

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.

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General	Paula Crow. I am a retired attorney and pro-Palestinian rights activist.	<p>[Include the page and line number(s) here—Write your comment here]</p> <p>August 14, 2019</p> <p>Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:</p> <p>I was heartened to read that California is preparing an Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (“ESMC”). I am 66 years old, a white woman, and a product of California public schools from kindergarten through law school at Berkeley. This program is so important both for the children who will have their backgrounds explored as well as those who have not directly shared these experiences.</p> <p>I grew up in a single parent working class family in San Francisco. We lived in public housing for 3 years in the Western Addition, then a mostly African American community that had been more of a Jewish community before that. Because my mom needed childcare while she worked we went to school outside of our own neighborhood. There my classmates were truly of all ethnic, national and racial backgrounds.</p> <p>We learned to read with books about suburbanite brother and sister Dick and Jane and their blond baby sister Sally. Dick and Jane and I had no similar experiences. Not until I found a book, <i>The Radio Imp</i>, in our school library did I find stories in print that mirrored my life. <i>The Radio Imp</i> was about two children who lived with their mom in an apartment building in a big city. The children in their neighborhood looked like my classroom. I devoured this book. Teaching the ESMC will provide the children in the groups studied in this curriculum an even greater understanding and validation than I got from <i>The Radio Imp</i>.</p> <p>I write today in support of the inclusion of the Arab component in the ESMC, specifically the inclusion of a description of the Nakba, the catastrophe when Palestinians were forcibly removed from their homes because those properties had been given to the new state of Israel by the European colonial powers withdrawing from the region at the end of WWII.</p> <p>When I was a kid in SF Jewish families were, and I believe still are, a vibrant part of the mainstream. They were not the “other” as are the groups that will be studied in the ESMC. Arabs were so much the “other” that we learned absolutely nothing about the Palestinian side of the story in the founding of Israel. I was a 9th grader in my social studies class at Roosevelt Jr. High when our teacher, Mr. Parades, announced that Israel had won the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Sharing Mr. Parades’ enthusiasm, we all stood up and cheered. We had been taught nothing about the Arab side of the story or of the violent Palestinian displacement that began in 1948.</p>
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		<p>I read in the Los Angeles Times that several Jewish groups are concerned about how the Palestinian experience in the founding of Israel is described in the ESMC. They are also concerned that the Jewish experience, including anti-semitism, is not addressed.</p> <p>Palestinian displacement that began in 1948.</p> <p>I read in the Los Angeles Times that several Jewish groups are concerned about how the Palestinian experience in the founding of Israel is described in the ESMC. They are also concerned that the Jewish experience, including anti-semitism, is</p>
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		<p>I read in the Los Angeles Times that several Jewish groups are concerned about how the Palestinian experience in the founding of Israel is described in the ESMC. They are also concerned that the Jewish experience, including anti-semitism, is not addressed.</p> <p>Dangerous anti-semitism is clearly on the rise in the United States and should be addressed in our schools. But I wonder if the ESMC is the proper place for that. I wonder if there is a curriculum addressing religious bigotry or ethnic prejudice more generally where it should be studied. Just as my inner-city white economic experience as a child or my gender experience as a law student and young lawyer are not discussed in the ESMC but are worthy of discussion in our schools and are presumably considered elsewhere.</p> <p>Finally, I will note, as strongly as I can, that statements of provable fact about how the state of Israel historically or currently treats Palestinians are not anti-semitic and should not be treated as such by any of our public institutions. Despite Israel’s recent adoption of its notorious “nation-state” law it is not exclusively a Jewish state but rather is a state of Jewish and Arab citizens. Even if it were exclusively a Jewish state speaking out against its ill treatment of other human beings would not be anti-semitic. A claim of being anti-Israel is fair. An accusation of being anti-semitic is not.</p> <p>Paula Crow</p>