

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.

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Page 2 of 6

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
Glossary and Bibliography	Raquel Benguiat CA resident	<p>On Page 2 of the glossary for the curriculum, there is a definition of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (“BDS”) campaign against Israel. It claims the purpose of BDS is to, “establish freedom for Palestinians living under apartheid conditions.” This is a highly politicized anti-Semitic falsehood.</p> <p>The BDS campaign solely focuses on Israel. It only targets one state in the world, the Jewish one. It does not target actual gross human rights abusers, like Egypt or China. It does not target the 10 states where being gay currently subjects one to the death penalty. It does not target states that still have slaves, like Qatar and Mauritania. It does not target the numerous states where women have no rights and are treated like property, such as Pakistan, Congo and Saudi Arabia. It does not even target states that actually have different laws that de jure discriminate against Palestinian Arabs, like Lebanon and Syria. BDS is anti-Semitic in both intent and effect.</p> <p>This proposed definition for BDS in the proposed curriculum is also materially misleading. The purpose of the BDS campaign is not to “establish freedom” for anyone. If it were, its target would not be Israel, the freest state in the Middle East and North Africa (“MENA”). If it were, it would not target the only state in the entire MENA where Arab citizens vote in real elections, have freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly. If it were, it would not target a state where Arab citizens not only have the same right to due process before the courts as any Israeli citizen, but are also judges in Israel, including on Israel’s Supreme Court.</p> <p>The proposed definition for the anti-Semitic BDS campaign is also misleading because its purpose is not freedom, but destruction. Its founders and main proponents have never hid that their purpose with BDS is to de-legitimize the</p>

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Page 3 of 6

		<p>State of Israel in its entirety. BDS does not attack a specific Israeli policy. It attacks Israel's existence. BDS representatives regularly say this, they do not hide it. BDS leaders/founders believe that there should be no Jewish state anywhere in the Levant, while they have no issue with any other states, be they Latvian, Czech or Armenian states, or 56 Muslim states and at least 15 Christian states. Under any objective measure, it is plain that the antisemitic BDS campaign does not seek “freedom” for anyone. They do not even campaign for freedom for even Palestinian Arabs living under terrible dictatorships in Gaza (under Hamas) or in Judea/Samaria (under the Palestinian Authority) or in Jordan (under the Hashemite monarchy). “Freedom” has nothing do with BDS.</p> <p>The BDS campaign simply and plainly seeks the eradication of the only democratic country in the MENA where all citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, faith, or gender have full and equal civil rights. The BDS campaign, which this proposed curriculum seeks to promote with its misleading claims, seeks to destroy the only country in the MENA where being Gay is not a crime and where women have held the highest office in the land, and are presently CEO’s, legislators, army generals, fighter pilots, and judges.</p> <p>The BDS campaign also tokenizes Palestinian Arabs and acts as if they and their leaders have no agency in the Israeli-Arab conflict. It also ignore that the dictatorial leaders of the Palestinian Authority are not interested in peace. BDS ignores that the leaders of the PA have frequently declined negotiations with Israel and even turned down several generous two-state offers, including one that offered them a capital city in east Jerusalem, even though no Arab country has ever had Jerusalem as its capital (ever). BDS ignores that Hamas, Fatah, and other Palestinian Arab leadership groups profit from the conflict, collecting and keeping \$billions in foreign aid, enriching themselves in the process.</p>
Lesson Plans	Raquel Benguiat CA resident	On pages 234, 237, 242, 256, and 264-269 The sample lesson plans for the curriculum:

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Page 4 of 6

	<p>Encourage teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine, but provides for no voices critical of their (anti-Semitic and ahistorical) perspectives (p. 234).</p> <p>Promotes a false equivalence between Israel's efforts to stop terrorists (who are encouraged and incited to want to murder Jews by both the PA and Hamas) from entering communities to murder innocent people, and U.S. policies on the border with Mexico (p. 234).</p> <p>Uses unclear language that implies "Israel-Palestine" as a whole is an Arab country (p. 237) when there has never, ever, been an independent Arab state west of the Jordan River.</p> <p>Frames the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives (p. 242) and completely ignores that the Palestinian Arabs' leaders not only rejected the 1937 and 1947 partition plans, which would have created the first ever independent Arab state west of the Jordan River; but also joined 5 other Arab countries in a self-described genocidal war to destroy Israel and "push the Jews into the Sea."</p> <p>Encourages teachers to use a poem featuring harsh criticism of Israel, but no content offering a positive perspective about Israel or criticism of the incredibly corrupt and dictatorial Palestinian Arab leaders be they within Fatah or Hamas (p. 256, 264-269).</p> <p>This is a one-sided fraudulent perspective being packaged and sold by the anti-Semitic BDS campaign in order to indoctrinate a generation with no sense of perspective for the realities on the ground in the MENA, or for any of the history of the antisemitism and violence that targeted Jews in the Levant for mass murder well before the creation of the state of Israel.</p> <p>This proposed curriculum wholly and highly inaccurately ignores the virulent and violent antisemitism has prevented peace for over 100 years and has placed</p>
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Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Page 5 of 6

		<p>Israeli society under war-like conditions since before the Jewish people succeeded in gaining independence in their indigenous homeland from the British and Ottoman Empires, which controlled the Levant for nearly 450 years before Israel declared its independence. This curriculum ignores that history and is therefore entirely misleading and not remotely educational. It is antisemitic propaganda. Nothing more.</p> <p>There are real opportunities to provide a comprehensive and reality-based education here. To educate, for example, about how Israel and Israelis value life, taking incredible steps for example to rescue Jews facing mass murder and persecution in Ethiopia and bringing them to Israel. A recently released film on Netflix provides a window into Israel's Operation Brothers, which brought thousands of Jewish refugees in the early 1980's from Ethiopia to Israel. Israel is a country that recently saved thousands of Syrians who were facing life-threatening injuries caused by their own government's brutal civil war. Israel is a country that has saved thousands of children, many from Arab dictatorships that do not even recognize Israel's existence, with life-saving heart surgery. Israel is a country that sends its soldiers, aid workers and field hospitals all over the world to help people hit by terrible natural disasters in Mexico, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, South Sudan, etc.</p> <p>This proposed curriculum ignores all of this history and reality. Teachers should be placed in a position to educate accurately and present the complexity of the situation in the MENA. These proposed lesson plans and materials do not set them up for success – unless the goal here is not to educate, but to propagandize and spread anti-Semitic and ahistorical hate.</p>
Introduction	Raquel Benguiat CA resident	The Introduction 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."

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Page 6 of 6

		<p>Despite this stated goal, the curriculum does not feature a single lesson about the Jewish community, mentioning Jews only in passing. With antisemitism rising, and ignorance about the Jewish people still a major problem in our society, the exclusion of Jews from this curriculum is deeply disappointing. Jews account for less than 2% of the population of the USA, yet since at least 2002 have accounted for at least 60% of the hate crimes in this country based on faith. This proposed curriculum almost completely abdicates any effort to address one of the most long-lasting and destructive examples of “bigotry, hate, and racism” that has ever existed in history, all while it purports to care about eradicating “bigotry, hate, and racism.”</p> <p>I hope you will consider adding lessons about American Jews as an ethnic group, including those who fled pogroms and persecution in Europe, fled the Holocaust, survived the Holocaust, fled from persecution and oppression in the MENA, as well as discrimination in the former Soviet Union. I hope you will also consider adding lessons about antisemitism in America, how it manifests itself today, not only as hatred for Jews individually, but as a collective, particularly when they “dare” to establish their sovereignty in their indigenous homeland.</p> <p>This proposed curriculum does a disservice to both the education system and the communities who put their trust in this system by failing to provide reliable information about the history of the region, the history of antisemitism in Europe, the MENA or in the USA, all while it completely ignores the realities on the ground in Israel and throughout the MENA.</p>
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