

From: Raphael Londner On Behalf Of Raphael Londner  
Sent: Friday, August 9, 2019 8:26 AM  
To: Kenneth McDonald Ethnic Studies  
Cc: Cliff Rudnick  
Subject: RE: Question about the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Mr. McDonald,

Thank you for the information. In that situation, I would advise the curriculum review committee to thoroughly review and remove any topic that might seem too ambiguous and politically charged in order to leave teachers to their own devices and leave too much room for interpretation of the suggested topics.

For instance, what is the underlying objective of comparing the Israel-Palestine and US-Mexico borders ? Is it to highlight the similarity of a “border wall”? If so, why target the Israel-Palestine wall specifically ? As pointed out at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Border\\_barrier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Border_barrier), there are many other countries with border walls in the world – including in the Arab/Muslim world, such as the Egypt-Gaza, Iran-Pakistan, Saudia Arabia-Yemen and Saudi Arabia-Iraq border walls – with various and unrelated objectives so why highlight this one particularly? Because Trump made mentioned “Mexican terrorists” when touting his border wall (not yet in place, btw) and that compares well with the Israel-Palestine wall, built for anti-terrorism reasons?

Regardless of your political inclinations, I am sure you can see how addressing this single “recommended” topic has the potential to bring current political debates (and its associated heated discussions) into the classroom very easily. Is fostering debate about current domestic and international political subjects one of the unstated curriculum objectives? In my opinion, students would rather spend more time studying and learning world history than weighing on current domestic and international political subjects, especially knowing the relative weakness of international history and geography in US education (compared to other countries, especially European ones).

I have already relayed my observations and concerns about the curriculum in a separate email to and I am adding this one about the Mexico-Israel border comparison, since I purposely left it out in my original remarks given the absence of contextually relevant information about the topic at stake.

Best regards,  
Raphael Londner.

From: Kenneth McDonald  
Sent: Friday, August 9, 2019 7:52 AM  
To: Raphael Londner  
Cc: Cliff Rudnick  
Subject: RE: Question about the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

There are no plans to do what you requested. The Legislature only funded this as a one-time effort to create a guidance document, rather than an ongoing project with support to create a more

comprehensive resource. However, it is possible that third-party publishers and organizations may create such resources to support the model curriculum in the future.

Kenneth McDonald  
Education Programs Consultant  
Curriculum Frameworks Unit  
California Department of Education

From: Raphael Londner On Behalf Of Raphael Londner  
Sent: Friday, August 9, 2019 12:28 AM  
To: Kenneth McDonald  
Cc: Cliff Rudnick  
Subject: RE: Question about the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Mr. McDonald,

I sincerely appreciate your taking the time to reply to my question and providing the useful information below. Do you know if there are any plans to provide further resources and materials to help teachers build the content of topics they would like to highlight to their students based on the lists available for each sample course? If so, would this effort be done for every single, sample topic?

Thank you in advance for your feedback.

Best regards,  
Raphael Londner.  
From: Kenneth McDonald  
Sent: Thursday, August 8, 2019 1:14 PM  
To:  
Cc: Cliff Rudnick  
Subject: RE: Question about the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

The Arab American Studies course outline was provided by a member of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee that developed the draft. I can't speak to their intent, but the lists of sample topics was provided to give teachers ideas for topics they could further develop as they prepare course content in this area. I do not have any additional information to give you.

Kenneth McDonald  
Education Programs Consultant  
Curriculum Frameworks Unit  
California Department of Education

From: Raphael Londner On Behalf Of Raphael Londner  
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2019 12:35 AM  
To: CFIRD  
Subject: Question about the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Hello,

I am a US citizen and San Jose, CA resident, with children currently going to public school. I have looked at the proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum with great interest and think it's a great initiative.

In the sample course model, I found a reference to a "Comparative Border Studies: Palestine and Mexico", which I found interesting.

Is the intent of this sample topic to look at potential similarities between the Israel-Palestine border and the US-Mexico border? Which research material (or other) do you recommend teachers to use if they are interested in highlighting this topic to their students?

Thanks in advance for your feedback.

Best regards,  
Raphael.