

From: Benjamin Kersten

Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 3:36 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: Superintendent; [emails redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Include Arab American Studies in CA Ethnic Studies Curriculum

To the Instructional Quality Commission, Tony Thurmond, Linda Darling-Hammond, and the Arab Resource and Organizing Center,

I am writing to express my support for including Arab American Studies and Pacific Islander Studies in the CA Ethnic Studies Curriculum. I am a Jewish graduate student in Art History and Jewish Studies at UCLA and a community member who cares about the safety and education of young people. I have learned that revisions to the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum have decreased the amount of material that would teach people about Arab American and Pacific Islander history and culture. Learning about the histories and cultures of peoples who have been targets of colonialism is important not only for redressing the harms of the past but for protecting those who identify with those cultures today. As has been shown with Ethnic Studies, teaching these topics will lead to increases in positive personal, academic, and social outcomes for students. In addition to the political and ethnic imperative of teaching these topics, it is necessary for students to learn about people of different backgrounds who continue to face challenges of a colonial past. I would encourage you to pass an ESMC that includes Pacific Islander and Arab American studies course outlines and includes Palestine in Arab American studies. This is necessary for the wellbeing of all.

Best,

Benjamin Kersten