

## 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](mailto:ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov). You may contact Kenneth McDonald, Education Programs Consultant, at [kmcdonal@cde.ca.gov](mailto: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>	<b><i>[Include the page and line number(s) here—Write your comment here]</i></b>
Chapter 1, Introduction and Overview	Daniel Slate, Citizen of California	The curriculum describes its goals as appreciating diversity and eradicating hate and its correlates. The goal of ethnic studies is to create an appreciation for cultural diversity. I was thus disappointed to find that the proposed curriculum has no lessons about the Jewish People and the American Jewish experience, which are highly apropos to the contemplated curriculum. The history of the Jews has many instructive lessons for us all, and in a time in which, sadly, Jew-hatred (antisemitism) is on the rise, we as a society still need to exert ourselves to understand the Jewish experience.

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Chapter 2, Sample Course Models	Daniel Slate, Citizen of California	<p>Generally, there is remarkably little material on Jewish history. (There appear to be only brief asides like the one about Lionel Cohen on page 222, or the nod to Jewish immigration from the Muslim world on page 240, but no mention of hate crimes against Jews, or the longstanding history of discrimination against Jews in American life (whether in education, .)</p> <p>For instance, there is no section on stereotypes of Jews, despite the amply documented history that such stereotypes led to world-historical hate crimes against the Jews, such as the Nazi genocide (the Holocaust), the Soviet persecutions, and oppression in the Middle East and Europe. Such history could help illustrate for students how dangerous stereotypes can be, so I was surprised to find no mention of this in your proposed curriculum.</p> <p>I would urge the committee to include a lesson on Jews and Jewish Americans and their history. Not only are many of the state's school pupils from Jewish families, and their stories should be acknowledged, but everyone can learn from the tragedies and triumphs of Jewish American history, especially in an ethnic studies curriculum.</p>

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Chapter 2, Sample Course Models	Daniel Slate, Citizen of California	<p>Page 234, line 4957. The curriculum appears to ask the teacher to call students to action to join the Boycott, Divest, Sanction (BDS) movement against Israel. See my comments below, on the entry for Boycott, Divest, and Sanction entry in the Glossary and Bibliography.</p> <p>Page 234, Line 4958: There is a vague reference to “Comparative Border Studies: Palestine and Mexico,” that implies there is an equivalence between American immigration policy and Israeli security policy, though there may be a parallel in that both countries quite reasonably seek to stop terrorists from entering. America at present does not suffer from cross-border rocket assaults or kidnapping infiltrations.</p>
Chapter 2, Sample Course Models	Daniel Slate, Citizen of California	<p>Page 236, lines 5029-5032. The term “Israel-Palestine” is vague and does not describe any country; in the context of the paragraph, it also may lead students to inaccurate conclusions, such as thinking that Israel is an Arab-majority country.</p>
Chapter 2, Sample Course Models	Daniel Slate, Citizen of California	<p>Page 242. Lines 5159-5161. The curriculum appears to present as a fact only one side of a complex history. The 1948 war is also known as the War of Independence, or the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, or the First Arab-Israeli War. To call it the Palestine War is to adopt only one perspective on this war. With the advent of the State of Israel, Jews could return to their historic ethnic homeland and escape the persecution and oppression they suffered around the world for centuries.</p>
Chapter 2, Sample Course Models	Daniel Slate, Citizen of California	<p>Pages 256, 264-269. The curriculum calls on teachers to use a song-poem sharply critical of Israel, with no balancing content or positive views of Israel that Arab writers have published. There is also no content that includes criticism of Palestinian leaders, which Arab writers have published.</p>

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<b>Chapter of Model Curriculum</b>	<b>Your Name and Affiliation</b>	<b>Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)</b>
Glossary and Bibliography	Daniel Slate, Citizen of California	Page 1. There is, strangely, no entry for “antisemitism” or “anti-semitism,” the term used these days to describe hatred of Jews. Nor is there an entry for “Jew hatred.”

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Glossary and Bibliography	Daniel Slate, Citizen of California	<p>Page 2. It appears that the document gives an uncritical and incomplete description of the Boycott, Divest, and Sanction (BDS) movement against Israel, and simply adopts self-description the BDS movement has shared for public consumption. Others have claimed, credibly, that BDS has as its goal the destruction of the State of Israel. The BDS movement, if it were successful, would result in returning the Jewish People to conditions of stateless refugees, yet the glossary makes no mention of this. It is worth noting that the Jews have historically, for nearly two thousand years before 1948, been in the minority and an oppressed ethnic group in the societies in which they lived. The Jews are arguably the archetypical diaspora, with many, many Jews forced into exile by the Roman imperial oppressors, out of their homeland, the Land of Israel, to which many Jews have recently returned (this history has been noted by none other than the Dalai Lama, who asked Jews for advice for his own Tibetan diaspora, after they were forced from their homeland, on how they might one day return to their home). Given the history of the Jews, I would also think this proposed curriculum would include materials and lessons drawn from Jewish history, which records era after era, episode after episode of oppression and marginalization under the rule of different economic, political, cultural, and religious systems across the world — in other words, a historical record rich with material to teach the universal risk of oppression and hate. I am rather perplexed to not find any materials or counternarratives drawn from Jewish history in the proposed curriculum — it seems a surprising omission and silencing in a curriculum that seems so interested in giving voice to communities that through long stretches of history had none.</p> <p>Page 10. A similar issue appears under the “Liberation” entry — BDS’s self-description is uncritically accepted.</p>

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California Department of Education, June 2019