

From: Spenta Kandawalla

Sent: Wednesday, November 11, 2020 11:26 AM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>; Superintendent <Superintendent@cde.ca.gov>; lindadh@suse.stanford.edu

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Arab American Studies is Ethnic Studies

Dear Members of the IQC, Superintendent Thurmond & CBE Chair Darling-Hammond,

The changes that have swept the Ethnic Studies Curriculum since the summer are a stunning disappointment and disservice to our youth in California. Against what I assume are your priorities, the curriculum has been white-washed. This is an offensive move to all of the original curriculum writers, students, and people of color across the state of California who expect better of you.

As a healthcare worker and educator in the state, I stand with the following demands;

- Include the Arab American lesson plan submitted to the California Department of Education by members of the original Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) advisory committee.
- Re-insert Arab American studies in its rightful place—within Asian American studies.
- Align all lesson plans to the guiding principles of ethnic studies, which are anti-racist, decolonial and liberatory.
- Reject debunked definitions of antisemitism that equate criticism of Israel with antisemitism.

The changes you have made are offensive to the political moment and the demands for racial justice sweeping this country. It is also dangerous to sideline people of color. Ethnic Studies has a long history of being rooted in social and racial justice. It is about people of color for the sake of all people and our freedom.

I hope you will stand on the right side of history and reinstate a real ethnic studies curriculum and not this white-washed, minimizing and tokenizing garbage. Create something that this state can be proud of and can be a model for people to follow around the country.

Sincerely,
Spenta Kandawalla