

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)
	Sandra Schwarcz Berkeley resident and concerned parent	<i>[Include the page and line number(s) here–Write your comment here]</i>
General		While I agree that it is important for students to be cognizant of racial, ethnic, religious, gender, and cultural diversity, the proposed curriculum has several, serious problems and limitations. First is that given its current lesson plan and examples it could be renamed ‘persecution studies’. It fails to highlight accomplishments of ethnic minorities or to celebrate ethnic diversity. It is also selective in the minority groups that are highlighted. The curriculum appears to be very biased and politically motivated. The most glaring example of this is the failure to mention anti-Semitism or Jews as a minority that has and continues to experience bigotry in this country (consider the neo-nazi movement and terrorist acts against the Jews such as the murder of innocent people at the Poway synagogue in California as well as at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. The lack of any sample lessons regarding anti-Semitism is in itself, a demonstration of the bias of the persons who created the curriculum.

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Ch 1, pg 1		The use of new 'inclusive' terminology is not inclusive, it carries anti-male bias and it fails to consider linguistic origins of the words such as 'history' (which comes from the Ancient Greek word 'historia' which means 'inquiry').
Ch 2, pg 1		The Asian race does not include Arabs who are Caucasian or Pacific Islanders are Native Hawaiians, Samoans, etc. Why consider them to be Asian? This shows disrespect and teaches inaccurate information. No curriculum should present false information.

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Ch2, pg 234		<p>There is an enormous emphasis on Palestinian Arabs even though they constitute a small proportion of the Arab population. This, as well as the suggestion to use the anti-Israel groups BDS and DAP as lesson samples appears to be politically motivated and demonstrates, either intentionally or not, an anti-Israel and anti-Jewish bias. The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is a very complex issue and it seems to me that using this as an example for Arab studies serves as a distraction from other, problems faced by Arabs today and fails to highlight any positive aspects to Arab culture. There is also a focus on Muslim Arabs and this shows a lack of inclusion of other Arabs such as Christians and Jews. In the US, the majority of Arabs are Christian. This is an important piece of information to include if the Ethic Studies curriculum intends to teach students about Arab Americans. If the aim is to have students learn about Islam, then focus on that rather than on Arabs and this includes the the conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Jewish Israelis. If the point is to address current discrimination against Muslim Arabs then the travel ban issued by President Trump is a good choice. There are examples of groups of Arabs such as Arab Christians and Jews who have suffered discrimination in Arab countries but this is not addressed in the curriculum. There is a cultural issue for Islamic Arabs in the US as well as in Arabs in and other Islamic countries and that is the treatment of non-gender conforming Muslim Arabs. Homosexuals, for example, face serious discrimination. There are a number of topics that could be discussed in ethnic studies of Arab Americans. Certainly, the issues in the middle east are poor and inappropriate examples to include. Exploring other issues will steer clear of complex political issues and address cultural issues that impact Arabs rather than promoting an anti-Israel and anti-Jewish bias.</p>
Ch 2 pg 242		<p>If the curriculum is going to mention the dispersion of Arabs at the time of the creation of Israel it should also address the dispersion of Arab Jews from Arab countries and the persecution of no Muslim Arabs (how many Christian Arabs are in Lebanon now?)</p>

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Glossary		-Including BDS shows the bias on the part of those who created this curriculum (or at least who created the Arab lesion) and is not accurate in its description and uses words that are critical of Israel without any instruction on the conflict between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs. If the purpose of the Ethnic studies curriculum is to ... 'enable students to develop a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusion, and aids in the eradication of bigotry, hate, and racism' then using examples that are not biased against Israel or Jews and that address cultural rather than political issues such as the conflict in this region of the Middle East should not be included.

California Department of Education, June 2019