



**JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL**  
of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

For Immediate Release

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## **Official Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Addresses Major Jewish Concerns**

### **Focus to Shift to 1,000+ School Districts Across California**

SAN FRANCISCO, March 18 – A prominent California Jewish organization that spearheaded advocacy efforts to shape the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum expressed appreciation that the official version successfully addressed its major concerns.

The State Board of Education’s decision Thursday to approve the educational plan comes after years-long revisions to the model curriculum, created as a result of legislation passed in 2016.

“We urgently need ethnic studies, which gives marginalized communities the agency to define and share their own stories, cultures and histories,” said Tyler Gregory, executive director of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Community Relations Council, [who spoke publicly at the start of the board meeting](#) on Thursday. “As Jewish Americans, we can relate. For too long in our classrooms, Jewish identity has been flattened and distorted to that of a white religious minority, taking little note of our global peoplehood, history, diversity and oppression.”

After the state board made its decision in an up-or-down vote, Gregory said, “The just-approved model curriculum, while not perfect, addresses the major concerns our community identified nearly two years ago: It keeps out denigrating content about Jews, Israelis and Israel; includes lesson plans on the Jewish American experience, as well as references to and definitions of antisemitism; and adds language to protect students from discrimination.”

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel (D-Woodland Hills), chair of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus, said, “The model curriculum approved today by the State Board of Education is a vast improvement over prior drafts and a win for everyone who fought to remove bigoted and discriminatory content about Jews and Israel.

“But today’s action is only one step in a longer process. In the coming months, the Jewish Caucus will continue to remain actively engaged to ensure that the model curriculum is properly implemented by local school districts and that the teaching of ethnic studies adheres to the highest educational standards.”

The model curriculum is a statewide guidance document. California’s 1,000+ school districts have some autonomy on how to specifically teach ethnic studies, and many are already offering ethnic studies classes.

“JCRC will continue to advocate during the model curriculum’s statewide implementation as well as partner with the California Department of Education and school districts to guarantee an accurate, respectful and robust teaching of the Jewish American experience, in all its diversity,” Gregory said.

An initial draft of the model curriculum both excluded Jews and included anti-Jewish, anti-Israel components. In large part as a result of JCRC advocacy, subsequent drafts removed the denigrating content and included two lesson plans on Jewish Americans.

The Jewish community’s engagement and advocacy, including JCRC’s #JewsNotIncluded campaign, represented nearly one-third of all comments the California Department of Education received during the nearly two-year process to finalize a curriculum.

JCRC has advocated on this issue as part of the Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California (JPAC), the largest single-state coalition of Jewish organizations nationwide.

“Our diverse coalition of organizations successfully advocated to better the model curriculum, for all of California’s public school students,” said Julie Zeisler, JPAC executive director.

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### **About the JCRC**

The [Jewish Community Relations Council](#) (JCRC) of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, one of 125 JCRCs nationwide, brings together and strengthens the Bay Area Jewish community. By building bridges and working in coalition with diverse ethnic, faith, political and civic communities, JCRC is strengthening the pillars of a healthy society that Jews and our neighbors need to thrive, together.

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