



March 31, 2020

**California Department of Education
1430 N St #5901, Sacramento, CA 95814**

Re: Sikh inclusion in California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

To: California Department of Education, Instructional Quality Commission, State Board of Education officials, and California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee:

We, the undersigned Sikh gurdwaras (houses of worship) of California, write to request revisions and inclusions to California's Draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Sikhism is the world's fifth largest religion, with over 25 million followers. As a community that has proudly been a part of the California fabric for 125 years, we estimate that nearly 50 percent of the Sikh population in America lives here with approximately 250,000 residents. The first gurdwara in the United States was founded in Stockton, California in 1912 and the first Asian American, who identified as Sikh, was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from California's 29th congressional district in 1957. Our contributions to the Golden State are rich and deep; today, in nearly every facet of California's society and economy, Sikhs are making a profound impact.

In 2016, our community was deeply appreciative when the California Department of Education worked with Sikhs across the state to accurately include Sikhism in the History and Social Science Framework. This was a critical first step for recognizing that the Sikh community should be a part of the California curricula, but it also exposed how much more work is required to provide educators with the opportunities and materials to actually teach about the Sikh community in our state's public schools. The California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is a timely and obvious opportunity to overcome that challenge.

Specifically, we request:

1. A detailed lesson plan about the Sikh American community to be inserted into the Model Curriculum.
2. More specific examples throughout the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum that focus on the myriad of *positive* Sikh contributions made over 125 years in California, to balance the current language's focus on the hateful backlash against Sikhs in the context of post-9/11 Islamophobia.

The Sikh Coalition and the Jakara Movement have been in communication with you, specifying the details of these asks. We ask that the recommendations made in their [letter](#) be incorporated into the final Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum on our behalf.

As you know, these two requests are not perfunctory, but instead will have lasting positive consequences for all California children that enter our public classrooms. For non-Sikh classmates, it will give them a real chance of learning about one of the fastest growing minority populations in the state of California and better prepare them for the ever-changing globalized world. For Sikh students, which represent up to 12 percent of the student population in some California school districts, it will give them a chance to be seen, heard, and accurately represented. A [2014 report](#) by the Sikh Coalition found that turbaned Sikh children are bullied at twice the national average, and their data included surveys of Sikh children in California public schools. For educators who all care about creating safer and more inclusive classrooms, the lesson plan and additional recommendations will finally give them the curriculum and instruction to teach about our community as we work together to combat school bullying.

Respectfully,

1. Sikh Community Gurdwara Alhambra, Alhambra, CA
2. Gurdwara Guru Angad Darbar, Bakersfield, CA
3. Guru Nanak Mission Sikh Center, Bakersfield, CA
4. Gurdwara Guru Dashmesh Darbar, Bakersfield, CA
5. Sikh Temple Bakersfield, Bakersfield, CA
6. Gurudwara Sukh Sagar Sahib, Bakersfield, CA
7. Sikh Society of Central Contra Costa County, Bay Point, CA
8. Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Buena Park, Buena Park, CA
9. Valley Sikh Temple, Canoga Park, CA
10. Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society, Caruthers, CA
11. Sikh Society of San Diego, Escondido, CA
12. Gurdwara Sahib Fremont, Fremont, CA
13. Guru Nanak Prakash, Fresno, CA
14. Darbar Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji, Fresno, CA
15. Sikh Institute Fresno California, Fresno, CA
16. Nanaksar Satsang Sabha, Fresno, CA
17. Gurdwara Sahib Hayward, Hayward, CA
18. High Desert Gurudwara, Hesperia, CA
19. Gurdwara Sahib Modesto, Hughson, CA
20. Anandgarh Sahib Kerman, Kerman, CA
21. Antelope Valley Sikh Center, Lancaster, CA
22. Live Oak Sikh Temple, Live Oak, CA
23. Tri-Valley Sikh Center, Livermore, CA
24. Sikh Temple Livingston, Livingston, CA
25. Guru Nanak Sikh Mission, Livingston, CA
26. Guru Ram Das Ashram, Los Angeles, CA

27. Hollywood Sikh Temple, Los Angeles, CA
28. Gurdwara Gurmat Parkash Manteca, Manteca, CA
29. Sikh Gurdwara Merced, Merced, CA
30. Singh Sabha Bay Area, Milpitas, CA
31. Nanak Sadan Sikh Temple, North Hills, CA
32. Sikh Gurdwara of Los Angeles, North Hollywood, CA
33. Guru Maneyo Granth Gurdwara Sahib (Sikh Center), Orangevale, CA
34. Khalsa Care Foundation, Pacoima, CA
35. Sikh Center Porterville, Porterville, CA
36. Sikh Foundation San Diego, Poway, CA
37. Shri Guru Ravi Dass Sabha Sacramento, Rio Linda, CA
38. Riverside Gurdwara, Riverside, CA
39. Riverside Gurdwara (Mariposa), Riverside, CA
40. Gurdwara Sri Sachkhand Sahib, Roseville, CA
41. Sacramento Sikh Society, Sacramento, CA
42. Sikh Gurdwara Sahib, San Jose, CA
43. Dharam Khand Sikh Academy, San Martin, CA
44. Sikh Center of Orange County, Santa Ana, CA
45. Silicon Valley Gurdwara, Santa Clara, CA
46. Gurdwara Walnut, South Walnut, CA
47. Gurdwara Sahib Sikh Temple, Stockton, CA
48. Sikh Temple Turlock, Turlock, CA
49. Gurdwara Sahib West Sacramento, West Sacramento, CA
50. Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Yuba City, Yuba City, CA
51. Sri Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, Yuba City, CA
52. Sikh Temple Yuba City, Yuba City, CA