

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)
Glossary	<i>Haim Albalak Resident of Palo Alto, CA</i>	Glossary, Page 2, Lines 30-40: The term “ <i>Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)</i> ” is defined as a movement to “to establish freedom for Palestinians living under apartheid conditions,” which assumes a falsity that Israel is an apartheid-state – it is not because Israeli Arabs share equal rights with Jews and all other Israelis and Palestinians live under autonomous self-government. The BDS movement is actually a radical movement that includes known terrorists and persons linked to known terrorists, and the true aim of the movement is the elimination of the State of Israel because BDS supporters believe in a “free Palestinian from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea,” which would mean no Israel. The BDS movement is so radical and violent in nature that it has been outlawed in at least 22 states in the U.S.A., and a bill is pending in the U.S. House of Representatives (HRes. 246) – with bipartisan sponsorship of over 340 Representatives – that defines the BDS movement accurately as a movement “targeting Israel is a campaign that does not favor a two-state solution and that seeks to exclude the State of Israel and the Israeli people from the economic, cultural, and academic life of the rest of the world.” Unless the BDS movement is identified for what it really is, BDS has no place in California school curriculum. BDS is a divisive movement that does not promote peaceful discussion about the Palestinian-Israel conflict, and demonizes Israel in a false, biased manner. BDS instruction in schools will divide students rather than bring them together.

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Glossary	<i>Haim Albalak Resident of Palo Alto, CA</i>	Glossary, Page 10, Lines 239-240: 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,” which is one of the oldest hatreds in human history. 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. Indeed, Anti-Semitism is the #1 type of religious-based hate crimes in the U.S.A. At a minimum, the Glossary should define Anti-Semitism just like Islamophobia: ““hatred, discrimination, fear and prejudice against Jews and the Jewish religion”
Glossary	<i>Haim Albalak Resident of Palo Alto</i>	Glossary, passim (General): The Glossary includes the terms Racism, Sexism, Anthropocentrism, Cisheteropatriarchy, Heteropatriarchy, Classism, Colonialism, Homophobia, Imperialism, Islamophobia, Patriarchy, Transphobia, White Supremacy, and Xenophobia. It does not include the term Anti-Semitism.
Chapter 2	<i>Haim Albalak Resident of Palo Alto, CA</i>	Chapter 2, Pages 32-36: Chapter 2 contains a sample course entitled “Social Movements and Student Civic Engagement” in which a sample lesson invites students to select a movement from a list of “social movements” where the BDS Movement (see comment #1 above) is listed as a “social movement.” It is not a “social” movement – it is a radical political ideology whose focus is eliminating the State of Israel. As noted above, the BDS movement has been outlawed in at least 22 States and a U.S. congressional bill is pending to condemn it. The BDS Movement has no place being an option for students to select for learning about social movements as it would invite students into a political indoctrination whose fundamental motivations are anti-Israel and anti-Semitic in that it falsely characterizes Israel as a criminal state and delegitimizes the right of the Jewish people to national self-determination as BDS envisions a “free Palestinian from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea,” which means no Israel. Permitting students to “study” BDS as a social movement will be divisive and will undermine peaceful discussion about the Palestinian-Israel conflict. Any instruction about BDS instruction in schools will divide students rather than bring them together.

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Chapter 2	Haim Albalak Resident of Palo Alto, CA	Chapter 2, Pages 234: Chapter 2 contains a sample course entitled “Arab American Studies” which includes the topic “Call to Boycott, Divest and Sanction Israel.” Please see comments above regarding the impropriety of teaching about the BDS Movement, a radical and outlawed anti-Semitic and anti-Israel ideology. The course encourages teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called “Direct Action for Palestine”, but identifies no voices critical of their perspectives.
	Haim Albalak Resident of Palo Alto, CA	Chapter 2, Pages 234: The course “Arab American Studies” includes a topic “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	Haim Albalak Resident of Palo Alto, CA	Chapter 2, Pages 234-235: The course “Arab American Studies” proposes to cover “Significant Figures” that include known anti-Semites and Israel-haters such as Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar. These figures, and others on the list, are among the most polarizing, anti-Semitic and anti-Israel Arab Americans in U.S. public life. Further, 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. At a minimum, the course should offer other prominent Arab American figures such as Asra Nomani, Tahir Aslam Gora, Tawfik Hamid, Usama Hasan, Arif Humayun, Farahnaz Ispahani, Zuhdi Jasser, Naser Khader, Hasan Mahmud and Raheel Raza. <u>See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Reform_Movement</u>
Chapter 2	Haim Albalak Resident of Palo Alto, CA	Chapter 2, Pages 234-235: The course “Arab American Studies” contains sample course content that includes an interview of Rashida Tlaib, one of the most polarizing, anti-Semitic and anti-Israel Arab Americans in U.S. public life. The course should include Arab Americans who promote peaceful, harmonious relations between Americans rather than polarizing figures who pit American against American, as well as Arab vs. pro-Israel Jews, based on political view.

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Chapter 2	Haim Albalak Resident of Palo Alto, CA	Chapter 2, <i>passim</i> (General): Chapter 2 contains numerous references to “Palestine,” which has never been a country and, prior to 1948, was a territory controlled by the British with no prior national history or sovereignty. In 1948, the United Nations proposed the creation of two states – a Jewish State and an Arab State in this territory. The Jews accepted the proposal, and the State of Israel was born. The Arabs rejected the proposal, and attacked the State of Israel. Except for British-mandate Palestine, the term “Palestinian” was only first used by the terrorist Palestine Liberation Organization in the 1960’s. There is no country called Palestine. The term Palestine was only a place prior to 1948.
Chapter 2	Haim Albalak Resident of Palo Alto, CA	Chapter 2, <i>passim</i> (General): Chapter 2 erases the American Jewish experience, as it contains no course about American Jews. Despite the significant contributions that Jews have made to California history, politics, culture and government – and the Jewish community’s longstanding struggle against hatred and discrimination – Jews are omitted as an ethnic group and there is no proposed course about American Jews or their experience in the U.S.
Chapter 2	Haim Albalak Resident of Palo Alto, CA	Chapter 2, <i>passim</i> (General): Chapter 2 specifically discusses ethnic bias against other communities, it omits any meaningful discussion of anti-Semitism.
Chapter 2	Haim Albalak Resident of Palo Alto, CA	Chapter 2, <i>passim</i> (General): Chapter 2 is 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. <u>See https://www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism/</u>