

From: Larry Hendel

Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 10:30 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: Superintendent; [emails redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Inclusion of Arab American Studies in Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Gentlepersons,

I write to urge you to include Arab-American studies, as part of Asian-American studies, in the revised Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum at your August 13 Instructional Quality Commission meeting.

In Ethnic Studies at the college level, Arab-American studies is part of Asian-American studies. The National Association of Asian-American studies, and other Asian American scholars, have issued statements defending the inclusion of Arab American studies in the Model Curriculum.

Arab high school students have come under increasing stereotyping, harassment and hazing since 9/11, with a marked increase since Trump's Muslim ban. With the murder of George Floyd, the increase in hate crimes directed towards Chinese and Japanese Americans since COVID 19, and the racial disparities in the impact of COVID 19, it is clear that we need a lot more anti-racist education in our country..

In addition, Ethnic Studies has been linked to increases in positive personal, academic and social outcomes for students. How unfair it would be to leave Arab-American students, their history and their experience, out of this curriculum.

As a Jew, and a parent of a child who attended California schools, I reject the idea that it would be antisemitic to include Arab-American studies in the curriculum. On the contrary, I think it is prejudiced against Arabs, and Palestinians in particular, not to include Arab-American studies because of attitudes regarding the current situation in Israel/Palestine. The reality is we need education about Arab-Americans more than ever in our state. Furthermore, the curriculum regarding Arab-Americans should be put together by experts in Arab-American studies.

In conclusion, please include Arab-American studies, including the relevant Palestinian narrative, in the Model Curriculum.

Thank you for your time.

Larry Hendel
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