

## 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	Troy Ault, Resident, Oakland	I grew up in the 90's and 2000's in schools that taught kids about slavery and Jim Crow; taught about women's suffrage, Japanese internment and the Chinese Exclusion Act; taught about indigenous peoples being wiped out by small pox brought by Europeans and about Native Americans being forcibly removed from their land and killed in droves. I am father and a cautious supporter of going a step further in elementary and high school curricula to connect historical injustices to surviving issues of social injustice. But we need to do so responsibly. This model curriculum, I fear, does not represent that kind of responsible approach. Laudable aims notwithstanding, it reads in places more like an ideological activist's manifesto than an objective educator's effort to cultivate well-rounded critical thinkers. I am a firm political independent. I would not call myself a conservative, though I often find elements of conservative thought to be as useful as any other. I tend to see both progressive and conservative thought as necessary in balancing one another, even though I might favor one or the other side more strongly on any given issue. Above all, though, I have the humility to know that mine is a subjective worldview that I have developed through many years as an adult; that it is my own, and that I have no right to force it on anyone else, least of all a child. In retrospect I'm grateful that I was allowed to form my own worldview, my childhood having been

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		insulated for the most part from too-strong an exposure to one or the other dominant ideologies. With that background, I hope you'll read the following comments on the proposed model curriculum and to think critically about subtle differences. There is a difference between systemic racism and individual racism. There is a difference between empirical fact and subjective opinion. So long as these different things are taught in the appropriate context, and true diversity in subjective opinions, intellectual thought and comparative ideologies are revealed to the student, an acceptable curriculum can likely be reached. The proposed model curriculum fails to meet those standards.
Chapter 1	Troy Ault, Resident, Oakland	Page 1, Line 7 – The use of movement jargon/terminology like 'hxrstory,' is objectionable. It would be fine to suggest that such alternative terminology can be employed in lesson plans, appropriately contextualized, to develop an understanding of such movements. The model curriculum fails to contextualize the terminology as such and instead asserts many of these terms as if they were recognized formally in the English language.
Chapter 1	Troy Ault, Resident, Oakland	Page 2, Lines 27-31 – I would be fine with the document if it were doing this in an objective way. Unfortunately, the framework reads more as a TWLF activist's manifesto. If it said, for instance, that capitalism, as a model of economic organization, has lifted entire societies' standards of living and been a tremendous force for social good, but that there have also been unintended consequences with regard to social injustices as a result of free markets functioning alongside, among other societal forces, systemic racism, that would be fine. Instead, it references capitalism as an oppressive 'System of Power'. Younger and yet-to-be-born generations have an opportunity to course-correct, perhaps through political activity, but should be given the opportunity to appreciate the fuller picture, and the dynamics in which the status quo evolved. This model curriculum does not look nearly adequate to achieve that.

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Chapter 1	Troy Ault, Resident, Oakland	Page 2, Lines 41-45 – Certainly, many agree with Ms. Ladson-Billings that a debt is owed. However, this is a politically-charged framing of the issue. I'd rather my daughter learn that the perspective exists among other perspectives (like, for instance, that an opportunity gap does exist, that it has not necessarily been caused by the deliberate oppression of generations of one race by generations of another, but rather survives mostly as an unintended consequence of independent actors within a free society pursuing their own happiness.) and learn to think critically about all these perspectives.
Chapter 1	Troy Ault, Resident, Oakland	Pages 3-4, Lines 81-91 – I'm left feeling that if this curriculum is implemented, in order for my daughter and her peers to receive a well-rounded education (one that exposes them both to the intellectual thought of the names in this section, as well as elements of enlightenment era classical liberalism and modern social conservatives such as Thomas Sowell – with whom I often disagree but whose perspective on many of these issues I recognize as valid) some right wing group is going to need to institute a separate curriculum alongside this. We should not be forcing separate factions to compete for the indoctrination of young minds. We should seek to expose our youth to truly diverse perspectives at appropriate ages.
Chapter 1	Troy Ault, Resident, Oakland	Page 7, Line 151 – Especially given the (I think laudable) desire to help students develop a strong sense of identity in the previous section, perhaps this section on civic and community engagement could include a bullet like, "Help students understand how to constructively apply their strong sense of identity in a tolerant, pluralistic society," I think it would be a good complement to, "...[how to] speak out on social issues," which seems a bit incomplete.
Chapter 1	Troy Ault, Resident, Oakland	Page 8, Lines 168-171 – This sounds positive. As the balance of my comments show that I consider the framing of social issues in the model curriculum to demonstrate subjective biases, however, I must offer a complementary perspective, that this model curriculum for Ethnic Studies will sow more division, not less.

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Chapter 1	Troy Ault, Resident, Oakland	Page 10, Line 229 – ‘Environmental racism’ is another movement term. Whereas systemic racism or institutional racism can be demonstrated empirically to exist, environmental racism is another conflation of the former (whereby racial outcomes are real but corollary results of, among other types, wealth-based injustices) with individual racism.
Chapter 2	Troy Ault, Resident, Oakland	Page 4, Line 87 – White supremacy is an ideology, not a system of power. Capitalism is a model of economic organization or an economic system, not a system of power. I do not want my daughter being taught that capitalism, in and of itself, is bad. I support my daughter being taught that white supremacy, as an ideology, is wrong. I do not want her to be taught that it is a system of power as the connotation is that her parents and grandparents are part of a massive cabal deliberately perpetuating social injustices. The extension of this connotation, especially in the eyes of a child, could easily be that white people are bad. White supremacy was long ago relegated to a minority ideology against which public opinion has firmly turned. I do not want my daughter to be taught that she should feel guilt because she’s white. I’m all for her learning that it’s all of our responsibilities to work both individually and collectively toward a more equitable society. This model curriculum, however, crosses the line from the latter into the former.
Chapter 2	Troy Ault, Resident, Oakland	Page 6, Lines 125-126 – I’m okay with just about everything I’ve read in Chapter 2 to this point. Bringing in a question like, “should African Americans receive reparations...” is going too far, however. These are kids. There is a reason we have a voting age. Similar to voting, we should not be forcing complex questions like this on children, who lack the cumulative life experience and exposure to diverse perspectives to face such questions objectively.

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Chapter 2	Troy Ault, Resident, Oakland	Pages 52-53, Lines 1062-1067 – The framing of this contemporary housing issue and the '07/'08 financial crisis is problematic. It once again conflates systemic racism (where loans were subprime because they were extended to people of all races with lower quality credit – which, because they represent a disproportionate share of the population in lower income neighborhoods, were disproportionately people of color – with individual racism. Furthermore, it seems lesson plans guided by this model curriculum would leave out altogether the fact that FHA policies and the FNMA and FHLMC have been established to encourage home ownership as a means of effecting family wealth-building and stability, with an unintended consequence being a shot of adrenaline to the mortgage market that enabled and encouraged it to extend credit to lower credit-quality borrowers. Also left out is the concept that nonracial, profit-seeking motives led to the bundling of subprime mortgages into mortgage-backed-securities, which created the false perception of lower risk in the market, which subsequently led to lenders lowering credit quality standards in the first place. There is no evidence that any of that was racially motivated.

California Department of Education, June 2019