

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

May 2019 Draft

(Download and use to provide specific recommendations)

Include the chapter of the model curriculum, the page number, and line number(s) to ensure that the California Department of Education and Instructional Quality Commission can reference the content of the document when reviewing your comments. Please email this document as a Word document to ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov. You may contact Kenneth McDonald, Education Programs Consultant, at kmcdonal@cde.ca.gov with any questions regarding this template or the public input process.

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
"General"	Melissa Baten Caswell	<p>As a parent, community member, President of the Santa Clara County School Board's Association, and 11 year Public School Board Trustee for the Palo Alto Unified School District, I am concerned about several aspects of the sample Ethnic Studies curriculum and the process that was used to collect public input:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The model curriculum advances a political agenda that is presented as unchallenged truth. It is completely unacceptable for a sample high school curriculum to present a one-sided political agenda and for our students to be used as vessels for political propaganda. For example: Capitalism is described as a "form of power and oppression," alongside "patriarchy," "racism," and "white supremacy". 2. The model curriculum does not reflect the diversity of California's population, and mischaracterizes and omits several major California ethno-religious groups. For example, the glossary for the curriculum includes "Islamophobia" but not "anti-Semitism, and the curriculum effectively erases the American Jewish experience and longstanding struggle against hatred and discrimination. 3. The input process is flawed. It was initiated over the summer at a time when schools were not in session, and most parents, teachers, students and administrators were gone from school and not focused on school related news and activities. 4. The call for public review and the process to collect comments was not widely communicated. The information was buried in the CDE website, moreover the comment forms are cumbersome and require the use of technology that might not be widely available in many disadvantaged communities. Now as the deadline for comments is only days away, and school is just starting, our community is just now learning about the content of this model curriculum and they are seriously concerned. Furthermore, because, the input period took place during the summer months when our Board of Education did not meet, our Board will not be able to put our comments together as a group and we have no other option other than to comment as individuals. <p>It is concerning that a course which has been presented as a way to reduce prejudice and bigotry, is being put forward with a sample curriculum that is so politically unbalanced that it could easily fuel hatred and discrimination.</p>