

From: Adi Horn
Sent: Sunday, August 9, 2020 10:26 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: senator.hill@senate.ca.gov; marc.berman@cityofpaloalto.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] URGENT: 2nd Draft ESMC Major Concerns

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

I, Adi Horn, appreciate some improvement in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), but I am deeply concerned by the overly flawed approach.

Here are my major concerns:

1. The second draft does not prevent teaching offensive politically indoctrinating and anti-Israel elements from ESMC's first draft. Here's what would make it better:

- Add Elements of Balanced Curriculum from the LA Unified School District's Ethnic Studies Curriculum to provide solid ground rules for course development
- Numerous sections of the ESMC need revision to expose students to "multiple and often competing sources of information" and ensure that "diverse viewpoints are respected".

2. The few references to Jews are misleading and offensive. Here's what would make it better:

- Include Mizrahi and other Jews of color
- Remove links to, and group advocacy of, virulently anti-Israel pro-BDS sites with malicious slander about imaginary genocide
- Add a definition of antisemitism that addresses sinister stereotyping and double standards against Jews and Jewish institutions from all parts of the political spectrum.

3. References to Middle Eastern communities should not favor one community over others

- If Middle Eastern communities are considered Asian, then under the "broadly defined umbrella of Asian studies" are Mizrahi Jews and other MENA ethnic groups, which represent ~60% of CA's MENA population (estimated 500,000 Californians).
- Include the lesson plan, "Antisemitism as the Middle Eastern-American Jews," covering contemporary issues of antisemitism, bigotry, and the Middle Eastern-American Jewish experience produced by the JIMENA: Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa

4. The ESMC should be revised to accurately and equitably represent the cultural and racial diversity of California so it is balanced, as required by SBE standards and ESMC Guidelines

- If it represents religions, it should represent religious minorities proportionately (i.e. CA's non-Christian religions -- Buddhist (2%), Hindu (2%), Jewish (2%), and Muslim (1%)).
- If the ESMC includes ethnic groups from the Middle East, it should include Mizrahi Jews and other Middle Eastern communities proportionately (See MENA coalition letter of communities which explains this in depth.)

As a California native and current resident of Palo Alto, as well as a Moroccan Jew myself, I URGE you to make significant revisions of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum to address these concerns.

Please revise the Guiding Values and Principles of the ESMC to use more precise and inclusive terminology, to align with the ESMC Guidelines, to build bridges of intergroup understanding, and to ensure critical thinking. Then adjust the lessons and sample topics accordingly to match the revised principles.

Thank you,
Adi

--

Adi Horn