California's 'anti-hate' curriculum teaches hate

August 12, 2019

### By [Mark Goldfeder](https://www.israelhayom.com/writer/mark-goldfeder/)

Israel Hayom

<https://www.israelhayom.com/opinions/why-californias-anti-hate-curriculum-is-problematic/>

The California Department of Education is currently reviewing a new proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) that is not just anti-Israel but downright anti-Semitic by any meaningful definition. This includes the standard definition used by the federal government; the 31 governments that are members of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance; all 50 countries, except Russia, that comprise the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; and the governments of the United Kingdom, Romania, Austria, Germany, and Bulgaria.

The proposed curriculum, which was allegedly designed to “aid in the eradication of bigotry, hate, and racism,” instead signals that some forms of bigotry are to be accepted without question.

I cannot believe I have to say this, but, regardless of one's politics, anti-Semitism is wrong, and it should not be tolerated, let alone taught.

Here are the facts:

The ESMC is rightly concerned with the importance of studying hate crimes, bias, prejudice, and discrimination, but astonishingly, it completely omits the concept of anti-Semitism. For the record, according to a recent FBI report, the majority of religiously motivated hate crimes in the United States are committed against Jewish people. In fact, since the FBI began reporting these statistics in 1993, there has not been a single year in which Jewish people were not the victims of the majority of religiously motivated hate crimes. And, yet, Jews make up only roughly 2% of the US population.

Far from teaching about the evils of anti-Semitism, the curriculum actually singles out Jews and the lone Jewish state for special condemnation. Among many other things, it refers to Israel as an apartheid regime without even attempting to give any evidence, support, or context for that vicious slander. It refers to the creation of Israel by the Arabic term *nakba* (disaster) without mentioning that there might be another side to that story. It promotes the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement, an international effort whose ultimate goal is to delegitimize and destabilize the State of Israel. It should be noted that BDS has been a significant factor in the recent trend of anti-Semitic incidents both globally and domestically, and has been repeatedly and demonstrably linked to radical terror groups.

This is not a partisan issue; in 2016 both the Republican and Democratic platforms included language disavowing BDS, and California itself has an anti-BDS law which says that the government will not do business with those who engage in this form of discriminatory behavior. The ESMC, however, overlooks all of this and apparently sees nothing problematic worth mentioning.

The proposed curriculum even throws in some classic anti-Semitic tropes for good measure, including song lyrics about Jews controlling the media and manipulating the public.

Aside from the fact that the curriculum as it stands is antithetical to its own stated purpose of eradicating bigotry, it is also unlawful and potentially dangerous. It is unlawful because it violates the California Education Code’s multiple prohibitions on discrimination and prejudice, as well as the specific requirement that, when adopting instructional materials for use in schools, governing boards include only materials that accurately portray the cultural and racial diversity of our society, including the contributions of different ethnic groups. Needless to say, in its cartoonishly anti-Semitic depiction of Jews as manipulative aggressors, the contributions of the Jewish people in the United States and specifically California are entirely absent.

The curriculum is dangerous because anti-Semitism is on the rise in the United States, and that harsh reality has affected the Jewish community in profound ways ranging from economic and cultural boycotts based on American Jews’ perceived loyalty to Israel, all the way to Jewish people being targeted disproportionately with hate crimes. California now seeks to institutionalize and encourage this hatred, with the state’s imprimatur.

The fight against anti-Semitism has nothing to do with any notion of Jewish exceptionality, and everything to do with good old-fashioned American equality as well as the pursuit of justice and fair play for all people. Hatred and discrimination, including subtle forms of hatred that masquerade as school curricula, ultimately lead to violence, just like it did in Poway, California, this past April. Let us pray that the state learns that lesson and corrects this noxious mistake before it is too late.