

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

Name: **Dusan Djordjevich**

San Mateo, CA 94402

Relevant Background:

- Born and raised in California
- Current resident (San Mateo) with two children in public elementary school
- Former high school history teacher (University High School, San Francisco, 2005-2007); courses included the history of Mexico, history of Islam, modern European history
- MA in History (Stanford University), PhD Candidate in History (Stanford University)
 - Completed all requirements for doctorate except dissertation
 - Courses taught included the dissolution of Yugoslavia; the history of ethnic cleansing; writing course in the required freshman “CIV” program (Cultures, Ideas, and Values)

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Name	Comment
General	Dusan Djordjevich	<p>This model curriculum does not lend itself well to line-by-line comments. It is an ideological document, and its problems are holistic. The <i>LA Times</i>' editorial board is correct to find that the curriculum is “an exercise in groupthink, designed to proselytize and inculcate more than to inform and open minds” and as such “is in bad need of an overhaul” (8/4/19). This is not a document that can be fixed by tinkering around the edges: amending a one-sided definition here, abandoning a few self-parodying “x”-coinages there, or adding in a few more ethnic groups whose grievances the draft neglected. Clearly, such tinkering is what the authors are hoping for: They’ve produced a radical document as an opening bid, in the hopes that the final version will be watered down a bit but still satisfactory from their standpoint as a means to “proselytize and inculcate” students with their own highly partisan, ideological, and contested understanding of history and society. Those with stronger and broader criticisms can expect to be accused of being part of the institutional racism and cisheteropatriarchy that the curriculum claims it is challenging.</p> <p>The State Board of Education should not be cowed by this prospect. <u>The right thing to do is to start over, with a new first draft and a new advisory board that is truly balanced</u> in reflecting the diverse range of legitimate, scholarly, and well-intentioned viewpoints that exist in the academy, in high schools, and among California students and families of all ethnicities about how best to meet the objective of “preparing pupils to be global citizens with an appreciation for the contributions of multiple cultures.”</p>

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Page 2 of 2

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Name	Comment
General (continued)	Dusan Djordjevich	I studied the modern history of ethnic conflict in the Balkans in depth (see “Relevant Background” above). Comparisons with the United States must be made carefully. But I can say that reading this model curriculum, I am reminded of well-intentioned attempts by the Yugoslav authorities to instill a sense of “Brotherhood and Unity” (as the slogan went) among the country’s different nationalities by promoting in schools a narrow and rigid interpretation of history and society, couched within a jargon-laden ideological framework that bears some similarity (and intellectual lineages) to the Critical Race Theory informing this model curriculum. With respect to brotherhood and unity, the results were, shall we say, counter-productive. It is painful to think that similar mistakes may be made in California today.

California Department of Education, June 2019