

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.

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| <p>Please include lessons about American Jews as an ethnic minority and those who fled the Holocaust, oppression in the Middle East and who suffered discrimination in the former Soviet Union</p> | <p>Laurence Cohen</p> <p>I am a retired secondary public school teacher who taught in California public schools.</p> | <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". The word "apartheid" is an emotionally loaded term which makes a conclusion that Israel is an apartheid nation. This not a productive stance to take if an objective discussion of all the facts is the goal of this curriculum.</p> <p>Page 234, encourages teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine, but no voices critical of their perspectives and also 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.</p> <p>Page 237, uses unclear language that implies "Israel-Palestine" as a whole is an Arab country. On page 242, the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War is framed as fact, with no alternative perspectives.</p> <p>Pages 256, and 264 through 269 encourages 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> <p>The Introduction 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. It is amazing that nothing in this curriculum discusses the fact that Jews have been a despised minority throughout the World and have suffered oppression and mass murder at the hands of bigots down through many centuries. Adolph Hitler's Final Solution, The Holocaust, resulted in the murder of most of the Jews of Europe.</p> <p>A sound education regarding any issue requires that students be exposed to all viewpoints and all information regarding what is happening in the Middle East. Israel is a complex, vibrant democracy with its citizens holding a wide variety of political opinions which can be freely expressed.</p> <p>If the information presented to students explores only one point of view, then that is not education but indoctrination and the information presented should be properly regarded as propaganda.</p> |
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California Department of Education, June 2019