

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.

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Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
General	Sophia Merkin, Columbia University	<p>My name is Sophia Merkin. I am a PhD candidate at Columbia University. I recently read about the developing Ethnic Studies curriculum; I am not a California resident, but wanted to voice some urgent concerns. I think it is an excellent idea to teach students ethnic studies; as a scholar who focuses on forms of indigenous art history, I understand very well how important it is for the next generation to understand the histories of hatred, bigotry, racism, and colonialism, as well as their continued impact on communities today. However, I am extremely troubled and to be honest frightened by the absence of anti-Semitism from the proposed curriculum. Is this subject not equally worthy and pressing for students to understand? Hate crimes against Jews have increased in number exponentially more than those against any other group; this is not an historical issue that has been solved. We do not live in a post-anti-Semitic world anymore than we live in a post-racial one, and it is irresponsible and dangerous to imply otherwise.</p> <p>Furthermore, the presence of anti-BDS rhetoric in the curriculum is inherently biased. This is not to say that Israel is a perfect state, or does not make grievous mistakes or threatening decisions. However, to imply that there are not other countries with more damaging and horrific human rights records or political flaws is not only inaccurate, but given the frequent inability to separate anti-Semitism from disapproval of individual Israeli policies, it will only serve to perpetuate the very anti-Semitism that your curriculum fails to address. If you truly want to include the BDS movement in your curriculum, at the very least it should be taught as the nuanced issue that it is, with comparative examples from other countries.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to submit concerns, and your time. I sincerely hope that you will reconsider these decisions, and drastically revise your curriculum.</p>

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California Department of Education, June 2019