

**From:** Jeff Wolfeld

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:37 AM

**To:** Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum comment

Thank you for taking steps to remove the denigrating and shameful language about Jews and Israel from the earlier draft of the ESMC. It's heartening to know that cooler minds were able to see that the committee had been co-opted to advance a specific ethnic group's grievances in a highly unbalanced way.

However, the August 12 changes, which were announced just hours before the IQC was set to convene, represent a partial backtrack into unbalanced coverage.

I was comfortable with the fact that only the four most statistically significant population groups were included in the pre-August 12 draft. It seems fair to me that the Israel/Palestinian conflict was no longer covered in depth, for two reasons: 1) you would never be able to get the two groups to agree that the coverage was balanced, and 2) including these groups opens the door for many other ethnic groups to clamor for their own inclusion. It makes sense to draw a line based on statistical significance, and to use the study of the included groups as a jumping-off point for members of all other ethnic groups to consider their own stories and backgrounds, and to learn to respect each others' similarities and differences.

Unfortunately that didn't last long, and here we are again talking about us-vs.-them.

In order to achieve the core goals of the ethnic studies curriculum, I call on each member of the IQC to commit to the following:

1. The inclusion of a meaningful definition of antisemitism;
2. No return of the derogatory language about Jews, Israelis, and Israel, with guardrails in place to keep such language out of the classroom in the future;
3. The addition of a sample lesson reflecting the diversity of Jewish Americans, including Jewish Americans from the Middle East and North Africa and Jews of Color; and
4. Commit to complete transparency to developing the curriculum.

Sincerely,  
Jeff Wolfeld

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"The best way to predict the future is to create it." -- Abraham Lincoln