

**From:** Larry Hendel  
**Sent:** Friday, January 15, 2021 12:30 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comment on draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

TO: California Department of Education

RE: Gutting of Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

January 15, 2021

I write to protest the CDE's watering down of the draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) that will be going to the State Board of Education in March.

1. Instead of a liberatory, anti-colonialist, empowering curriculum that is the essence of Ethnic Studies, the department was turned the model curriculum into a "can't we all get along" orientation that has none of the power of Ethnic Studies as developed over the last fifty years. The curriculum needs to be centered on communities of color and their struggle for liberation.
2. The department needs to restore Arab-American studies to its rightful location under Asian-American studies, instead of relegating it to a minor lesson plan in the Appendix. In addition, the curriculum should not shy away from discussing the situation of Palestine and issues pertaining to Palestinian-Americans, particularly high school students, because you are afraid of offending pro-Israeli organizations.
3. The curriculum should be developed by Ethnic Studies professors and experts, not by political appointees, and it should be in tune with principles, values and pedagogy of the Ethnic Studies discipline.
4. As a Jew I am particularly offended by the department's kowtowing to the Anti Defamation League and the Jewish Community Relations Council, as if they represent the whole Jewish community. They do not. Additionally, rather than embracing the IHRA definition of antisemitism, the department should reject it. Its sole purpose is to silence and stigmatize anyone who is critical of Israel.
5. Ethnic Studies should focus on communities of color. As a Jew I do not feel "left out" because Jews are not included. There are plenty of classes in the high school curriculum about the Jewish experience.

Please send this latest version of the ESMC back to the drawing board, and make sure Ethnic Studies experts are at the table when it is revised.

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