

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)
General	Rabbi Dalia Samansky, Temple Ahavat Shalom, Director of Education	<i>As a Reform Rabbi I am appalled by the representation of Jews and Israel in this curriculum. While it is important for the Palestinian voices to be heard, not to the exclusion of the Jewish voices. This kind of education will lead to a further increase in anti-Semitism.</i>
Glossary		Page 2, lines 29-40 – This section features a definition which clearly promotes 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 one-sided BDS talking points, offering no critical perspectives about this campaign of hate, including that its true purpose, as stated by its co-founder and leading activists, is to end the existence of Israel, the only Jewish state.

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Chapter 2		<p>Page 234, lines 4956-4958 – This section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine but no voices critical of their perspectives (p. 234). • 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		<p>Page 237, lines 5024-5032 – This section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use unclear language that implies “Israel-Palestine” as a whole is an Arab country.
Chapter 2		<p>Page 242, lines 5157-5161 – This section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frames the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives.
Chapter 2		<p>Page 256, lines 5477-5494, pages 264-270, lines 5692-5830 – These sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage teachers to use an anti-Israel poem which insinuates Jews control the media and use it to manipulate the public - a common, and quintessential, antisemitic slur.

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General		<p>The Introduction of the proposed curriculum states that “[t]he 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 or antisemitism, mentioning Jews only in passing. With antisemitism rising and ignorance about the Jewish people still a significant problem in our society, the exclusion of Jews and antisemitism from this curriculum is deeply disappointing and educationally deficient.</p>

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General		<p>The biased sections and omissions listed above run counter to the stated purpose of the curriculum, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 1(a): The State of California is committed to providing excellent educational opportunities to all its pupils; • Section 1(f): The state’s educational standards should be guided by core values of equity, inclusiveness, and universally high expectations; and • Section 1(g): The state is committed to its efforts to provide all pupils with excellent educational opportunities, without regard to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, income, sexual orientation, or disability. <p>Additionally, California Education Code § 233.5(a) provides:</p> <p>"Each teacher shall endeavor to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice, patriotism, and a true comprehension of the rights, duties, and dignity of American citizenship, and <i>the meaning of equality and human dignity, including the promotion of harmonious relations</i>, kindness toward domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures, to teach them to avoid idleness, profanity, and falsehood, and to instruct them in manners and morals and the principles of a free government." (Emphasis added).</p> <p>The rise of antisemitism within our culture, which has been accompanied by an increasing general threat to freedom, human dignity and harmonious relations, is evidenced by the recent attacks of Jews in synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway, as well as against other American citizens in El Paso and Dayton. The curriculum’s failure to address antisemitism as a form or bigotry thus falls short of the above directive.</p> <p>Furthermore, the California Education Code’s Prohibition of Discrimination states, in relevant part, that “[n]o person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion... in any program or activity conducted by an educational institution that receives, or benefits from, state financial assistance, or enrolls pupils who receive state student financial aid.”</p>

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California Department of Education, June 2019