



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

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JCRC Remains Hopeful About Final Phase Of California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Diverse Coalition Has Yielded Major Improvements

SAN FRANCISCO, March 8 – A prominent California Jewish organization has expressed its appreciation to the state Department of Education for its greatly improved final draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

“We are now carefully reviewing all materials and consulting with Jewish and civic community partners,” said Tyler Gregory, executive director of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), the central public affairs arm in the region for the organized Jewish community. “In the coming days, we will meet with the State Board of Education about our outstanding concerns. We will subsequently share JCRC’s formal position on the board’s forthcoming up-or-down vote.”

The State Board of Education, which meets March 17-18, has the power to make additional changes and will make its final determination on the model curriculum by March 31. The curriculum was created as a result of legislation passed in 2016. Additional proposed legislation, Assembly Bill 101, would make the teaching of the ethnic studies mandatory in the state’s K-12 public schools.

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.

“We continue to advocate as a diverse coalition, which has proved effective in ensuring the best possible outcome,” said Julie Zeisler, JPAC executive director.

Gregory added that JCRC’s strong preference is to work with the State Board of Education to get to ‘yes’ with this final draft.

“Californians do not need another divisive process, and those eager to reject the final draft outright are short-sighted,” he said, adding, “It would restart the drafting process and allow the state’s numerous school districts to adopt lesser-quality curricula without universal standards, such as the rejection of the Boycott, Divest and Sanctions movement.”

An initial draft of the curriculum both excluded Jews and included anti-Jewish, anti-Israel components. Follow-up drafts removed the denigrating content and included two lesson plans on Jewish Americans. The just-released final draft retains the two Jewish American lesson plans and a definition of antisemitism, and removes mention of Linda Sarsour and Helen Thomas, figures with a history of making denigrating comments about Jews.

JCRC continues to advocate for improvements to the state curriculum and will now broaden its focus to the district level, where efforts to reintroduce anti-Israel, anti-Jewish material are already underway.

To stay informed of the latest developments about the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, please visit www.jcrc.org.

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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