

**From:** Harrison Krat

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 14, 2019 9:46 AM

**To:** Ethnic Studies

**Subject:** Do Not Endorse Anti-Israel and Anti-Semitic Propaganda as Public Education

LETTER TO

California Department of Education (CDE)

Instructional Quality Commission (IQC)

State Board of Education

Dear CDE, IQC, and State Board of Education,

I am responding to your call for public comment on the Draft 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

The stated and intended goals of the Ethnic Studies curriculum are noble and long overdue. Helping students appreciate diversity, become educated about the history and experiences of oppressed groups, and articulate different forms of racism and hate is a deeply worthy goal. That is why I am extremely troubled that the board's draft not only excludes the Jewish community as a minority to be studied, but also omits anti-Semitism as a form of bigotry and openly promotes hateful discrimination against Israel.

My attached Public Input document lays out numerous examples of how the curriculum paints a deeply warped and biased picture of Israel, while wholly eliminating any discussion of Jews and the Jewish experience in Europe, the Middle East, and the United States. Presenting anti-Israel and anti-Semitic propaganda as public education does a disservice to our students and sinks the state's credibility. We can do a lot better.

It is imperative for the Department, Board, and Commission to remove anti-Semitic stereotypes, BDS, and all anti-Israel bias from the curriculum. Furthermore, I urge you to add lessons about American Jews as an ethnic group and anti-Semitism as a form of racism with ancient, deep-seated, and appalling commitments to violence and extermination. These lessons must include American Jews who fled the Holocaust, oppression in the Middle East, and discrimination in the Former Soviet Union, among others.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Harrison Krat

## 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](mailto:ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov). You may contact Kenneth McDonald, Education Programs Consultant, at [kmcdonal@cde.ca.gov](mailto: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	Harrison Krat, Burlingame resident of 8 years  Former teacher  Parent of two	<b>Pages 234:</b> The course “Arab American Studies” includes a topic entitled “Comparative Border Studies: Mexico and Palestine” that 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		<b>Page 234:</b> Encourages teachers to highlight the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine, but no voices critical of their perspectives.
Chapter 2		<b>Pages 234-235:</b> The course “Arab American Studies” proposes to cover “Significant Figures” that include people such as Linda Sarsour, Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar who are among the most anti-Israel figures in U.S. public life. There are no Arab Americans listed who are from the American Muslim Reform movement, which is a socially progressive movement of Arab Americans that promotes a more peaceful and tolerant Arab American identity, one that seeks to collaborate with Jewish Americans and does not demonize or delegitimize Jews or the State of Israel.
Chapter 2		<b>Page 237:</b> Uses unclear language that implies "Israel-Palestine" as a whole is an Arab country.

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Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
Chapter 2		<b>Page 242:</b> Use and definition of “Nakba” frames the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspective.
Chapter 2		This entire chapter is in itself anti-Semitic. In the few instances where the ESMC actually acknowledges Jews, it does so in a denigrating and discriminatory manner. For example, the ESMC recommends song lyrics which say that Israelis “use the press so they can manufacture” – a classic anti-Semitic stereotype that Jews control the media. Chapter 2 and the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum single out Israel – the only Jewish state in the world – for special criticism and condemnation that is both out of context and factually inaccurate. Holding Israel up to unique, inaccurate and unfair criticism and double standards has been defined by the U.S. State Department as a form of anti-Semitism. See <a href="https://www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism/">https://www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism/</a> .
Glossary		<b>Page 2, Lines 30-40.</b> The definition of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel describes it as a “social movement.” The definition then parrots BDS talking points such as describing Palestinians as “living under apartheid conditions.” BDS is actually a political ideology, which has been outlawed in at least 22 States and a U.S. congressional bill is pending to condemn it. The glossary offers no critical perspectives about BDS, which falsely characterizes Israel as a criminal state and delegitimizes the right of the Jewish people to national self-determination. Permitting students to study BDS as a “social movement” with these talking points will be divisive and will undermine peaceful discussion about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

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Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
Glossary		<b>Page 10, Lines 239-240:</b> The Glossary contains the definition of the term “Islamophobia” as “hatred, discrimination, fear, and prejudice against Muslims and the overall religion of Islam,” but the Glossary does not contain a definition of “anti-Semitism.” Anti-Semitism is the #1 incident of religious-based hate crime in the United States. The omission of the term “anti-Semitism” from the Glossary is itself anti-Semitic because the omission bespeaks the authors’ failure to consider Jews as a minority ethnicity that is also the frequent target of bigotry, hatred and violence. At a minimum, the Glossary should define anti-Semitism just like Islamophobia: “hatred, discrimination, fear and prejudice against Jews and the Jewish religion.”
General		The Introduction of the proposed curriculum states that, "The 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, mentioning Jews only in passing. With anti-Semitism rising and ignorance about the Jewish people still a major problem in our society, the exclusion of Jews from this curriculum is deeply disappointing.
General		I urge you to add lessons about American Jews as an ethnic group and anti-Semitism as a form of racism with ancient, deep-seated, and appalling commitments to violence and extermination. These lessons must include American Jews who fled the Holocaust, oppression in the Middle East, and discrimination in the Former Soviet Union, among others.
General		It is imperative for the Department, Board, and Commission to remove anti-Semitic stereotypes, BDS, and all anti-Israel bias from the curriculum.