

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum May 2019 Draft

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	Janine Baer private citizen, lifelong Californian	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. While I understand that the main focus is on people of color, it does include many other groups; however, it leaves out the history of Jews in California. The important lessons children will learn about ethnic studies will be more complete if you include Jewish American history. Doing so would allow us to unite around shared values and learn from each others' experiences.</p> <p>For example, a recent book describes the attempt of Hitler to take over the United States by setting up pro-nazi groups in Los Angeles in the 1930s (see <i>Hitler in Los Angeles</i> by Steven J. Ross [2017]). I had never heard of this even though I grew up as a Jew in Los Angeles. The book explains that the U.S. government in the 1930s was not especially interested in stopping the nazi movement — which only was stopped when the U.S. declared war on Germany.</p>

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Chapter 4, Glossary	Janine Baer private citizen, lifelong Californian (continued)	<p><i>Page 2, lines 30 to 40</i></p> <p>This is a description of the BDS movement against Israeli policies. If the state's curriculum is going to mention Israel at all, it should also include that Israel was created because Jews were oppressed around the world, originally in Europe; after 1948, many Jews who had lived in North Africa and the Middle East were forced to flee, despite having lived in those countries for centuries (see JIMENA http://www.jimena.org/ for details). Over a half million escaped to Israel; others went to the U.S. That is a part of California's story and those immigrants are parts of our state's present-day demographic reality. I have relatives who escaped to Los Angeles from Morocco in the late 1950s.</p> <p>Most residents in the neighborhood where I grew up in post-World War II Los Angeles were Jews of European ancestry; some were Holocaust survivors. <i>Members of my own family were killed during World War II after a racist U.S. immigration policy would not allow them to escape to the safety of the United States as refugees.</i> Being "white" did not save them. Immigrants currently fleeing violence in Central America and the Middle East, who are not able to have asylum in the United States, remind me of my own Jewish family members' experiences.</p> <p>Similarly, since 1979, a large population of Iranian Jews moved into the same neighborhood where I grew up, the Pico-Robertson neighborhood, adding another chapter to the history of migrants fleeing oppression. The inclusion of Jewish American history in the Ethnic Studies curriculum would help school children understand how the present can be illuminated by the past.</p> <p>California students have a right to know why their world is the way it is by learning a full and complete history of the many groups who make up our state. For these reasons, I hope you will find a way to add some of the faces of the Jewish American experience into the final version.</p>
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