

From: Joy Hellman
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 8:05 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: ESMC comment and concerns

Thank you so much for providing opportunities for input on the DRAFT Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I have attached the Public input template as you requested and will also summarize my concerns in this email.

Assuming best intentions, I do want to identify a few concerns.

1. I appreciate the respect for the CCSS and the State Historical analysis skills indicated in the model curriculum. With those standards as checkpoints, with specific attention to analysis of sources (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6) and to instruction on identification of bias in historical interpretations, (H&SS analysis of historical research, evidence, and point of view skills 2 and 3) along with recognition of the complexity of historical cause and effect and interpretation of past events within the context of present day norms and values. (H&SS analysis historical interpretation skills 1-3), I am surprised by the inclusion of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement in the social movements list (page 37 of 304.)
 - a. You do not provide a necessary balance of another perspective as is required by both the CCSS and State historical analysis skills listed above.
 - b. I do not see any information about the well documented bias of this movement, including its documented weak peer review process when attempting to use educational research.
 - c. Another example of the problematic privilege provided by the inclusion of the BDS movement is that it is the only current foreign policy focused movement, thus another reason it is a questionable choice when compared to the other social justice organizations. And because it is foreign policy focused, it does not belong in this curriculum.

2. I am also concerned with the inclusion of the Arabic verses written by S. Masour and the Planet of the Arabs (page 272).

- a. Both primary sources are inflammatory, simplistically using derogatory language, and are, in short, dangerous. To encourage the use of these sources without verifiable oversight on appropriate analysis and use by the teachers can much too easily hurt the mission of the Ethnic studies curriculum and, even more importantly, hurt the very students we are trying to support. Inflammatory sources are too “easy” and somewhat simplistic methods of instruction. For example, while I appreciate my colleagues’ work at helping our students to understand the rise of fascism in Europe in the 1930s and 40s. I always caution them to consider the primary sources they use and how they use them. While the adults may understand the problem of an antisemitic cartoon or language, without proper instruction and balanced resources,

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students may only take away the problematic and powerful message of the propaganda and may either have prejudices confirmed or be threatened and hurt by the display, by a trusted adult, their teacher, of hurtful documents. There is not enough accompanying methodology in the model unit to ensure that these sources are used appropriately.

As context for my comments, I have worked in our public schools for 40 years as a history and academic support teacher, mentor teacher and curriculum, systems, and new teacher coach, course team and department coordinator, professional learning communities facilitator, and District Director, always with a focus on equity and open access in advanced course work. Thus I am a long time proponent of the goals of the Ethnic Studies curriculum Please consider my strong concerns listed above; I am surprised by the inappropriate inclusions listed above given the potential harm they can create to such an important effort.

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(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)
Chapter 2	<i>Joy Hellman</i>	Inclusion of BDS as it is foreign policy focused and not a domestic ethnic studies justice movement. And no balanced alternative prospective and information is provided. And this movement has significant equity and scholarship concerns. (page 37)

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Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
Chapter 2	Joy Hellman	Inclusion of the Arabic verses written by S. Masour and the Planet of the Arabs (page 272) since the language is very inflammatory and without strong oversight on the use of both there is danger that many students will be hurt by or consume the biased and prejudicial messages.

California Department of Education, June 2019