

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)
Page 2 of glossary and pages 234, 237, 242, 256, and 264-269 of the sample course model documents	<i>Alexander Volinsky, Resident of California since 2005, Concerned citizen</i>	<p>A glossary for the curriculum includes a definition of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel. It claims the purpose of BDS is to, "establish freedom for Palestinians living under apartheid conditions". It then parrots more BDS talking points while offering no critical perspectives about this campaign of hate, which seeks to end Israel's existence.</p> <p>The definition of BDS “Boycott Divestment and Sanctions” as anti-apartheid movement that fights ethnic discrimination assumes that Israel is an apartheid state, which is not true. There’s no mention of antisemitic motives in BDS activity or its connections with terrorist groups (Hamas, Islamic Jihad) that actively promote violence against innocent civilians based on racial basis. There’s no mention that BDS was overwhelmingly condemned by the US Congress and German Parliament for actively promoting antisemitism</p> <p>It also doesn’t mention that both Hamas and the Palestinian authority are dictatorships, which means that the Palestians will not be truly free even under their rule. The truly free Palestinians are the ones who are Israeli citizens (close to 20% of Israel's population).</p>

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		<p>The sample lesson plans for the curriculum: Encourage teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine, but no voices critical of their perspectives (p. 234). Promote 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 (p. 234).</p> <p>Israel built the wall after it has suffered the equivalent of 15 9/11 attacks. The wall was the best measure to avoid bloodshed from both sides, since Israel didn't want to re-occupy the Palestinian cities, which were under Palestinian autonomy following the Oslo agreement.</p> <p>Moreover, the Oslo agreement is not mentioned at all, nor the attempts to reach a peace agreement, and the reasons for their failure (according to Clinton it was Arafat's). Neither do you mention the unilateral disengagement from Gaza that backfired literally on Israel: Israel is no longer ruling Gaza and in return the Hamas has shot thousands of missiles into Israel, and dug tunnels in order to kill and kidnap Israeli citizens.</p> <p>Use unclear language that implies "Israel-Palestine" as a whole is an Arab country (p. 237). Frame the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives (p. 242).</p> <p>You don't mention the 1947 UN resolution to split Palestine (which at the time meant the homeland of the Jews) between the Jews and the Arabs. The fact that the Jews have accepted the resolution, declared independence, and the Arabs tried to annihilate it instead of choosing to live peacefully side by side.</p> <p>There's no mention that Jews are indigenous people in the Middle East and Israel. Their ancestors' name came from Judea, renamed to Palestine by Roman oppressors in the II century CE to obliterate connection between Land of Israel and Jewish people</p>
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		<p>Encourage teachers to use a poem featuring harsh criticism of Israel, but no content offering a positive perspective about Israel or criticism of Palestinian leaders (p. 256, 264-269).</p> <p>Israel is the only democratic state in the Middle East, that guarantees basic rights to religious, ethnic and sexual. It is the only state in the Middle East where Christian population and other minorities (Druzes, Circassians, Armenians) are not persecuted and their number is growing.</p> <p>To the contrary, Palestinians are oppressed by their own leadership. LGBTQ citizens are harassed and even murdered, and often flee to Israel to find refuge.</p> <p>Use quoted language that implies calls “destroy Israel” and “drive the Jews into the sea” as prejudice towards Palestinians (p.257)</p> <p>In fact, calls to destroy Israel and drive Jews into the sea are still part of the official agenda of Hamas militant group, that governs the Gaza strip and has been the official agenda for PLO before Oslo agreements.</p> <p>Since 2000, more than 1350 Israeli civilians have been killed by Palestinian violence and terrorism and more than 8500 have been wounded.</p> <p>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 antisemitism rising and ignorance about the Jewish people still a major problem in our society, the exclusion of Jews from this curriculum is deeply disappointing.</p>

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