

From: Amy Leserman
Sent: Monday, August 5, 2019 10:58 AM
To: CFIRD; Ethnic Studies
Cc: Paul Kujawsky; Maralyn and Paul Soifer
Subject: Comments on Ethnic Studies Model

I am writing with grave concerns about the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum proposed for California students. I have been a teacher in Los Angeles Unified School District since 1999, with a MAEd in Cross-Cultural Secondary Instruction, credentials in both English and Social Studies, and twenty years of experience teaching in both public and private schools.

Attached you will find my specific comments about the proposed model for Ethnic Studies Curriculum, but in general it:

- Addresses concepts of RACE without teaching that it is an [UNSCIENTIFIC term that has been proved to be a non-biological criteria for dividing people.](#) As such, this lesson plan divides people by arbitrary concepts of COLOR.
- This set of lessons does not teach respect for diversity or the value of honoring individuality or ethnic history.
- These lessons demonizes and marginalizes people that it arbitrarily identifies with "whiteness" and equates this quality with racism.
- These lesson plans do not honor the rich history of the ethnoreligious and religio-cultural groups that have shaped the history of the state, including Armenians, Jewish people, Mormons, and others;
- This model is filled with deliberate misspellings that push ridiculous agendas, including the misspelling of "history" as "hxtory"; There are significant factual errors, such as referring to Joshua Lionel Cowen as "Lionel Cohen" and thinking that his major contributions to the world were toy trains.
- This model lionizes vocal Jew-hating individuals such as Linda Sarsour, Rashida Tlaib, Helen Thomas, and Ilhan Omar.
- The model uses sarcastic quotation to indicate disrespect for certain groups;
- This model promotes a curriculum based on archaic ethnic- and gender-studies programs and terminology that were out-of-date a decade ago.

The committee selected to write this curriculum is NOT diverse, and does not represent a cross-section of California's rich ethnic and cultural breadth or history. This is NOT the kind of course that will enrich California's students, and it should not be used as any kind of model for curriculum or instruction.

It needs to be completely rewritten to accurately reflect on, honor, and RESPECT various sectors of California's population.

Amy Leserman
LAUSD Teacher, English
MAEd Cross-Curricular Instruction

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 and General	Amy Leserman Los Angeles Unified School District Teacher Secondary English and Social Studies	Glossary and General makes no mention of ethno-religious minorities, such as Jews, Gypsies (Roma/Sinti/Traveller), Armenians, Hindu, Sikh, Mormon, Seventh Day Adventist, etc.
	"	Glossary p. 2 of 22: Derogatory explanation of capitalism, and use of sarcastic quotation of "free market"
		Glossary p. 2 of 22 - Use of term "Cisheteropatriarchy- a system of power that is based on the dominance of cisheterosexual men." is used to marginalize straight men
		Glossary p 12 of 22 - Negatively collectively identifies "white" people: :People of color- someone who is not white. People of color as a collective identity emerged as a response to systemic racism and to assert resistance and solidarity against white supremacy. People of color are a global majority."
		Glossary p. 15 of 22: Negative and collective stereotyping of fair-skinned people with term "white": "Whiteness- a social construct that has served as the foundation for racialization in the United States. Whiteness is the antithesis of Blackness, and is commonly associated with those that identify as white.

		However, Whiteness is much more than a racial identity marker, it separates those that are privileged from those that are not. Whiteness can manifest as a social, economic, political, and cultural behavior and power. For example, the “standard” or cultural “norm” are often always based on whiteness and by extension white culture, norms, and values."
		General: This set of lesson plans focuses on RACE without explaining that this is a NONSCIENTIFIC term that has been disproved biologically.
Appendices		Page 8 of 214: European Immigration (Italians, Jewish , Polish, Irish, Serbian, etc.) Topics will include history and waves of European immigration to the United States, the role of World Wars I and II, the Cold War, Iron Curtain, and Communism played in immigration policies and effects on populations of immigrants. Students will participate in the analysis and discussion of economic opportunities, escape from religious persecution, humanitarian crisis, famine, and labor trends for wealthy, skilled or unskilled, workers. What have been the United States government policies that have accelerated or slowed European Migration to America?" Jewish is an ethno-religious identity, not a nationality like Italian, Polish, Irish, or Serbian.
Overview		Document should correctly spell HISTORY. The word does not connote gender identity and should not be misspelled to accommodate a ridiculous mistaken sense of having been wronged.
Appendices		Page 44 of 214: This unit focuses inappropriately on Arab MUSLIMS, when 63% of American Arabs are Christian. and a large proportion are Jewish.
Overview		General: Overview inappropriately associates “whiteness” with “white supremacy” which marginalizes and demonizes our students who identify as white.
Appendices		Page 44 of 214: The Israel/Palestine conflict is beyond the purview of any American ethnic studies class. In particular, the focus here is on demonizing and marginalizing students with religious and familial connections to Israel.
Sample Course Model		Pagination is incorrect, 288 of 303 pages are marked “299 of 300”
		Did Arab States declare that they would “drive Jews into the sea” -- Yes, they did. This is not heresy, but fact, and if it is reference, this should be clear.

		<p>"Call to Boycott, Divest, and Sanction Israel" -- Mention of this is entirely inappropriate and targets a tiny Jewish country as the major challenge to Arab countries, which is factually incorrect. Their major problem is a lack of democracy.</p>
		<p>Page ? "immigrant Jew like Lionel Cohen and his famous Lionel toy trains " -- His name was Joshua Cowen (check spelling) and his first claim to fame was for a device to ignite a photographer's flash. This is the only mention of Jewish people except with reference to Arabs.</p>
		<p>249 of 316 - Linda Sarsour as a person of Arab ancestry to research? She is a notable anti-semite!</p> <p>Helen Thomas? Anti-semite ----</p> <p>Likewise Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib</p> <p>You cannot find more notable Arab Americans to cite?</p>

California Department of Education, June 2019