

## **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.

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[General]	<i>[Oussama Mokeddem]</i> <i>[Council on American-Islamic Relations, California]</i>	<p>To Whom It May Concern,</p> <p>I am writing you in regards to the CA Department of Education Instructional Quality Commission’s proposed Ethnic Studies model curriculum.</p> <p>As some who works in the realm of civil rights and education, I would highly encourage a revision and reformation of the already proposed curriculum to adequately represent the historical narrative of the communities and concepts presented.</p> <p>The way in which Islamophobia, a phenomenon that spans across many racial/ethnic/national lines, is limited to just the Arab-American experience within the proposed curriculum is a perfect example of how much nuance is lacked on the topic. Including a more nuanced and wide-ranging analysis on the phenomenon in the section on African American History, as Islam has been historically sustained in America through the experience and struggle of the Black community, would provide a historical perspective on Islamophobia that allows students to have a more substantive understanding of the phenomenon.</p> <p>Furthermore, the inclusion of BDS as a movement is essential to the narrative of Arab – and more specifically, Palestinian – Americans in the United States. As a movement that was employed throughout history (as seen with the example of Apartheid South Africa), BDS is a crucial aspect of the Palestinian-American experience. I would go as far as to argue that BDS has been a testament to the willingness of Palestinian-Americans and allied communities to engage in a peaceful macro-level approach to holding the state of Israel accountable for the human rights violations it has committed against Palestinian civilians, which the United Nations has recognized on a number of occasions. BDS is a result of Palestinian-Americans realizing that there have been selfish forces throughout their history that betrayed their community’s trust and aimed to pit their community against that of their Jewish brothers and sisters, leading to waves of anti-Semitism. The employment of BDS methods by communities spanning across the United States – including but not limited to Palestinian, Jewish, Black,</p>
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		<p>Latino, and other multiethnic communities – is proof that people are coming together to pressure state actors, rather than fall into the traps of those who aim to exploit human beings belonging to different ethnic and religious groups and pit them against each other. There must be a more nuanced historical understanding of this phenomenon present in our school curricula.</p> <p>With that, I would like to add that the Jewish-American experience and the waves of anti-Semitism experienced by that community, must also (like Islamophobia) be addressed in a critical and historically accurate way. The way through which it is currently presented in the proposed curriculum does a disservice to the experience of the Jewish-American community, as it does not allot that community the proper nuance and context necessary to understand the tragedies they have historically experienced, and how we can work to educate our young people to embody a curriculum that allows them to critically understand this experience and prevent such things from occurring in the future.</p> <p>I thank you for your consideration, and urge you to reach out to me regarding these suggestions, as our team is dedicated to the research and efforts necessary to properly develop a curriculum that accurately represents the beautiful diversity and culmination of experiences present in our state of California.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Oussama Mokeddem</p>

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California Department of Education, June 2019