

From: Andrew Yeung

Sent: Tuesday, November 10, 2020 6:49 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>; Superintendent <Superintendent@cde.ca.gov>;

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment: Re-insert Arab American Studies within Asian American Studies NOW

To the members of the Instructional Quality Commission and the California Department of Education,

I am writing to support the demands put forth by the Save Arab-American Studies Coalition, which are:

- **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.**

As an educator and organizer at the RYSE Center; with the grassroots organization Teachers 4 Social Justice; as a student of Ethnic Studies; and as a lifelong student CA public schools, I am frustrated and disappointed in the persistent erasure of the histories and perspectives of people of color. The relegation of Arab American lesson plan to the appendix is an act of erasure, marginalization, and capitulation to racist threat -- one that particularly and directly undermines the rights of our Southwest Asian and North African youth, family, and kin. As a student of ethnic studies and critic of empire, it must be stated that historical erasure and marginalization is one of the primary mechanisms of empire, that erasure moves people towards social death, towards violence, towards early death.

As we witness the demands for racial justice sweeping this county, know that it is offensive and dangerous to shunt the histories and perspectives of people of color to the sidelines. These revisions are tone-deaf to the political moment we are living in. The responsibility of educators is to build sites of sanctuary that combat Islamophobia and racist depictions of Arab culture. And the responsibility of our state legislators and those that govern California education is to center that needs of youth, resist the bully pulpit of lobbyists, and accurately assess the motivations of interest groups that do not care for all of our BIPOC students.

The obligation and just decision is clear -- honor the demands.

In solidarity with Arab-American youth everywhere,
Andrew Yeung

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*** Please note, RYSE will be working remotely until further notice.**

You can visit our website for a list of virtual programming as well as updated COVID-19 and anti-racist resources *
#BLACKLIVESMATTER



Andrew Yeung

Economic Justice Program Manager

Pronouns: he/him/they

