

## **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.

# Public Input Template–2019 Health Education Framework

Page 2 of 7

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
<p><i>Write “General” if your comment isn’t about one specific chapter.</i></p>	<p>Harry Stark, Ph.D. Adjunct Faculty California State University, Northridge</p>	<p>A “Bigot” is one who is an “intolerant adherent of a creed or view” (Oxford Dictionary). Marginalizing a group of people (Jews) by denying them the right to claim bias against them based on their Jewish-ness or affiliation with the Jewish state of Israel is an expression of “bigotry”, more specifically, anti-Semitism. This follows the logic that a lack of direct aggression does not remove the presence of prejudice or bigotry. However, the BDS movement and the directions within this proposed curriculum does not avoid purposeful efforts against the lone Jewish state (Israel). Information is provided to undermine any claim Jews have for their native homeland, which furthers the efforts to erase Jewish autonomy and Jews themselves from this area. Indeed, adherents of the BDS movement have been very clear: The Jewish people have no right to self-determination in their native homeland.</p> <p>Disallowing people to decide what offends them and how they wish to be addressed has become a banner cry for many who have been abused throughout history as evidence of continued oppression and bigotry. Excising one group from recognition for oppression is equivalent to advancing the oppression again.</p> <p>Students passing through public high schools enter my classroom in the hopes of gaining critical thinking skills and hope to use those skills to address the world in which they live. Denying them access to critical information contributes to making them believe adhering to the view that Jews are fair game for bias is acceptable. People need to be able to think and in order to do that they need to experience safety and the data with which to contemplate the issues at hand; your proposed curriculum does not provide either.</p> <p>If you have read this far... bravo!</p>

# Public Input Template–2019 Health Education Framework

Page 3 of 7

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Glossary		<b>Page 2, lines 29-40</b> – This section features a definition which clearly promotes the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel. It claims the purpose of BDS is to “establish freedom for Palestinians living under apartheid conditions.” It then parrots more one-sided BDS talking points, offering no critical perspectives about this campaign of hate, including that its true purpose, as <a href="#">stated</a> by its co-founder and leading activists, is to end the existence of Israel, the only Jewish state.
Chapter 2		<b>Page 234, lines 4956-4958</b> – This section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine but no voices critical of their perspectives (p. 234).</li> <li>• Promotes a false equivalence between Israel's efforts to stop terrorists from entering communities to murder innocent people, and U.S. policies on the border with Mexico.</li> </ul>
Chapter 2		<b>Page 237, lines 5024-5032</b> – This section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use unclear language that implies “Israel-Palestine” as a whole is an Arab country.</li> </ul>
Chapter 2		<b>Page 242, lines 5157-5161</b> – This section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frames the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives.</li> </ul>

# Public Input Template–2019 Health Education Framework

Page 4 of 7

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Chapter 2		<p><b><i>Page 256, lines 5477-5494, pages 264-270, lines 5692-5830</i></b> – These sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage teachers to use an anti-Israel poem which insinuates Jews control the media and use it to manipulate the public - a common, and quintessential, antisemitic slur.</li> </ul>
General		<p>The <a href="#">Introduction</a> of the proposed curriculum states that “[t]he implementation of Ethnic Studies presents an opportunity for teachers to...enable students to develop a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusion, and aids in the eradication of bigotry, hate, and racism.” Despite this stated goal, the curriculum does not feature a single lesson about the Jewish community or antisemitism, mentioning Jews only in passing. With antisemitism rising and ignorance about the Jewish people still a significant problem in our society, the exclusion of Jews and antisemitism from this curriculum is deeply disappointing and educationally deficient.</p>

## Public Input Template–2019 Health Education Framework

Page 5 of 7

General	<p>The biased sections and omissions listed above run counter to the stated purpose of the curriculum, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Section 1(a): The State of California is committed to providing excellent educational opportunities to all its pupils;</li><li>• Section 1(f): The state’s educational standards should be guided by core values of equity, inclusiveness, and universally high expectations; and</li><li>• Section 1(g): The state is committed to its efforts to provide all pupils with excellent educational opportunities, without regard to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, income, sexual orientation, or disability.</li></ul> <p>Additionally, California Education Code § 233.5(a) provides:</p> <p>"Each teacher shall endeavor to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice, patriotism, and a true comprehension of the rights, duties, and dignity of American citizenship, and <i>the meaning of equality and human dignity, including the promotion of harmonious relations</i>, kindness toward domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures, to teach them to avoid idleness, profanity, and falsehood, and to instruct them in manners and morals and the principles of a free government." (Emphasis added).</p> <p>The rise of antisemitism within our culture, which has been accompanied by an increasing general threat to freedom, human dignity and harmonious relations, is evidenced by the recent attacks of Jews in synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway, as well as against other American citizens in El Paso and Dayton. The curriculum’s failure to address antisemitism as a form of bigotry thus falls short of the above directive.</p> <p>Furthermore, the California Education Code’s <a href="#">Prohibition of Discrimination</a> states, in relevant part, that “[n]o person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, <b>race or ethnicity, religion</b>... in any program or activity conducted by an</p>
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## Public Input Template–2019 Health Education Framework

Page 6 of 7

		<p>educational institution that receives, or benefits from, state financial assistance, or enrolls pupils who receive state student financial aid.”</p> <p>Similarly, the California Education Code’s Prohibition Instruction includes a provision on <a href="#">Prejudice</a> that states, in relevant part, that “[a] teacher shall not give instruction and a school district shall not sponsor any activity that promotes a discriminatory bias on the basis of <b>race or ethnicity</b>, gender, <b>religion</b>, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation...” This provision, like the Prohibition of Discrimination mentioned above, illustrates the problems inherent in the proposed curriculum, and are not an exhaustive list of the provisions of the California Education Code with which the proposed curriculum appears to be in conflict.</p> <p>The model curriculum not only fails to address antisemitism as a form of bigotry but actually includes thinly veiled antisemitic rhetoric and promotes the discriminatory BDS movement. Additionally, the model curriculum simultaneously fails to provide balance with regard to Israel or any education at all about Jews. Therefore, it effectively discriminates against Jewish and Israeli students in violation of the education code. Additionally, by marginalizing Jewish and Israeli students, the model curriculum violates the three above-referenced declarations of the California state legislature in enacting the legislation.</p> <p>We note the critical <a href="#">LA Times’ review of the curriculum</a>, and hope that the values of inclusion prevail over hatred, division, and misinformation. <b>In closing, we strongly urge you to review and revise the curriculum to remove bias and to educate students about American Jews as an ethnic group, including those who fled the Holocaust, oppression in the Middle East, and discrimination in the former Soviet Union. Furthermore, we call on you to create safeguards that will prevent similar bias and omissions in this and other California state curriculums going forward.</b></p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical issue.</p>
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**Public Input Template–2019 Health Education Framework**  
Page 7 of 7

California Department of Education, June 2019