

From: Saidah Traish

Sent: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:19 AM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Arab American Ethnic Studies

Hi,

I am little concerned about the stipulation in the Ethnic Studies curriculum that gives administrators and educators in a school district the right to tweak the curriculum to meet the needs of their students. My understanding from this stipulation is that an administrator in a privileged school district with a majority of white students has the right to eliminate or waterdown any hard questions. Hard questions that may be based upon lay people attempt to manipulate truthful knowledge for political gains. This is wrong because it does not take into consideration the interests of the minority students and takes away their voices in the process. In addition, it maintains the status quo by making it harder for underprivileged families who have committed their learners to a privileged school in order to improve their chances at a better education thus life choices. In other words, this stipulation ensures minority and underprivileged students continue to struggle to break the "ceiling" even when standards and principles have been determined by the State.

My recommendation is for the Ethnic Studies Committee to adhere to the knowledge and expertise of the original scholars. Scholars who I am sure have read more than 35 books on each discipline. If that is not an option then please confer with other scholars on the information and knowledge that was presented at the conference. All of the information was misguided and not true. This brings me to my next concern. What are the credentials of the teachers teaching history in the public school district? Based upon the misinformation presented by the opposing side it seems that the history curriculum needs to be addressed as well as the hiring process of the school district of history teachers. Actually, I am not surprised by the militarization of the opposing side's responses. Their attempt to interject fear during the discussion was a textbook example of how stereotypes such as us versus them played a vivid role.

Take the time to write down each arguing point made during the conference and ask scholars and experts to give their recommendations on the accuracy of the information. I am sure after hearing the response you will understand the urgency of keeping Arab American Studies especially the focus on Palestine and Pacific Islander Studies in the curriculum.

Thank you,
Saidah Traish