

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. 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	Rose Parekh <i>Parent and former high school teacher</i>	As a parent and former high school science teacher, I am extremely disturbed by the framing of issues in this curriculum. The model courses read like an indoctrination manual rather than an outline of an educational course. The curriculum even admits it is written with the goal of turning students into activists, and the courses make it extremely clear what type of activists the authors are hoping to create. Our public school system should not be turned into a platform for creating political activists – for any perspective. The topics are not even restricted to those of ethnic studies. The Occupy Movement, environmental justice causes, BDS, and LGBTQ movements are all presented as social protests or movements to study and learn from. The merit of the movements or their effects is never once questioned. The curriculum presented here is not an Ethnic Studies curriculum; it is a collection of everything the most extreme left of the political spectrum wants with no other perspective given and no debate expected or desired (is it even allowed?). There is no provision in the courses for students to debate a complex issue, a skill students desperately need. Students gain the most valuable experience from researching and arguing the side they do not naturally feel inclined to.

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2	Rose Parekh <i>Parent and former high school teacher</i>	p. 15-23 – Identifying the power structures that have contributed to students' lives without an at least equal focus on how their own and their parents' individual choices have affected their lives tells students that have no agency and their life outcome is determined solely by external power structures. That is not true and is definitely not the message we want to teach teenagers who are developing their sense of self and responsibility.
2	Rose Parekh <i>Parent and former high school teacher</i>	p. 108-111 To truly facilitate critical thinking, a discussion of statistics and how they can be manipulated, as well as statistics showing possible negatives of immigration, should be a part of this lesson. While it is true that immigrants from Mexico and Central America often take jobs that would go unfilled at their <i>current wage</i> , there is also evidence that a larger supply of low-skilled labor drives down wages for citizens and immigrants who are working in construction, farming, housework, and other fields that depend on a strong back and smarts rather than a college degree. It is possible for two things to be true simultaneously: immigration may show positive economic effects for the U.S. as a whole AND drive down wages for lower skilled labor, especially in specific markets. This situation is complex; treating it so simplistically is both factually wrong and intellectually dishonest. The site students are directed to clearly makes one and only one case: immigration at any level is always a social good. But all societies have shown strain when the percentage of foreign-born individuals reaches a tipping point. What if there were fewer “low-skilled” recent immigrants, American citizens and legal residents were paid higher wages because there was more constriction in the labor market, and as a result Trump was never elected? High schools should explore the complexity of issues, not falsely squeeze issues into a simplified, pre-approved box of one political side.

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General	Rose Parekh <i>Parent and former high school teacher</i>	I could go on and on showing the one-sidedness of virtually every page of this 300-page document. Due to time constraints, however, I will focus on these two points: 1) All students, including those from the four backgrounds highlighted in these model courses, should feel the great ability they have to chart their own courses in life. Teaching them – formally – that their future is almost predetermined by systems of oppression is untrue and an indefensible position for public schools. 2) This curriculum eschews teaching students research skills (giving a website with links to follow is NOT research), critical thinking, and debate skills. The history contained here is important and should be taught but students must be asked to think about that history, come to a conclusion, and then defend that conclusion. Instead, this curriculum clearly expects students to repeat a desired phraseology and come to prescribed answer. Ideally, students would not only to be expected to defend their own conclusions but to defend an <i>opposing</i> position – with evidence – in debate; that is where true exercise of the mind lies. To adopt the Ethnic Studies Model Courses is to abandon that ideal in public schools. It is to surrender the aim of teaching <i>logic</i> in favor of the small goal of indoctrinating political parroting. Don't vote for that, no matter your politics.