

**Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum
May 2019 Draft**

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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)

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General

Kelly Junno, 3rd grade teacher in Massachusetts

I am writing to commend the committee who wrote the proposed ethnic studies curriculum for including voices that are actively silenced - in the media, in schools, and in the government. We

continue to live in a world where certain people own and control the wealth of the world, and those same people wield the power of the state. These holders of wealth and power dominate public discourse. An ethnic studies curriculum should not only reflect the lives and histories of our diverse student body, but should also provide equity in the narratives that inform our understanding and analysis of the world.

Equity of narrative could not be more important than in our teaching about the settler-colonialist states of the United States and Israel. Both of these states were founded on seizure of indigenous land and erasure of indigenous people - erasure that occurs in a myriad ways in both places: murder, home demolitions, terror, criminalization, or literal erasure of the people and their history from our text books and our collective consciousness. Here in the US, most of us are living the settler perspective. If we are committed to justice for Native American people, as I believe the state of California is, we must have students delve deeply into the diversity of Native American peoples, their painful history, and their present-day voices. If there are Native American voices that have criticisms of the United States, we should consider those opinions seriously in our ongoing discussion of creating the world we want. Kudos to the committee for including a deep study of Native Americans in the proposed curriculum.

The same is true for Palestinian voices. I commend the committee for including many present-day Palestinian voices such as Shadia Mansour, Linda Sarsour, and Rashida Tlaib. These women have all had the courage to speak their truth, in spite of the powerful forces that are against them. All indigenous peoples have a right to critique the state that is occupying them.

I have heard that some are calling the curriculum anti-semitic for including critiques of Israel and uplifting BDS as a social justice movement. I think that it is crucially important that the state of California maintain that Israel is NOT equivalent to the Jewish people. That the state of Israel was created as a home for Jewish people does NOT negate its position as a settler-colonialist state. It is at best a disservice to the Jewish people to equate critiques of Israel with anti-semitism. At worst, it is itself anti-semitic to imply that the Jewish people wholly and uniformly identify with this designated “homeland.”

The Jewish people are an incredibly diverse group of people who come with an equally wide variety of stances on the state of Israel. They should be seen as such, and Jewish voices who oppose the state of Israel should be equally included in the curriculum. Furthermore, it is completely appropriate, if not absolutely necessary, for high school students to consider whether a state that is founded on the promise of maintaining a certain ethnic majority, of ANY ethnicity, is part of the world we want. Our goal should be to create a better world for ALL people. Both Jews and non-Indigenous people in the US are included in this.

I want to thank the state of California and this reviewing committee for acknowledging how power dynamics play out in curriculums and for making an active attempt to include voices that oppose dominant narratives. I also want to thank them in advance for separating a state from the people who

live there and allowing students access to dissenting voices so that they can intelligently formulate their own opinions.

California Department of Education, June 2019