

**From:** Elizabeth Ingenthron

**Sent:** Thursday, November 12, 2020 5:49 PM

**To:** Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>; [emails redacted]

**Cc:** [email redacted]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment regarding the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear California Superintendent for Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, California Board of Education Chair Linda Darling-Hammond and The Instructional Quality Commission,

This letter is in support of The Coalition to Save Arab American Studies demands with regard to the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (EMSC). The demands are as follows:

- 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.

California is a leader in so many ways and the decision about the ESMC in our state will reverberate across the country. In this current political climate of clear and righteous demands for racial justice, the decision about the ESMC is an opportunity to respond to and respect those demands, and to therefore stand on the right side of history. The demands for racial justice and more specifically the demands listed above with regard to the ESMC are rooted in principles of anti-racism, decolonization and liberation. These are principles that, if respected and adopted, can and will lead us — all of humanity — into ways of being in the world that foster experiences of abundance, joy, and community for all peoples around the globe, and to abolish needless suffering.

Arab American studies are essential to the ESMC, not only for the sake of acknowledging its rightful place in an Ethnic Studies curriculum but also for the sake of the lives and well-being of Arab American youth who are most endangered by any education that does not address their heritage and many contributions, and the realities of Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. Arab American studies provides information and history that have been sorely lacking in mainstream education, as well as tools and interventions to address the racism at the root of the erasures, misinformation and stereotypes.

Finally, I want to state clearly that any definition of antisemitism that equates criticism of Israel with antisemitism is false and dangerous. Israel is a nation-state. Antisemitism is against Jewish people. Arab American education is not antisemitic. Teaching about Palestine is not antisemitic. Teaching about Palestinian resistance to Israel is not antisemitic. The fact that

there is misunderstanding around these issues only further emphasizes the importance of Ethnic Studies and of Arab American Studies in particular.

If you would like to have any further conversation about this matter, or request clarification, I hope that you will feel free to respond.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to education that is toward liberation for all peoples.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Tauba Ingenthron, Ph.D.