

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

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	Suzette Brown, Concerned California parent	<p>I am a parent of a 10-month-old boy who will attend California public schools in a few years. Some of the curriculum outlined below is worrisome to me as it generates anti-Israel and anti-Semitic sentiments. In light of deadly anti-Semitic hate crimes in both Pittsburgh and Poway, California, it is imperative for California schools to promote inclusive education that specifically mentions the Jewish people as a unique ethnic group in the state. Please rewrite some of the curriculum as it directly affects my family and 1.2 million Jews in California (3% of total population). The inclusion of BDS & pro-BDS viewpoints is disheartening and promulgates a negative opinion of Jews as being evil and colonialist. By singling out and boycotting the only Jewish state in the world and not countries with more serious human rights abuses, this curriculum will only serve to foster an environment of hatred against Jews and directly cause harm to my child.</p> <p>Also, I would recommend adding lessons about an overlooked ethnic group, American Jews. This would include Jews who fled the Holocaust (before and after), Jews who fled oppression or were forcibly removed from Arab countries in the Middle East, and Jews who fled discrimination in the former Soviet Union. There is a glaring omission of the large Jewish immigrant wave from Eastern Europe in the late 19th-early 20th century. I urge the state Department of Education to help fight hatred against American Jews by educating students on these topics. American Jews face a disproportionate amount of hate crimes against them by white supremacists and others.</p>

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		This has created fear in our community and within our family personally. Please consider my suggestions on the specific sections I have noted below.
Pg. 2 of Glossary and Bibliography	Suzette Brown, Concerned California parent	Page 2 lines 30-40 —Please remove the section pertaining to BDS from the curriculum. While people are entitled to their own viewpoints on this issue, the promotion of BDS and singling out the only Jewish state for a boycott fosters anti-Israel sentiments and encourages anti-Semitism and hate crimes. The US Congress has in fact voted against BDS, so this would be in opposition to our federal policies. The BDS movement promotes divisiveness and hate; instead, I would recommend highlighting instances and initiatives of Jews and Arabs working together harmoniously in Israel, the only country in the Middle East where this happens.
Arab American Studies Course Outline	Suzette Brown, Concerned California parent	<p>Page 234 lines 4956 & 4957—This section instructs teachers to promote BDS and the pro-BDS group, Direct Action for Palestine. This guides teachers to single out and boycott the only Jewish state in the world while ignoring the human abuses of any other non-Jewish state.</p> <p>Page 234 line 4958—This section is highly inappropriate as there are very few similarities between the US-Mexican border and the border between Israel and territories under Palestinian control. Israel has suffered from suicide bombings and terrorism, which it has mostly successfully stopped with border control. Mexican and Central American migrants are crossing the border as refugees or seeking better economic opportunities. Most people would agree the US has not suffered from suicide bombings or even mass shootings by Mexicans. In fact, the only similarity is that the US and Israel have both created border walls. That is the end of the analogy, so I do not believe an entire lesson plan should be based on this premise.</p>
Arab American Studies Course Outline	Suzette Brown, Concerned California parent	Page 237 line 5030 —The use of "Israel-Palestine" creates confusion and suggests there is a Arab state of this name. This should be clarified to reflect the fact that Israel is a Jewish state, and Arabs comprise ~20% of the state, with a higher percentage in the Palestinian territories.

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The History of Arab Immigration to the United States	Suzette Brown, Concerned California parent	Page 242 lines 5154 to 5163 —This whole section highlights the Palestinian narrative of the founding of the state of Israel. I would recommend adding that many Arabs left on their own accord, and the ones who stayed were offered citizenship, unlike Jews in surrounding Arab countries. During the same period, 850,000 Jewish people were “dispossessed or dispersed” out of surrounding Middle Eastern nations. The curriculum does not mention these Jews, who have been nearly written out of all history books. A truly inclusive curriculum would include their stories, as this would provide a better overview of migration and dispersal of immigrants from the Middle East.
Further Resources	Suzette Brown, Concerned California parent	Page 256, 264-269 —These pages include a song for teachers to use that harshly and unfairly criticizes Israel as a “colonial” nation. This falsely equates Israel with white supremacy colonialism, when in fact there are many Jews of color, as well as many Jewish refugees that fled European colonialism after the Holocaust. It parrots propaganda promoted by the Palestinian leadership without providing factual context. The curriculum offers this one-sided view without including any songs promoting the Jewish people (including those of color) and the great accomplishments of the state of Israel in the face of adversity. Perhaps include a song written by a Jewish refugee that fled the Holocaust. In addition, if criticism of the Israeli government is included, then content criticizing the Palestinian leadership should also be included, as neither side is perfect. These sort of one-sided attacks prove to be dangerous and create anti-Israel, and therefore anti-Semitic, sentiments that lead to hate crimes against Jews.