

**From:** Jasper Willson  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 24, 2021 12:14 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Issues with the Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Hello,

My name is Jasper and I'm writing to voice my concerns about the ethnic studies curriculum that is being proposed. In this curriculum there are many issues with how Jews are taught to students. It's important students get accurate information about minority groups. The information that is in the proposed curriculum currently endangers Jews and misrepresents us. Here are some of the many issues and the ways they should be changed.

1.) Using the term "Jewish Middle Eastern Americans" to describe Jews living in the middle east is problematic. This makes Jews appear to be an American group, despite historically originating from the middle east. This needs to be amended so that Arab Jews, Mizrahi Jews, and so many other subcategories are accurately represented. Jewish people are originally from the middle east, adding America to the end of that takes away from our history and inaccurately portrays us.

2.) This curriculum focuses on Jews fleeing after the 1940s, but does not include the antisemitism from the rest of our history. Only talking about WW2 related antisemitism once again diminishes the suffering my people have been through. This is inaccurate.

3.) Conditional whiteness is brought up only in relation to Jews. Many Jews do benefit from conditional whiteness, but by talking about it only in relation to Jews it teaches kids to associate Jews with white which erases Black Jews and other Jews of Color. This section should be amended to discuss conditional whiteness of all ethnic groups as they relate to it, while making sure to discuss how many people in these different groups have varying levels of conditional whiteness.

4.) The curriculum currently has several talking points about how Jews are from all over, but then goes onto list specifically that many Jews have European ancestry. By calling this out specifically and talking about it as if it's the common thing, it teaches kids to not believe that Jews can be Black or Indian or from anywhere else. This needs to be taken out.

5.) "Jews were less often racialized, more frequently able to assimilate, and gained conditional whiteness..." This again erases the existence of Black Jews and Jews of Color. Some Jews have gained conditional whiteness, but which groups need to be more specified. This also diminishes the suffering of many white functioning Jews who have experienced discrimination for not being white. Being "less racialized" is a complex term and needs to be more specifically laid out for teaching or just taken out.

6.) Talking about how Jews are gaining "racial privilege" is harmful for a couple of reasons. It once again ignores that Jews are a race within themselves, and it ignores the amount of antisemitism they face. Calling us a privileged group is an incredibly antismemitic term that is used by people to try and paint Jews as a race that sees themselves as superior. This needs to be taken out.

There are many more instances where things are left out or the language shows that this was not written by Jewish historians as it should be. This curriculum NEEDS to be looked over and reviewed BY JEWISH historians and educators before it is implemented. As it is now this curriculum does not accurately educate students about Judaism and is incredibly dangerous to Jews.

Thank you for your time, I look forward to seeing these changes looked at and implemented.

-Jasper Willson