

From: Julie Kaufman
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 6:58 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: [emails redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please continue to modify Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

I am in favor of an Ethnic Studies curriculum that addresses racism openly, but I don't want militant political dogma or material that pits groups of color versus groups of white - or any group vs. another - in our schools! While some improvements have been made in the new draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), such as the addition of the identity theme in the instructional guidelines, many serious problems still remain. The problematic principles and framework unfortunately remain unchanged, and can easily lead to one-sided political ideologies and anti-Israel sentiment being forced onto our kids, just as it was in the ESMC's first draft.

There are numerous issues with the seven values and guiding principles of ethnic studies laid out in Chapter 1. I am very concerned that they establish an "us-versus-them" agenda, rather than bringing ethnic groups - of all colors or no color - together. This works against the desired goals established in AB 2016. The guiding principles also indoctrinate students with a narrow, Third World Liberation Front political ideology - which is counter to the high school guidelines of providing various political perspectives and letting students develop their own opinions. I don't feel textbooks should advocate any political point of view. It is similarly upsetting that some of the seven principles are based on the book *Education at War*, which encourages "solidarity" and "linkages" with BDS, and anti-Israel narratives, which ostracizes and leads to bullying of Jewish students.

Many of the eight new outcomes in Chapter 1 are more helpful and inclusive, but as long as the seven guiding principles remain unchanged, and all the lessons are based on a foundation of those principles (as stated in Chapter 3), there is no hope for a significant improvement in the key areas of concern with this curriculum. I urge you to fix the principles.

The ESMC also offers a misleading, Eurocentric portrayal of Jews. There is a lack of inclusion of Mizrahi Jews (Jews originally from the Middle East and North Africa), and no acknowledgement of the multiple identities of African American, and other Jews of Color. References to Jews in the ESMC should be revised to reflect the full diversity of the Jewish community.

Similarly, references to Middle Eastern communities within the model curriculum should not focus only on the Arab community. If Middle Eastern communities are to be considered Asian, then under the broadly defined umbrella of Asian studies, Mizrahi Jews, Armenians and other Middle Eastern groups must also be included.

I am a Californian whose children benefited from our schools, and whose grandchildren are just beginning to do so. I even worry that this curriculum may make my partly-Jewish grandchildren

feel negative about their own heritage, which cannot possibly be the goal of an ethnic studies curriculum.

Please make significant revisions to the ESMC to give our students the high quality education they deserve. There are many good ethnic studies courses that build understanding about the struggles and accomplishments of key ethnic groups without the political indoctrination and divisiveness of the ESMC.

Julie Kaufman