

**From:** Karla Kelly  
**Sent:** Friday, July 24, 2020 11:43 AM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Cc:** Superintendent; [emails redacted]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Inclusion of Arab American studies

I fully support the inclusion of Arab American studies in K-12 curriculum in schools for the following reasons:

- I am a parent of an educator, and grandparent to children ages 3, 4 and 6. It is important that I know my grandchildren will receive appropriate instruction on Arabs or Muslims that is anti-racist, anti-Islamophobic and anti-xenophobic. The history and struggles of the Palestinian people must be a part of that curriculum. I traveled to Israel and the West Bank in 2019 as a tourist and saw with my own eyes the racial disparities rampant there and a truly apartheid environment that treats Palestinians as less than human and devoid of an appreciation of their dignity, human rights and civil liberties.
- Further, it is not antisemitic to defend human rights, and include Palestinian history and current movements in Ethnic Studies, any more than it is anti-American to insist that persons of color are treated fairly, without discrimination and their human rights are defended. Racial justice, freedom from bigotry and racism and access and enjoyment of equality and dignity is a human right and not the protected province of any particular group of people, whether based on economic status, race, ethnicity, privilege or custom.
- Ethnic Studies is critical in primary, secondary and higher education, and the need for it in this era of racial unrest, prejudice against Arabs and Muslims in our country and bigotry is so apparent. We need to ensure the curricula for our children guides them to, and builds in them, empathy, unity and solidarity and an appreciation and respect for diversity with each other, no matter what ethnicity or race or country of origin, which strengthens and supports movements for justice for all in this country.
- In an era exacerbated by the current administration's vocal and overt disparagement of Muslims and Arabs, we need clear measures to counteract this social inequity and harmful racism and racist rhetoric which leads to physical, emotional and psychological damage to all involved.
- Television and the internet are steeped in supporting racial disparity in cartoons, movies and advertisements, all of which my grandchildren witness, and I want a K-12 curriculum that counteracts those harmful and messages. I want to be sure that they will experience positive personal, academic and social outcomes as they grow toward adulthood.
- It is very important to me that CA Board of Education's Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) keeps the CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) intact, including the proposed Arab American studies curriculum for all the reasons stated in this statement of public support.
- It is also important to me that Arab American studies are included in Asian American studies, and that any revisions should be made in collaboration with Arab American scholars and Ethnic Studies practitioners
- As a parent and a grandparent, I need the support of primary, secondary and higher education to reflect and support my values that are linked to justice, fairness and equality, to instill these concepts in the minds of my little grandchildren who deserve a better world than the one they were born into.

Sincerely,

Karla R. Kelly

Escondido, CA