

From: Erin Mathieu

Sent: Sunday, July 19, 2020 12:36 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: Superintendent; [emails redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Keep Arab American Studies in the Ethnic Studies program!

Hello,

I am writing to you today to urge you to keep Arab American Studies in California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I am a student in California and fully support ESMC, including Arab American studies. In these times of Islamophobia and xenophobia, it is so critical to include West Asian American experiences in Ethnic Studies, so that West Asian American students can see their experiences valued and reflected back to them, and other students can learn about their experiences and culture.

Palestinian experiences, history, and current movements MUST also be included in ESMC. I hear that there have been some concerns over whether teaching about the Palestinian experience is anti-semitic. I am here to firmly emphasize that this is not the case - it is not anti-semitic to defend human rights, or to call out the actions of a corrupt government and the political (not religious) groups that support it. Claiming that criticizing Israel is inherently anti-semitic paints the incredibly false image that something about oppressive racial apartheid is inherently Jewish, and not just another example of power corrupting people. It erases the thousands of Jewish people who stand against the oppressive Israeli regime, often using their Jewish faith as the basis for them to stand for human rights and Palestinian freedom.

I also demand that any and all revisions that affect Arab American studies be made in collaboration with Arab American scholars and Ethnic Studies practitioners, in order to ensure the best and most accurate program possible for California's students.

California is an example for the rest of the country in so many ways. You have the opportunity here to set a powerful precedent for the inclusion of West Asian & Arab American experiences in education, as well as to teach students about standing up for human rights.

Thank you for your time.

Erin Mathieu