California scraps ethnic-studies model decried as anti-Semitic, left-wing 'propaganda'

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The California State Board of Education has decided to scrap a proposed ethnic-studies curriculum after a groundswell of opposition over the draft’s allegedly anti-Semitic and anti-Israel content.

In a joint statement on the board’s website, three board officials said Monday that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum now under consideration “falls short and needs to be substantially redesigned.”

“Ethnic studies can be an important tool to improve school climate and increase our understanding of one another,” said the Monday statement. “A model curriculum should be accurate, free of bias, appropriate for all learners in our diverse state, and align with Governor Newsom’s vision of a California for all.”

The 11-member board is accepting comments until Thursday on the model curriculum, drafted by a panel of 18 college and high school educators, after which “a new draft will be developed for State Board of Education review and potential approval.”

“The Board will ultimately adopt an ethnic studies model curriculum that aligns to California’s values,” said the statement by board president Linda Darling-Hammond, vice president Ilene Straus and member Feliza Ortiz-Licon.

Among those lambasting the proposed curriculum in letters to the board were the California Legislative Jewish Caucus and 83 Jewish and pro-Israel organizations, led by the AMCHA Initiative.

The draft included sections on a wide range of minority groups, including Arab Americans, but not Jewish Americans, and identified multiple examples of bigotry, but not anti-Semitism.

The proposed curriculum also promoted the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, as well as BDS supporters such as Women’s March co-leader Linda Sarsour, and included rap lyrics about Jewish control of the media.

The Israeli American Council cheered the decision in a Tuesday post on Facebook, saying, “WE DID IT!”

“We thank our vibrant and active community for mobilizing and sending thousands of letters and emails to the commission!” said the post. “We thank the more than 14,000 who signed our petition and joined this important cause!”

The model was developed as a curriculum for high schools that opt to include ethnic studies classes, but a bill making its way through the state legislature would make ethnic studies a requirement for graduation.

The proposed curriculum had also been blasted as “leftist propaganda” by the Orange County Register in an Aug. 8 editorial.

The sample course outlines included jabs at President Trump, capitalism, police and “US imperialism,” and promoted “significant figures” such as convicted cop killers Assata Shakur and Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The pro-Israel group StandWithUs put out an “action alert” last week urging residents to tell lawmakers to “stop anti-Israel hate in California public schools.”

“This statement shows that our voices are being heard,” said StandWithUs CEO Roz Rothstein. “Our fight isn’t over yet, but we are proud of everyone who spoke out to demand that this deeply flawed curriculum be fixed. We urge the public to continue holding the state accountable to its own educational standards.”