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August 11, 2020

By electronic delivery only

Members of the Instructional Quality Commission
c/o California Department of Education
Curriculum Frameworks & Instructional Resources Division
1430 N Street, Suite 3207
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Revised Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Members of the Instructional Quality Commission:

The Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California (JPAC) is the largest single-state coalition of Jewish organizations in the nation. We advocate in Sacramento on behalf of a diverse representation of the California Jewish community, which includes Jewish Federations and Jewish Community Relations Councils, Jewish Family Service agencies, and many other Jewish community organizations that advocate for and directly serve the California Jewish community and the people of California at large. Our member organizations collectively serve over 1,000,000 people each year.

Over the past year, JPAC has worked on behalf of our member organizations with the California Department of Education (CDE) to reiterate our support for teaching Ethnic Studies in California's schools and to help ensure that the state's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum incorporates "core values of equity, inclusiveness, and universally high expectations" for all of California's diverse communities. Our position is that a rigorous and pedagogically sound curriculum that meets the guidelines set by the CDE would be of great benefit to teachers and students across the state.


JPAC is grateful that the CDE has responded to our concerns about the unacceptable and biased content in the first draft of the Curriculum, which included anti-Semitic tropes and lessons praising the BDS movement. JPAC applauds the revised model curriculum as a significant improvement from the first draft, and we thank CDE Superintendent Thurmond, Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond and their staff for removing the overt antisemitism and anti-Israel bias. We are additionally pleased that the Superintendent and the CDE have expressed their commitment to offer broader education and training about anti-Semitism and the diversity of Jewish-Americans to schools and communities throughout our state.

While JPAC, and our broad coalition, welcome the direction the model curriculum is headed, we may request further revisions to this new curriculum framework during the public comment period. We appreciate the transparency of the process and look forward to working together to ensure a strong, fair and high-quality Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Sincerely,



Lynn Bunim
Chair, JPAC



Julie Zeisler
Executive Director, JPAC



Cliff Berg
Legislative Advocate

Cc: The Honorable Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

The Honorable Jose Medina, Assembly Member

The Honorable Ben Allen, State Senator, IQC member, Chair of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus

The Honorable Jessie Gabriel, Assembly Member, Vice Chair of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus

The Honorable Shirley Weber, Assembly Member, IQC member, Chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, President of the California State Board of Education

Dr. Stephanie Gregson, Director, Instructional Quality Commission, and Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Performance, Planning & Technology Branch

The Honorable Das Williams, Assembly Member, Chair of the California Legislative Asian and Pacific Islander Caucus

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez, Assembly Member, Chair of the California Legislative Latino Caucus