

January 21, 2021

Dear Members of the IQC:

I am submitting comments in response to the current 3rd draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I write to express grave concerns regarding minimum representation of Arab American Studies representation, inclusive of Palestine in the latest draft of the ESMC.

I am indigeneous Pacific Islander womyn, an Ethnic Studies middle school teacher, and lecturer in Race & Resistance at San Francisco State University, the birthplace of Ethnic Studies. As a womyn of color, I understand the importance of learning and hearing about your peoples and their history. As an educator, I have seen how Ethnic Studies has been both liberating and empowering for my students. They are able to learn about the beauty of their cultures, the wealth of their home(is)lands, and the resilience of their peoples. My students are able to use their knowledge of self, to make connections with their peers and create genuine change for themselves, families, community, and peoples as a whole. Do not erase or alter the stories of my students, most especially my young Arab youth.

While the CDE and Superintendent Thurmond have moved forward to include Pacific Islander curriculum developed by Pacific Islander Studies Educators, I am aware that key content pieces were removed from the ESMC draft regarding Arab American Studies.

I urge the commission to address these issues in the ESMC with the following actions:

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. Please do not hesitate to contact me to provide further information.

Sincerely,

~kerri ann borja  
SFUSD Ethnic Studies teacher