

## **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)
General	<p><i>Jody Sokolower</i></p> <p><i>Retired, Berkeley Unified School District Social Studies and English teacher</i></p> <p><i>Adjunct faculty, Connie Lurie College of Education, San Jose State University</i></p> <p><i>Project coordinator, Middle East Children's Alliance</i></p> <p><i>Teacher Supervisor, University of San Francisco School of Education</i></p>	<p><b>Public Input Template—2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum</b> Page 2 of 3</p> <p>I am a Jewish public school teacher and teacher educator. I have taught Ethnic Studies to 9<sup>th</sup> graders, English language learners and teacher education candidates. From my own experience, I know that it is a critical piece of K-12 education. I have seen the difference in high school students who have had Ethnic Studies and those who haven't, particularly in their ability to talk and write meaningfully about racism, injustice, and the complexity of US history. So I urge you to support this Ethnic Studies model curriculum.</p> <p>I also strongly support the inclusion of the units on Arab American history, which is so neglected in the mainstream curriculum. When I taught Ethnic Studies at Berkeley High, there was nothing about Arab American history or experience. When I included Arab American studies and Islamophobia as topics in my classes, all the students (Arab and non-Arab) told me how important this content was. For the Arab American students in particular, it was the first time they saw their reality reflected at school. When I included this content in teacher education classes at San Jose State, my students told me it hadn't occurred to them to include Arab American issues or discussion or Islamophobia, despite the large Arab American population in Silicon Valley.</p> <p>Of course, it's important to include Jewish history and anti-Semitism in California curriculum, and <b>it is already there</b>. As you know, the 8th grade core literature curriculum includes The <i>Diary of Anne Frank</i>; in the Los Angeles School District, 8th graders take a field trip to the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust; the 10th grade core literature curriculum includes Elie Wiesel's <i>Night</i>. In high school US History and World History classes, core curriculum includes anti-Semitism, Jewish immigration through Ellis Island, genocide and extensive study of the Holocaust during World War II.</p> <p>As a Jew, I am deeply ashamed when right-wing Jewish organizations start shouting about anti-Semitism whenever anything about Arab history or current reality is raised.</p>

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		<p>Arab American history is not anti-Semitic; talking about the impact on Palestinians of the formation of the Israeli state is not anti-Semitic; discussing the pros and cons of the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement is not anti-Semitic. Some students may not agree with the goals or strategy, but that’s not anti-Semitic. Anti-Semitism is attacks on Jews as a religion and/or culture, not political disagreements with the policies of the Israeli state.</p> <p>In this era of rising racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, Arab American students in California desperately need this content at school so they are not made invisible or demonized, and all our students need this content as part of becoming critical thinkers and participants in an inclusive democracy.</p>