

Our Purpose

Jewish Family Service is a client-centered, impact-driven organization working to build a stronger, healthier, more resilient San Diego



Jewish Family Service

Moving Forward Together

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August 15, 2019

Soomin Chao

Chair, Instructional Quality Commission

California Department of Education

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Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

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RE: Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Chairwoman Chao:

We are writing to share our deep concern over the released version of the State's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC). We look forward to reviewing a new draft by Instructional Quality Commission (IQC).

Founded in 1918, Jewish Family Service of San Diego (JFS) is one of San Diego's most impactful nonprofit agencies – providing resources and support to more than 40,000 San Diegans every year. Through integrated services, JFS empowers **people of all ages, faiths, and backgrounds** to overcome challenges, set goals, and build more stable, secure, and connected lives – efforts which strengthen the entire San Diego community.

Most recently, the agency has focused on responding to the urgent needs of immigrants at the southwestern border fleeing violence and persecution. In addition to providing pro bono legal services for asylum-seekers enrolled in the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), JFS has sheltered and provided healthcare, legal services, and travel coordination to more than 17,000 asylum-seekers released on their own recognizance into San Diego.

As an organization rooted in Jewish values – values which speak to *why* we serve, rather than *whom* we serve – we cannot support ESMC in its current iteration. The proposed curriculum decidedly excludes the

the significant contributions of the Jewish community to California and effectively erases our community's longstanding struggle against discrimination and hatred – even going so far as to omit anti-Semitism entirely from its discussions of bias and prejudice, and from the EMCS Glossary. The curriculum also inaccurately and harshly condemns Israel – the world's only Jewish state – in an out-of-context endorsement of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, a known effort to promote discrimination against the Jewish community and individuals of Israeli descent.

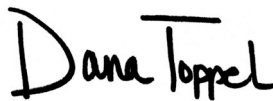
Instead of using education to eradicate racism and bigotry, the proposed curriculum will perpetuate stereotypes and do lasting damage by presenting dangerous, hateful tropes under the guise of authority and education.

As AB 2016 states, “the state’s educational standards should be guided by core values of equity, inclusiveness, and universally high expectations.” At a time of increased vulnerability for American Jews, it is essential that the State of California do its best to protect the unique needs and sensitivities toward American Jewish students. This can be done, in part, by including Jewish culture and history, teaching about anti-Semitism, and avoiding irrelevant and inflammatory references to Israel in a new draft of the ESMC.

Moving Forward *Together*,



Adam Welland
Chair, Board of Directors



Dana Toppel
Acting CEO, Chief Operating Officer