

From: Jamie Sarfeh

Sent: Friday, November 13, 2020 4:01 PM

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

Cc: [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Keep Arab American studies in the ESMC!

Dear Instructional Quality Commission,

It is absolutely critical that Arab-American studies be included in the ESMC, and that the proposed definition of antisemitism equating criticism of Israel with antisemitism is removed from the curriculum.

As a community member and former high school educator, I am deeply concerned by the damage that the erasure of Arab-Americans from the curriculum will mean for our students and community. I am writing with the hope that you will make the right decision for our community, and support the following demands:

- 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.

Particularly now, as the country remains deeply divided and demands for racial justice are sweeping this county, 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, and do not set up our students to understand or survive in the increasingly racialized and polarized political climate. California should be a sanctuary, not a place of danger for our students and their families.

Sincerely,
Jamie Sarfeh