

## 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)
General	<i>Dan Stepenosky, Ed.D., Superintendent Las Virgenes Unified School District</i>	On behalf of the students, staff, and community of the Las Virgenes Unified School District, which serves the cities of Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Westlake Village, and unincorporated areas of northern Los Angeles County, I would like to share my very significant concerns regarding the draft of the 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, (ESMC). It is my request that the ESMC only move forward with serious and substantive revisions. ESMC comes from Assembly Bill 2016, which was passed by the governor of California on September 13, 2016. In that Assembly Bill, the legislature had several findings and declarations which included, Section 1-A states that the State of California is committed to providing excellent educational opportunities to all of its pupils, which I could not agree with more. Section 1-F states that educational standards should be guided by core values of equity, inclusiveness, and universally high expectations.

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		<p>My concerns with the draft curriculum, which are also shared by leaders of on our Board of Education, local city council members, and local state legislators Senator Henry Stern, Senator Ben Allen, Assemblymember Jessie Gabriel, and all members of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus, are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The Commission’s decision to exclude antisemitism and the Armenian genocide from the draft curriculum marginalizes the American Jewish and American Armenian experiences, amongst others.</li><li>b. The ESMC draft advances an extreme and politically motivated biased point of view that delegitimizes the existence of the State of Israel while also delivering support of the Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions (BDS) movement.</li><li>c. The ESMC draft provides an extreme, politically motivated definition of “Capitalism” that aligns this foundational element of our economic system as being comparable to the horrific ills of “racism” and “white supremacy”.</li><li>d. The ESMC draft does not present a balanced perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.</li><li>e. The ESMC draft does not provide substance to the very serious and growing issue of anti-Semitism.</li><li>f. The ESMC draft uses an anti-Semitic trope.</li></ul>
		<p>Certainly, the goal of an ethnic studies course would be to be inclusive and balanced, and this draft curriculum is not sufficiently so at this point. In conclusion, a course on Ethnic Studies has the potential to positively impact and enrich the educational experience and the engagement of students across California; therefore, it is essential to get this right and to be inclusive, sensitive, and supportive of all of our California residents and communities while encouraging and engaging in rigorous academic processes. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information. I can be reached at 818-878-5225, or <a href="mailto:dstepenosky@lvusd.org">dstepenosky@lvusd.org</a>.</p>

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California Department of Education, June 2019