

**From:** Sydney Ji

**Sent:** Thursday, July 2, 2020 4:08 PM

**To:** Ethnic Studies

**Cc:** Superintendent; [emails redacted]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] I support the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, including Arab American Studies

Hello,

I am writing to urge for having a comprehensive Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum that includes Arab American Studies. I was a former K-12 student in Cupertino public school districts and later an undergraduate at UC Berkeley. Although I grew up as a second generation Chinese American in a majority Asian immigrant and Asian American community, in the bay area reputed to be a "progressive," "diverse," and "multicultural," I experienced (and still do) a great deal of microaggressions and sometimes overt acts of racism. In K-12, the only history I was taught relevant to my experiences of racialization were mere footnotes about Japanese internment and the Chinese Exclusion Act, and even when I sought out classes that might be relevant such as a contemporary lit high school class that was advertised as including a book about queer Asian experiences, my teacher chose to cut it out due to lack of time or interest in teaching it. It was not until college and afterward where I was able to learn much more that was grounded in ethnic studies, and this was mainly due to my own interest and willingness to spend energy seeking out these learning opportunities. I could say the same about the lack of education I received about being queer and/or trans and being disabled.

I believe it is invaluable for youth, whether they be BIPOC (Black, indigenous, people of color) or white, to learn ethnic studies as an integral part of their education. Research on the impact of ethnic studies classes has shown it is associated with improved academic, personal, and social outcomes in the students that go through them, and can also empower our younger generations to fight for a more just world and combat the systemic racism of our society. The recent amplification of long-running xenophobia and racism, whether it be anti-Chinese "yellow peril" racism fueled by coronavirus, demonization of Latinos as "illegal" migrants and criminals, post-9/11 Islamophobia dangerously misportraying Middle Eastern and North African people as terrorists, and police and vigilante murders of Black people, as well as the everyday subtler injustices that BIPOC face which have led to their disproportionate likelihood of dying from COVID-19 including here in California, only serve to underscore the urgency and significance of having comprehensive ethnic studies education.

Thank you for your time!

Sydney Ji

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Sydney Ji, they/them

Languages: EN, FR, learning ES, understand a little JP

Living on unceded [Chochenyo Ohlone land](#)