

From: Myrna Kimmelman  
Sent: Sunday, August 11, 2019 6:11 PM  
To:  
Subject: Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Dear Superintendent Thurmond, Members of the State Board of Education, Members of the Instructional Quality Commission,

While we commend the intent to develop a curriculum that promotes inclusion and increases understanding of the richness of diversity not only in California but in our country, we feel that the draft curriculum falls far short by not presenting a full picture. By omitting the Jewish-American experience and refusing to identify Anti-Semitism, the suggested curriculum does not deal with the persistent bias and growing violence against people of the Jewish faith.

The statistics are staggering.

- In 2018, in addition to the horrific shooting of the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, there were 1,879 Anti-Semitic incidents
- In 2018 alone, there were 39 physical assaults against Jewish individuals (an increase of 105% over 2017).
- In 2018, there were 344 incidents at K-12 schools and 201 incidents on college campuses.
- In 2019, we have already seen the shooting at the Chabad in Poway and the arrest of a young man just this week who planned on shooting Jews.

Omitting any mention of Anti-Semitism is a distinct failure in the proposed curriculum. It represents a disservice to students by ignoring current events of ethnic attacks including the chanting of White Supremacists in Charlottesville of "Jews Will Not Replace Us," and the attacks on the synagogues in Pittsburgh, PA and Poway, CA.

In actuality, the distinct anti-Israel content included in the draft curriculum furthers Anti-Semitism. Jews are only mentioned in reference to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, casting Israel as the sole perpetrators of violence and hatred. It does not present a fair and more balanced discussion of an extremely difficult, decades old conflict but rather a pointedly political agenda. In addition, the inclusion of BDS goes beyond the discussion of otherwise American focused civil rights issues and is the only international reference discussed in detail.

We ask that you please consider these issues. The inclusion of the American-Jewish experience, the discussion of Anti-Semitism as a current and dangerous issue, and the elimination of political bias in relation to Israel will only benefit our students as they gain an understanding of the diversity of our population and the dangers of bigotry and discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, nation of birth, religion, sexism, gender, etc.

Thank you for considering the needed changes.

Sincerely,  
Myrna and Rich Kimmelman  
Walnut Creek, CA 94598