

Dear Advisory Committee,

As a Social Studies teacher who teaches Ethnic Studies for four years, I am concerned that some of the ethnicities and their experiences are omitted from the proposed curriculum. I am particularly troubled that one of the largest group of students in California, the Armenian students, won't be able to learn about their own heritage and the contribution of the Armenian Americans to American History. As you know, LAUSD is the 2nd largest district in the nation that has a large number of Armenian American students, not to mention Glendale USD where Armenian American students make more than 50 % of the entire district's population. California is home to more than 3 million Armenians who moved to the United States escaping the horrors of the Armenian Genocide from 1915-1923.

Armenian Americans contributed to the United States History in the most positive way. There are many outstanding individuals that students need to know about such as writer, William Saroyan, philanthropist and businessman, Kirk Kerkorian, 35th governor of California, George Deukmejian, presidential speech writer and politician Kenneth Kachikian, singers such as Cher and Serj Tankian, athlete Andre Agassi and many others.

Students need to be taught the story of the Armenian Genocide and how Armenians arrived in the United States and their experiences and contributions. In 2017, April was officially declared Armenian History month by the LA country board of supervisors. This was a steppingstone to teach non-Armenian students about experiences of Armenian Americans.

The curriculum creators did not consider equity issue when they were writing Ethnic Studies Curriculum. As a teacher, I would have a hard time explaining to a 17-year-old that their ethnicity is not worth learning about. I currently have at least 4-5 students in each of my classes that are Armenian descent. I believe that the purpose of this course was to represent the great diversity of people in California. We as educators should be attentive to our students' needs and cannot favor some ethnic groups over the others. Although, I understand that it is almost impossible to include every single ethnicity into the curriculum, we need to do our best to represent the majority of our students who are sitting in our classrooms. Please reconsider and include the study of Armenian American culture into the curriculum.(Ch. 2 line 14-15, pg. 1 and Ch.3 line 17, pg.1)

I am also troubled that there is no information about the Holocaust anywhere in the Ethnic Studies Curriculum. Although I personally teach smaller number of Jewish students, to compare with Armenian students, I believe that as a society we have the responsibility to teach about the horrors of the genocides and the Holocaust. If not in Ethnic Studies, then where? Jewish community contributed to American history as well and needs to be included.

Finally, the proposed class length seems unrealistic to me. Based on my own teaching experience, teaching Ethnic studies in one semester does not allow students fully engage and learn about each of the proposed ethnicity. I believe this course should be a one-year course to fully immerse students into cultural experiences. Here is the outline I propose:

August-September- Identity

October-Hispanic/Latino/Chicano (Hispanic Heritage month 9/15-10/15)

November-December – Native Americans (Thanksgiving)

January-February-Black/ African American (Black History Month)

March-April – Armenian/ Jewish (Armenian History month; Armenian Genocide Day, Holocaust Remembrance Day)

May-June- Asian American (Asian History month)

Thank you for your time reading my comments.

I urge you to consider the needs of our students described above when making final changes into the curriculum.

--

Naira Panasyan

Ethnic Studies & AP Human Geography Teacher

NBCT Social Studies

Northridge Academy High School

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) |
|--|--|---|
| <i>[Enter the Chapter Number here, or just "General" for a comment that applies to the entire document.]</i> | <i>[Enter Your Name] [Enter the agency, organization, or business that you represent, if applicable.]</i> | <i>[Include the page and line number(s) here–Write your comment here]</i> |

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Page 2 of 3

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Ch. 3 , Ch. 2 and General | Naira Panasyan, Ethnic Studies Public School Teacher, Northridge Academy High School, LAUSD | <p>Ch. 2 line 14-15, pg. 1 and Ch.3 line 17, pg.1</p> <p>As the Social Studies teacher who teaches Ethnic Studies for four years, I am concerned that some of the ethnicities and their experiences are omitted from the proposed curriculum. I am particularly troubled that one of the largest group of students in California, the Armenian students, won't be able to learn about their own heritage and the contribution of the Armenian Americans to American History. As you know, LAUSD is the 2nd largest district in the nation that has a large number of Armenian American students, not to mention Glendale USD where Armenian American students make more than 50 % of the entire district's population. California is home to more than 3 million Armenians who moved to the United States escaping the horrors of the Armenian Genocide from 1915-1923.</p> <p>Armenian Americans contributed to the United States History in the most positive way. There are many outstanding individuals that students need to know about such as writer, William Saroyan, philanthropist and businessman, Kirk Kerkorian, 35th governor of California, George Deukmejian, presidential speech writer and politician Kenneth Kachikian, singers such as Cher and Serj Tankian, athlete Andre Agassi and many others.</p> <p>Students need to be taught the story of the Armenian Genocide and how Armenians arrived in the United States and their experiences. In 2017, April was officially declared Armenian History month by the LA country board of supervisors. This was a steppingstone to teach students about experiences of Armenian Americans.</p> <p>The curriculum creators did not consider equity issue when they were writing Ethnic Studies Curriculum. As a teacher, I would have a hard time explaining to a 17-year-old that their ethnicity is not worth learning about. I currently have at least 4-5 students in each of my classes that are Armenian descent. I believe that the purpose of this course was to represent the great diversity of people in California. We as educators should be attentive to our students' needs and cannot favor some ethnic groups over the others. Although, I understand that it is almost impossible to include every single ethnicity into the curriculum, we</p> |
|------------------------------|---|--|

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Page 3 of 3

| Chapter of Model Curriculum | Your Name and Affiliation | Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable) |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| | | need to do our best to represent the majority of our students who are sitting in our classrooms. Please reconsider and include the study of Armenian American culture into the curriculum. |
| General | Naira Panasyan, Ethnic Studies Public School Teacher, Northridge Academy High School, LAUSD | I am also troubled that there is no information about the Holocaust anywhere in the Ethnic Studies Curriculum. Although I personally teach smaller number of Jewish students, to compare with Armenian students, I believe that as a society we have the responsibility to teach about the horrors of the genocides and the Holocaust. If not in Ethnic Studies, then where? Jewish community contributed to American history as well and needs to be included. |
| General | Naira Panasyan, Ethnic Studies Public School Teacher, Northridge Academy High School, LAUSD | Class length : As a teacher, teaching Ethnic studies, I believe one semester is not enough to fully learn about each proposed ethnicities. I believe this course should be a one-year course to fully engage students. Here is the proposed outline: August-September- Identity October-Hispanic/Latino/Chicano (Hispanic Heritage month 9/15-10/15) November-December – Native Americans (Thanksgiving) January-February-Black/ African American (Black History Month) March-April – Armenian/ Jewish (Armenian History month; Holocaust Remembrance Day) May-June- Asian American (Asian History month) |
| | | |
| | | |