

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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General	<p>Joel A. Biatch, age 62, California native and resident and U.S. Citizen, Jewish, holder of California multiple and single subject teaching credentials, and currently practicing attorney and member of the California, Washington D.C., and New York State Bar Associations</p>	<p>It's essential, important and wise to teach ethnic studies and to have sample curricula to do so.</p> <p>I sincerely appreciate your doing this!</p> <p>Your work is strong and represents an enormous undertaking.</p> <p>I simply have a few suggestions to make your work even more effective, and I hope you will take them in that spirit.</p> <p>Although my suggestions are very important, please understand how greatly I appreciate the magnitude of this task and the gratitude we all feel for your doing all of this.</p> <p>The sample curricula need to be as inclusive and varied as possible without instilling guilt or disenfranchising and mischaracterizing any racial, ethnic, religious, gender, sexual, physically challenged, or age groups.</p> <p>Of course this is extremely delicate and difficult to accomplish.</p> <p>Caucasians, for example, who do not otherwise on their own identify with any particular ethnic heritage can easily and inadvertently feel guilt or exclusion when studying various other races and ethnicities.</p> <p>It would be best if all students could be taught to learn about and take pride in their own individual backgrounds, and that this would be a goal in all ethnic studies curricula. Every group has made valuable contributions and has experienced hardships.</p> <p>In my experiences as a teacher and as an attorney of-working with students and clients, respectively, from a wide variety of ethnic, racial, religious, gender identity, sexual identity, a wide variety of ages, and abilities/disabilities figuring out a way for each individual to share (and to learn about, if need be, in order to</p>
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		<p>do this) their backgrounds with stories, pride, perhaps their families' migration to the US stories, etc., is the best way to facilitate their being or becoming open to hearing about others' painful discriminatory experiences so as to facilitate new and more appropriate future behaviors.</p> <p>The foregoing approach is missing from this sample curriculum. Groups of students can meet with other similar students to talk about their common heritage, and then report back to the "other" students who are present.</p> <p>It's similarly of compelling importance to teach about all forms of societal oppression as this has informed and formed many groups' experiences.</p> <p>The sample seems to mostly focus on racism elimination, which is extremely important, but should not be the exclusive goal.</p> <p>By the way there is no mention of multi-ethnicity. Most African-Americans and increasing numbers of other people are multi-ethnic.</p> <p>However, the omission of anti-semitismanti-Semitism, and the use of gun violence and hate speech against Jewish people is striking and shocking, particularly as these forms of societal oppression have been increasing dramatically in the last few years, to the point of Jewish people being attacked for being Jewish at rallies and while in synagogues.</p> <p>Attacking Jews because of their Jewishness, their Zionism and their otherness goes back many centuries to even before they were all labeled as "other" and as "Christ-killers".</p> <p>Also upsetting is the failure to include the severe destructiveness of able-body-ism, and the resultant hate speech, and its correlation to self-destructive, life-threatening and suicidal (at worst) impacts. Ageism is also unmentioned.</p>
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		<p>The gun violence in synagogues in California and Pennsylvania, as well as the last week of gun violence in Ohio, Texas and California demonstrate how extremely important these topics are, and especially that they be approached in a manner that validates <u>all</u> backgrounds, and that teachers be required to teach from a point of view of inclusion, noting which students are being excluded, and then to figure out ways of including everyone.</p> <p>The sample curriculum unfortunately seems to simply perpetuate the status quo in failing to address these issues.</p> <p>While the absence of substantive discussion on anti-semitismanti-Semitism and discrimination against Jewish people involves a topic of ethnicity and/or race, including as a subset of anti-Arabism (perhaps ¼ of Jews today descend from families who lived in Arab countries until 60 or so years ago) I appreciate that other forms of societal oppression such as able-body-ism and homophobia come under the heading of societal oppression, though not race or ethnically based (although at least homophobia is mentioned).</p>
Chapter 2		Page 2 Ethnic identity and ethnicity are spoken about, but neither black nor non-black Jews are mentioned.
		<p>Page 6: Line 144: There were codes & covenants that statedstated, “No blacks or people not of the Christian faith”.</p> <p>Page 32: Lines 594-598: The union movement should be mentioned here, as it was a major social movement that especially took off shortly after the Civil War and big migrations to our cities were underway.</p>

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		<p>Page 35: Line 684: Information ought to be included about the Zionist movement in the early 20th Century which failed to prevent the killing of 6 million Jews in Europe, and the resulting elimination of almost ½ of living Jewry at the time.</p> <p>In addition, the BDS Movement promotes hatred and divisiveness. It does not recognize that Jewish Arabs and Jews from all parts of the world are part of a people who are indigenous to the Middle East, have been speaking languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Yiddish) in that area for several thousand years, and have been praying to return to Zion (Israel) for approximately 3000 years. The BDS Movement also fails to acknowledge the United Nations Partition Plan that established Israel in 1947. Teaching the “correctness” of a Movement that fails in these regards teaches students to dangerously disregard Jews, and to perpetuate the exclusion of Jews, and to eradicate Jews.</p> <p>Analyzing the BDS movement is an opportunity to teach critical thinking, thinking for yourself and evaluating biases of data sources, so long as the instructor indicates that there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ response. The analytical process is what counts.</p> <p>Antizionism is another form of Antisemitism. Jews are being attacked and killed because they are Jews, in the US and in the rest of the world. Please add lessons about eliminating these atrocities to the sample curricula. “Zion” is “Israel”. To fail to explain and to teach that antizionism is “anti-Israelism” is to condone it. We cannot imagine that this curriculum, for example, could possibly teach that “anti-United States’ism” is acceptable just because there is racism in the US.</p>

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		<p>Page 42: Line 817: In the forced migration section, the Roman conquest of the Middle East around the time of Jesus and the resultant forced removal, conversion or killings of Jews should be taught.</p> <p>And the impact of the Holy Roman Empire on the killings of heathens among whom were Jews should be taught. It has taken centuries to successfully get the Catholic Church to begin to apologize for those atrocities.</p> <p>Similarly the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions in 1492 resulting in the forced conversions or deaths of Jews should be taught.</p> <p>Learning about forced migrations on the pain of death teaches us compassion for everyone.</p> <p>Migrations due to water shortage and resultant conflicts is perhaps one of the current and biggest causes of migration today, resulting from our changing climate and stimulating tremendous xenophobia in the migrants' destination populations. This must also be taught.</p>
		Page 98: Line 2167 Do you live in a food swamp? (define the term – lots of food, but nutritionally unhealthy)
		Page 234: Line 4947: Does this include Jewish Arabs who have come to live in the US?
		Page 234: Line 4957: Regarding BDS, please see my comment above referring to Page 35: Line 684.

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		<p>Page 234: Line 4958: Israel is trying to stop terrorists from entering Israel while Israel permits large numbers of non-violent Arabs from neighboring lands into Israel daily for work, medical care, attending family celebrations, shopping, selling, etc., as well as political, sexual orientation refugees and more. The US on the other hand has not been trying to keep out terrorists while letting everyone else in; these are not equivalent situations.</p> <p>Also, there are many Arab countries with border challenges—you may want to review what is happening with the Syrian border, Yemen, etc. and their impact on the nearby borders.</p>
		<p>Page 236: Line 4997: and students should understand the role of religion (folks from Arab countries might be Farsi, Muslim, Christian, Jewish, etc.)</p> <p>Page 237: Line 5030: Israel-Palestine is not a country. Israel is a country; Palestine is an area. Palestine is not a “state-actor” and should not be confused with or compared to state-actors. There are many groups, e.g. ISIS-DAESH, that want to be treated as countries, but which are not countries.</p>
		<p>Page 241: Line 5138: Again, Israel-Palestine is not a country.</p> <p>Page 241: Line 5143: Thank you for including Jewish Arabs here. I frequently am treated as an “Arab” due to the color of my skin even though I am a Jew. My father received similar treatment.</p>
		<p>Page 242: Line 5157: Please add that the UN established the State of Israel in the Partition Plan, and that the neighboring Arab countries went to war against the new State of Israel to stop it from being born. It’s important to teach about the process the UN used at that time, the refugee camps the UN created for displaced persons, the keeping out of many Jews from the newly created Israel who were trying to escape deathly conditions in Europe, and more.</p> <p>Page 242: Line 5157: Please add that the Nakba is known as the War of Independence in Israel.</p>
		<p>Page 256: Line 5481: Palestine is not a country. If someone is from “Palestine” their county of origin should be identified.</p>

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		Page 264-269: To say that none of Palestine is free or that it must be freed is to ignore that Israel is a democracy, and for many Arabs it is the most free <u>freest</u> part of “Palestine” currently. LGBTQ people are freer in Israel than in any other middle eastern country. There are Arab political parties in Israel, as well as Arab settlements, towns and cities. This poem/song perpetuates hateful stereotypes by failing to recognize these facts. Also, Palestinians have repeatedly been unwilling to negotiate a lasting peace with Israel. Verifiable peace treaties require enormous work on all sides. This discussion in the curriculum glosses over these essential issues.