

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	Saul Ferster, Moraga Resident	While discussing numerous other types of discrimination against ethnic minorities, the Ethnic Studies Course Outline fails to mention anti-Semitism at all, except in a passing reference under the topic Pacific Islander Studies. Jews have historically been discriminated against as an ethnic minority, and in recent years instances of anti-Semitism have increased exponentially in the U.S. and around the world. The white supremacist murders of Jewish worshipers in synagogues in Pittsburgh, PA, and Poway, CA, to name just a recent few. The failure to include anti-Semitism as a class of hate and oppression toward a minority ethnic group is unjustified.
Page 238, Line 5071-73	Saul Ferster, Moraga Resident	These lines seem to equate Direct Action Front for Palestine and Black Lives Matter, raise the “Call to Boycott, Divest, and Sanction Israel,” and list “Comparative Border Studies: Palestine and Mexico.” No context is given to these topics to ensure an even handed presentation. What appears to be a clearly anti-Israel slant throughout the entire document, suggests that these topics will be further used to demonize Israel and Jews by ignoring the complexity of the multiple issues involved.

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Page 246, lines 5275-77	Saul Ferster, Moraga Resident	The creation of the State of Israel is referred to by its Arabic pejorative, the Nakba, for “Catastrophe,” which is from the Arab view point, and the “1948 Palestine War,” a phrase I have never seen before. What is clearly missing is the 1948 Israel War of Independence, which is how it is described by Israelis and much of the rest of the world. Of course, not only is this anti-Israel bias once again demonstrated, but the complex history running up to that war, from the late 19 th and early 20 th century European pogroms resulting in Zionism, the Nazi ethnic cleansing of Europe’s Jews, 1/3 of world Jewry, by their slaughter because they were a despised ethnic minority, and the failure of the rest of the world to give them refuge, is all ignored. I’m not saying that only the Jewish/Israeli perspective should be considered and discussed, and I agree that the Arab’s viewpoint of the events as a Nakba should as well, but the Jewish side of this complex issue should not be totally ignored as if it did not exist.
Page 273, Lines 5917-20	Saul Ferster, Moraga Resident	The quote from Palestinian rapper Shadia Mansour once again takes one side of the conflict against the other, continues to demonize the State of Israel, and raises anti-Semitic tropes. No other country in the world, many with much worse human rights records than Israel, the only Jewish country, is singled out for the same demonization. This curriculum advances one political viewpoint, and totally ignores the other. Rather than encouraging students to use their own powers of analysis and discussion, it lends itself to simple anti-Israel indoctrination.

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Glossary, page 2, lines 30-40	Saul Ferster, Moraga Resident	A biased definition of the Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions movement is presented which, again without context, places it in a heroic light as “a global social movement that currently aims to establish freedom for Palestinians living under apartheid conditions.” In truth, the movement is controversial, with some anti-Semitic components and proponents, as exemplified by the common chant at rallies, “From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will Be Free”, thus calling for the destruction of Israel. Once again, there should be a balanced presentation of all the issues involved, and not just an anti-Israel indoctrination of high school students.