

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	<i>Rabbi Matt Friedman</i>	All the comments on this sheet have been authored by me.

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General		<p>I submit these comments as an individual with substantial experience in education and in-depth knowledge of the concept of ethnic studies. I served two terms as an elected member of the Center Joint Unified School District Board of Trustees that included time as board president. I was a faculty member at the University of Phoenix for over 10 years and taught courses regarding world religions, US History, cultural geography and ethics. Additionally, I served as an instructor at Sacramento State University and Missouri Western State College (St. Joseph, MO). I am also a graduate of K-12 public education in the State of California. The development of an ethnic studies model curriculum is a worthwhile, meaningful and important endeavor. I have reviewed the draft 2020 document. It is to be commended for its attempt to broaden students' understanding of the diversity of California, reduce prejudice and enhance appreciation of the ethnic background of all Californians. Unfortunately, the model curriculum has serious deficiencies and inaccuracies.</p> <p>The curriculum seeks to advance the understanding of and correct the maltreatment of several elements of California ethnic groups. This is admirable, but the tactic does so at the denigration of others. The curriculum is limited in its discussion and does not address the full depth of impacted minority groups. The comments below regarding Chapter 2 will offer some examples. These comments do not reflect a thorough analysis of the draft, but offer examples of remediable deficiencies.</p>
1		Page 2, lines 27-31: There is no mention of anti-Semitism. Jewish institutions and individuals have been the target of violence and attacks on structures and buildings. Examples include the firebombing of three synagogues in Sacramento in June 2018 and the shooting attack in Poway at a synagogue in Poway in 2019 that resulted in a death and injuries.
1		Page 4, 86-90: There are many ethnic and cultural groups that have contributed to the development of California that are not included here.

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1		Page 8, line 162: All students, regardless of race or ethnicity should “become stronger “advocates and allies for equity, justice, and liberation
2		<p>Line 4028 discusses Islamophobia. Islamophobia is certainly a concern, but sadly, many other religious groups have suffered from discrimination and violence. This would include Sikhs, Hindus, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and others. The curriculum should provide a broader discussion of phobic behaviors. Line 4957 endorses the boycott, sanction and divestment (BDS) movement against Israel. BDS likens Israeli policy to the former Apartheid policies of South Africa. Israeli law provides for equality of all citizens. Therefore, Israel does not practice Apartheid policies. Indeed, Israeli Arabs have full civil rights and have been elected to the national legislature and serve in the court system. The question can be rightfully raised regarding social and economic treatment of Arab, Christian, Druze and other minority populations. Israeli society has imperfections as do all societies. This proposed curriculum seeks to remedy problems in California. The existence of challenges does not merit BDS type actions. In fact, the selection of Israel for this level of scrutiny and response exceeds that of any other nation. This act is discriminatory. Line 5136 uses the term Israel Palestine. There is not a nation of Palestine. There are Palestinian political entities such as the Palestinian Authority and there are elements of Palestinian self-rule in the “West bank” region. At some point in the future there might be an independent Palestinian entity. Israeli and Palestinian leadership has engaged in discussions to assist with the establishment of a Palestinian entity. The process has not reached a conclusion for many reasons. Until it is complete and formalized by an agreement then there is no entity that is Palestine Israel. Line 6238 mentions anti-semitism as social oppression. The impacts of anti-semitism have been significant in California and merit additional attention. There are many other instances of social oppression that are not addressed. While it is impractical for the curriculum to include all, it could be reasonable broadened.</p>

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