

**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.

**Chapter of Model Curriculum**

**Your Name and Affiliation**

**Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)**

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*Yaeir Heber, Oakland resident, educator/school administrator*

***[Include the page and line number(s) here—Write your comment here]***

The [Introduction](#)

The introduction to the curriculum states that, "The 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, mentioning Jews only in passing. With antisemitism rising and ignorance about the Jewish people still a major problem in our society, the exclusion of Jews from this curriculum is deeply disappointing. Omitting this very real, very recent history of marginalization and oppression over-simplifies issue and reinforces ideas of black and white--which is precisely what this curriculum hopes to address

The [sample lesson plans](#) for the curriculum:

Encourage teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine, but no voices critical of their perspectives (p. 234).

Promote 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 (p. 234).

Use unclear language that implies "Israel-Palestine" as a whole is an Arab country (p. 237).

Frame the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives (p. 242).

Encourage teachers to use a poem featuring harsh criticism of Israel, but no content offering a positive perspective about Israel or criticism of Palestinian leaders (p. 256, 264-269).

## Glossary

A [glossary](#) for the curriculum includes a definition of 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" without any critical perspective, including that a stated goal of much of the movement is actually to end the existence of the State of Israel--A state created as a refuge for an oppressed people, and a return of colonially occupied land to its indigenous people.

## General

The notion that a curriculum focused on understanding marginalization, its mechanisms, and effects, that fails to discuss one of the most marginalized people in all of history unfortunately reveals a very disturbing bias, and marginalizing effect of its authors. I don't believe it possible for someone educated in these matters to accidentally omit the Jewish people's story from this narrative. Thus the question of why such an omission is present must be asked and answered candidly. The outcomes on students thinking of such a omission and underlying anti-semitic bias would be awful. I strongly urge to revision of this curriculum to equitably analyze conflicts and include the extremely relevant narrative whose omission can only be interpreted in one way.

California Department of Education, June 2019