

From: Davina C

Sent: Sunday, August 9, 2020 11:25 PM

To: Ethnic Studies; Superintendent[emails redacted]

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

To whom it may concern:

Hi, my name is Davina Chang. It has come to my attention that the teaching of Arab American and Pacific Islander studies will not be included in upcoming Ethnic Studies Curriculum. Given the current political climate and the concerning rise in white supremacy and race-based violence, I'd like you to consider a few points:

- It's never been clearer how important Ethnic Studies is. The racial disparities in the impact of Covid-19, the xenophobic targeting of Asian Americans as "vectors" of disease, and the national uprising in response to the murder of George Floyd point to the need for anti-racist education: All students need Ethnic Studies in their K-12 curriculum to build empathy, unity and solidarity with each other, strengthening our movements for justice.
- The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) is structured around the core pillars developed by the founders of Ethnic Studies in 1969: American Indian studies, Africana/Black studies, Chicana/Latina studies, and Asian American studies. Following a decades-long tradition in higher education, the ESMC includes Arab American studies within Asian American studies. Leading Asian American scholars, including the National Association of Asian American studies, have issued statements defending the inclusion of Arab American studies in the CA ESMC.
- Ethnic Studies has been linked to increases in positive personal, academic, and social outcomes for students.
- In the post-9/11 era, exacerbated by Trump's Muslim ban, Arab American students are desperately [in need of curriculum](#) that reflects their histories and current realities.
- [TURATH](#) (Teaching Understanding and Representing Arabs Throughout History) is a 2020 report researched and written by the teenage members of Arab Youth Organizing (AYO). According to AYO's findings, more than 66% of the students surveyed said they received most of their information on Arabs and/or Muslims from the internet or television; only 2.3% learned about Arabs and/or Muslims at school. But Arab American and Pacific Islander studies can be included in the ESMC. Here are several points of action that can be taken to include them:
 - Reconvene the original committee of writers and experts to revise the original Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. Ethnic Studies scholars and teachers are the experts on Ethnic Studies curriculum and pedagogy. Arab American scholars and teachers are the experts on Arab American curriculum and pedagogy

- Pass an ESMC that includes Pacific Islander and Arab American studies course outlines and includes Palestine in Arab American studies.
- Maintain the Ethnic Studies framework—with disciplinary knowledge, language, and pedagogy. Don't dilute it or convert it to a different field (i.e., multicultural studies, diversity studies, or area studies).
- Work within clearcut structures for accountability, transparency, and consensus-building. Center those structures on Ethnic Studies practitioners of communities of color and Native peoples throughout the entire model curriculum process, up to ratification.

With this in mind, I hope you include Arab American and Pacific Islander Studies in CA Ethnic Studies Curriculum.

Thanks,

Davina Chang