

**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)

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General

Lara Gabrielle Fowler

I write as a concerned Jewish citizen of California. This curriculum does nothing to address antisemitism, a growing problem nationally that we in California have seen firsthand. With the synagogue shootings in Poway and Pittsburgh occurring within the span of several months this year, a new Ethnic Studies curriculum that overlooks Jews and antisemitism entirely is unacceptable. There is not a single lesson about the Jewish community in the curriculum,

mentioning Jews only in passing. Ignorance about the Jewish people is still a major problem in the United States, one that I have personally experienced to a very painful extent. I am disappointed that nothing is said here that addresses what I and other Jews go through in this country. Additionally, the painful complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are jumped over to draw a conclusion that Boycott, Divest, Sanction is a viable answer. The curriculum:

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 (p. 234).

Uses unclear language that implies "Israel-Palestine" as a whole is an Arab country (p. 237).

Frames the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives (p. 242).

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. 256, 264-269).

This is hurtful to many of us, who have relatives and other familial and heritage ties to Israel. If BDS and Palestine is to be explored, it needs to be in the larger context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, because not doing so runs the risk of reinforcing antisemitic tropes that I, personally, have experienced firsthand. The only references to Jewish Americans are in passing or in conjunction with anti-Arabism. I urge you to add antisemitism to the curriculum and to modify the references to BDS.

California Department of Education, June 2019