

From: Ayelet Nachman

Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 6:09 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Comments

Hi, my name is Ayelet Nachman, and I live in Newport Coast California.

I'm writing to you about my concerns and remarks regards the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

1. I commend the CDE for including "the recent rise in anti-Semitic violence" as a topic for study in the ESMC. I believe this should be edited to say "the recent rise in anti-Semitic violence and hatred", to ensure discussions include anti-Semitic harassment, vandalism, discrimination, and rhetoric which may not fit within the category of "violence". (Page 20, Lines 527-528)
2. Instead of providing clear definitions for the terms mentioned in the "Guiding Values and Principles of Ethnic Studies", the ESMC includes footnotes for educators to delve deeper into the sources of such terms on their own. Sources mentioned include Maira and Shihade (2006) and Spade (2011), which lead educators to connect social movement principles with the BDS movement. This citation refers to Israel as a "Settler-colonial" state, connects anti-Zionism in the Middle East to anti-racism and anti-imperialist movements in the U.S., and attacks the CDE's partner organization, the ADL.

By not accurately defining these terms within the ESMC, educators will follow the terminology of these problematic references mentioned in the citations, ultimately promoting the hateful content originally removed from the first draft of the ESMC. (Page 9, Lines 179-194).

3. I commend CDE for adding language about transparency and public input regarding the development of local ethnic studies curriculums as well as encouraging the exploration of "multiple and often competing sources of information". I urge you to strongly emphasize this point in communications to local schoolboards as well as communicate that educators refrain from conveying their own political views and potential biases. (Pages 5, 10, 11)
4. "Students will write a paper detailing certain events in American history that have led to Jewish and Irish Americans gaining racial privilege." (Page 6, Line 8166-67)

1. Targeted Jewish communities all across America are currently dealing with antisemitism through the spread of the belief that Jews are responsible for racial and financial inequalities in America. Such a chapter falsely representing the Jewish American narrative would only promote such antisemitic rhetoric and instill such ideology.

2. This prompt leads students to the assumption that all Jews are white, rather than

taking into consideration the vast Mizrahi Jewish immigrant population that hailed from Arab countries as a result of persecution as well as Black Jews, Spanish Jews, Latino Jews, and Jews from North Africa.

3. Also, the reference to “white” Jews (those from Eastern Europe) does not mention that these very “white” Jews are still targeted today in the U.S. by white nationalists and other groups who carry out antisemitic violence. The victims of recent synagogue attacks were murdered because of the perpetrators’ perceptions that they are non-white and are enemies of the “white race.” Irish Americans today do not face this kind of violence by white supremacists.

5. “the unique experiences of Arabs and other Middle Easterners” should include Mizrahi Jews. By not doing so the ESMC will be erasing the narrative of non-Arab and non-Muslim ethnic and religious groups from the Middle East who form the Middle Eastern immigrant communities in America. (Page 20, Lines 527-528)
6. Given the problems listed above, this should not be the only example of a unit covering the experiences of Jewish Americans that teachers have access to in the ESMC. At minimum, the following materials should be included as well: (Page 6, Lines 8159-69)

This new model curriculum brings many political issues that should not be part of high school studies.

Thanks for listening
Ayelet Nachman