

From: Abby Levin
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2019 10:46 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: Public Comment on Ethnic Studies Curriculum from Contra Costa County CA

Please see the attached document. I am very concerned about the curriculum ignores the existence and experience of Jewish Americans. I am also concerned about how it highlights BDS, a movement that encourages hate and division. I am concerned that this curriculum will lead to more stigmatization of Jewish students and more antisemitism in the schools and among our youth. As a child growing up in the California public school system I experienced antisemitism firsthand and now as a parent I am concerned for my children.

Abigail Levin
Contra Costa County, CA

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)
Glossary	<i>Abigail Levin Contra Costa County, California</i>	Lines 9-16 - The glossary definition includes BDS which should not be in the curriculum. The glossary definition is 4x as long as any other definition in the glossary because it not only defines BDS, but it includes multiple BDS talking points while offering no critical perspectives about this campgin of hate which seeks to end Israel's existence. It is not a definition, it is anti-Israel propaganda. Please remove BDS and other anti-Israel bias from the model curriculum. It is not appropriate in California public schools ethnic studies curriculum. It will promote antisemitism and stigmatism of Jewish students and Israeli-American

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
		<p>students. There has been a rise in antisemitism locally/nationally/globally. Please do not contribute to it.</p> <p>In my county, a young man by the name of Ross Farca threatened to commit a mass shooting at a synagogue. He was arrested and was found to have an assault rifle, but he is out on bail. Anti-semitism is alive and well in California and state curriculum should not encourage it : https://patch.com/california/concord-ca/concord-man-accused-threatening-mass-synagogue-shooting-pd</p>
Arab American Course Outline	<i>Abigail Levin Contra Costa County, California</i>	<p>I have numerous concerns about this section and the anti-semitic and anti-Israel sentiment that is expressed in it. I find the following area particularly offensive and misinformed:</p> <p>Encourage teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine, but no voices critical of their perspectives (p. 234).</p> <p>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. A better and more accurate comparison would be U.S. policies on the border with Mexico and the U.S policies regarding European Jews World War II who tried to seek asylum in the United States but were turned away due to anti-semitism within the United States. (p. 234).</p> <p>Use unclear language that implies "Israel-Palestine" as a whole is an Arab country (p. 237).</p> <p>Frame the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives (p. 242).</p> <p>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).</p> <p>Encourages students to study Linda Sarsour who has refused to Louis Farrakhan and his hate speech against Jewish people.</p>
General	<i>Abigail Levin</i>	<p>What about students who are Israeli-Americans? How would they be treated by their classmates after such a lesson plan? What about the valid experiences of</p>

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
	<i>Contra Costa County, California</i>	their families in Israel which has been completely ignored by the proposed curriculum? What if they have relatives who have been killed by a suicide bomber while they were just riding a bus on their way to work or school? What if they have relatives who escaped Nazi occupied Poland and tried to go to the United States but were denied entry and instead ended up in what is now Israel? Were they not behaving as rational actors by going someplace where they would not be murdered? This curriculum does not attempt to tell both sides of the story and does not attempt to explain an incredibly complex and long history of conflict and generations of oppression of Jewish communities in Europe and the Arab world.
General	<i>Abigail Levin Contra Costa County, California</i>	The <u>Introduction</u> of the proposed 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. How can this lesson plan promote inclusion if it purposely excludes the Jewish community and their history?
General	<i>Abigail Levin Contra Costa County, California</i>	I urge the state to follow their goals of a curriculum which promotes diversity and inclusion by adding a lesson about American Jewish community as an ethnic group, including those who fled the Holocaust, who have relatives who were murdered in the holocaust, have relatives who fled the tyrannical oppression and pogroms of pre-World War II anti-semitic Europe, the Arab Jewish community who were kicked out of their homelands or fled the constant oppression they faced due to their religion, and the discrimination Jewish people experienced in the former Soviet Union.
General	<i>Abigail Levin Contra Costa County, California</i>	Was a Jewish person on the committee that developed this curriculum? If so, please have that person explain to the Jewish community how this curriculum was developed. If not, please add a Jewish person to this committee.