE to add ADL's lesson [BINAH – Building Insights to Navigate Antisemitism and Hate](#).
3. Urge SBE to use the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's complete definition of [antisemitism](#), which the European Union and [U.S State Department adopted](#) during the Obama Administration.
4. Thank the SBE for removing an earlier draft which included antisemitic and anti-Israel bias.

As a leading provider of anti-bias education, ADL recognizes that attitudes and beliefs affect actions and our communities. A pedagogically sound Ethnic Studies course will promote respect among students by teaching about the diverse histories, cultures, and contributions to our nation.

Thank you for taking action with ADL.

[READ ADL'S LETTER TO CA DEPT. OF ED](#)