

From: Mark Miller
Sent: Friday, August 9, 2019 11:27 AM
To: Ethnic Studies; senator stern; assembly member gabriel
Subject: Feedback on 2020 Ethnic Studies Curriculum
Good Morning,

Having just learned about this initiative concerning this new curriculum, I am utterly disgusted and appalled. You will be hurting the very children you purport to help. Please reconsider this vehicle and your goals. As educators, we should be striving to give our children the tools and knowledge that give them the best chance of being happy, successful, contributing members of society. Unfortunately, this curriculum achieves nothing of the sort. Instead, it continues a hurtful and invective narrative that serves neither the children nor the surrounding society at all well.

Mark Miller

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)
<i>General</i>	<i>Mark Miller- Private Citizen</i>	This program seems to be dividing people more than teaching people. It is encouraging people to embrace what is different, not teaching what we have in common. We should be teaching the concept of a melting pot where all of the ingredients lead to the best possible unique new “dish”, being American. Instead, this program seems to be teaching the concept of mixing oil and water in a single

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		vessel. The concept of co-existing, but never meshing or sharing an identity. This shared identity, while still celebrating all of our individual cultures, is what has historically made us great. While no society is perfect, or even nearly perfect, this is the best most tolerant society in human history. When you compare us against perfection, we pale in comparison. However, when you compare us to other societies historically, we shine. Where is the mention of that in this “curriculum?” This curriculum does all of your students a terrible disservice.
Chapter 1	Mark Miller- Private Citizen	Page 13, lines 306-308- This section lumps capitalism with a whole series of other categories of oppression. Capitalism is an economic system that is responsible for lifting more people out of poverty than any other single economic system in history. Furthermore, it represents the liberty of private parties to engage in commerce that each party feels is advantageous with no coercion from the government. It should be celebrated, not vilified.
Glossary	Mark Miller- Private Citizen	Page 2, lines 29-40 – This section features a definition which clearly promotes the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel. It claims the purpose of BDS is to “establish freedom for Palestinians living under apartheid conditions.” It then parrots more one-sided BDS talking points, offering no critical perspectives about this campaign of hate, including that its true purpose, as stated by its co-founder and leading activists, is to end the existence of Israel, the only Jewish state.
Chapter 2	Mark Miller- Private Citizen	Page 234, lines 4956-4958 – This section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine but no voices critical of their perspectives (p. 234).

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes a false equivalence between Israel's efforts to stop terrorists from entering communities to murder innocent people, and U.S. policies on the border with Mexico.
Chapter 2	Mark Miller- Private Citizen	<p>Page 237, lines 5024-5032 – This section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use unclear language that implies “Israel-Palestine” as a whole is an Arab country.
Chapter 2	Mark Miller- Private Citizen	<p>Page 242, lines 5157-5161 – This section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frames the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives.
Chapter 2	Mark Miller- Private Citizen	<p>Page 256, lines 5477-5494, pages 264-270, lines 5692-5830 – These sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage teachers to use an anti-Israel poem which insinuates Jews control the media and use it to manipulate the public - a common, and quintessential, antisemitic slur.
General	Mark Miller- Private Citizen	<p>The Introduction of the proposed curriculum states that “[t]he implementation of Ethnic Studies presents an opportunity for teachers to...enable students to develop a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusion, and aids in the eradication of bigotry, hate, and racism.” Despite this stated goal, the curriculum does not feature a single lesson about the Jewish community or antisemitism, mentioning Jews only in passing. With antisemitism rising and ignorance about the Jewish people still a significant problem in our society, the exclusion of Jews and antisemitism from this curriculum is deeply disappointing and educationally deficient.</p>
General	Mark Miller- Private Citizen	<p>The biased sections and omissions listed above run counter to the stated purpose of the curriculum, in particular:</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 1(a): The State of California is committed to providing excellent educational opportunities to all its pupils; • Section 1(f): The state's educational standards should be guided by core values of equity, inclusiveness, and universally high expectations; and • Section 1(g): The state is committed to its efforts to provide all pupils with excellent educational opportunities, without regard to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, income, sexual orientation, or disability. <p>Additionally, California Education Code § 233.5(a) provides:</p> <p>"Each teacher shall endeavor to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice, patriotism, and a true comprehension of the rights, duties, and dignity of American citizenship, and <i>the meaning of equality and human dignity, including the promotion of harmonious relations</i>, kindness toward domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures, to teach them to avoid idleness, profanity, and falsehood, and to instruct them in manners and morals and the principles of a free government." (Emphasis added).</p> <p>The rise of antisemitism within our culture, which has been accompanied by an increasing general threat to freedom, human dignity and harmonious relations, is evidenced by the recent attacks of Jews in synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway, as well as against other American citizens in El Paso and Dayton. The curriculum's failure to address antisemitism as a form of bigotry thus falls short of the above directive.</p> <p>Furthermore, the California Education Code's Prohibition of Discrimination states, in relevant part, that "[n]o person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion... in any program or activity conducted by an</p>

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		<p>educational institution that receives, or benefits from, state financial assistance, or enrolls pupils who receive state student financial aid.”</p> <p>Similarly, the California Education Code’s Prohibition Instruction includes a provision on Prejudice that states, in relevant part, that “[a] teacher shall not give instruction and a school district shall not sponsor any activity that promotes a discriminatory bias on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation...” This provision, like the Prohibition of Discrimination mentioned above, illustrates the problems inherent in the proposed curriculum, and are not an exhaustive list of the provisions of the California Education Code with which the proposed curriculum appears to be in conflict.</p> <p>The model curriculum not only fails to address antisemitism as a form of bigotry but actually includes thinly veiled antisemitic rhetoric and promotes the discriminatory BDS movement. Additionally, the model curriculum simultaneously fails to provide balance with regard to Israel or any education at all about Jews. Therefore, it effectively discriminates against Jewish and Israeli students in violation of the education code. Additionally, by marginalizing Jewish and Israeli students, the model curriculum violates the three above-referenced declarations of the California state legislature in enacting the legislation.</p> <p>We note the critical LA Times’ review of the curriculum, and hope that the values of inclusion prevail over hatred, division, and misinformation. In closing, we strongly urge you to review and revise the curriculum to remove bias and to educate students about American Jews as an ethnic group, including those who fled the Holocaust, oppression in the Middle East, and discrimination in the former Soviet Union. Furthermore, we call on you to create safeguards that will prevent similar bias and omissions in this and other California state curriculums going forward.</p>

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		Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical issue.

California Department of Education, June 2019