

**From:** D.Oisboid

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**Sent:** Tuesday, August 13, 2019, 8:23:15 PM PDT

**Subject:** Personal comments on the proposed California student Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC)

To the CDE, IQC, and State Board of Education,

Thank you for offering the opportunity to comment on the proposed California student Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC). I understand it is intended to build a shared understanding of ethnic groups from various perspectives. This is an admirable goal. However the curriculum, as proposed, has some serious flaws which need to be addressed/reconsidered/modified.

Before I provide my feedback, I affirm that I have read the 2020 ESMC Model Curriculum Chapters 1, 2, and 3 as published on <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/esmcpubliccomment.asp>

Please find a few comments below.

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
<b>Chapter 2</b>  <u>Arab American Studies Course Outline</u>  Sample Topics:  •Direct Action Front for Palestine and Black Lives Matter  •Call to Boycott, Divest, and Sanction Israel  and  <b>Glossary &amp; Bibliography</b>  •Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)	<i>Self/family</i>	<b>Chapter 2, Page 234, lines 4956, 4957</b>  <b>and</b>  <b>Glossary &amp; Bibliography, Page 2, lines 30 – 40</b>  These two topics in particular are extremely emotionally charged and it is impossible to appreciate the plight of Palestinians living outside and inside of Israel if these topics are simply “suggested” as a topic without providing a clear background on the history of Palestinians (and Israel).  These topics will foster hatred towards the perceived oppressors of the Palestinians, as promoted by the DAFP and BDS supporters, not create open discussion among students. This is not in the best interest of students, who have not been provided an alternate view.  BDS (as presented) suppresses sharing ideas because it simply demonizes the State of Israel. (I have friends and family who absolutely sympathize with the Palestinian situation, but you can’t do anything if no one will talk with you!) In order to have open communication among students, they need feel safe to discuss things from multiple viewpoints. The

		curriculum topic, as suggested, does not promote this way of thinking.
•The Second Wave of Arab American Immigrants	“	<b>Page 242, lines 5157 – 5161</b>  Palestinians were displaced after the war of 1948 but there is no discussion of the war's initial cause, and no commentary on the response of the surrounding Arab countries, nor any discussion on how the displacement came about. This is another emotionally charged topic and deserves more in-depth education than one or two glossy sentences.

Your suggested curriculum, while honestly and admirably trying to be very inclusive and wholesome, has the critical flaw that you CAN'T REACH EVERYONE. There are multiple ethnic (and other types of) divisions within each of the four major groups that you have chosen to provide curriculum for. Is it even possible to cover all the subdivisions, much less the groups you have NOT included? (Examples: Jews, Irish/Scots, Romanians, Ukrainians, Tibetans, Uyghurs, indigenous Australians.) Yes, you have provided methods for creating new curricula, but leaving that up to the teachers' discretion (and ever-decreasing free time) is tantamount to ignoring all groups not already in the main program. I predict that a few students will be thrilled to get their ethnicity shared, others will feel offended for being ignored, and a large portion will feel ashamed and afraid to bring up opposing viewpoints.

To illustrate, let me tell you about my niece's high school class. She had an Ethnic Studies experience which was similarly very one-sided. An essay was read which had derogatory statements about her ethnic group, and included misinformation about her group's religious practices which she knew to be false. It left her and her friends feeling attacked and helpless to defend themselves. Fortunately, after much discussion between parents and educators, the teacher was able to create a safe environment and the students were able to have an open discussion about bias.

The way the Arab-American curriculum is presented, it will not promote discussion but will shut out opposing viewpoints. This will not achieve the goals intended by the ESMC.

I understand how difficult it is to provide a thorough narrative of any ethnic group's immigration experiences. My primary concern is that the current Arab American module oversimplifies things and demonizes without explaining why things happened that way. I would suggest including an Ethnic Jewish Immigrant experience module, to provide an alternate viewpoint and possibly providing an opening for a shared understanding between very different opinions.

Thank you very much for your time and attention.

Deborah Oisboid  
Mother, concerned citizen and voter  
Representing myself and my immediate family

P.S. In Further Resources (Page 252, lines 5393 – 5396), you provided two links which are identical.

<http://www.mearo.org/lesson1.php/>

<http://www.mearo.org/module2/lesson1/>

Redundancy is a minor thing but in the interest of efficiency perhaps one link would suffice.