

**From:** allali lallia  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 2, 2020 2:39 PM  
**To:** Deniece Figueroa  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Concern

Dear Instructional Quality Commission Member, Daniece Figueroa

We are The Committee to Support Cultural Diversity in our Schools. We are a group of retired school administrators, retired and active teachers, and parent and community activists who formed in 2016 out of our mutual concern for the bullying of Muslim students in San Diego schools. Since then, our focus has broadened to address Islamophobia of any kind in education.

In 2017, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) found that 42 percent of Muslim students experienced bullying at school because of their religion: twice that of their peers of other religious groups. 1 in 4 had been bullied by a teacher or another adult at school.

Our combined years of experience in education tells us that increased and accurate instruction about the Muslim culture in schools would greatly reduce the negative perceptions of the Arab-American community. We feel, as we hope you do, that knowledge is the key to ending prejudice.

Our current focus is on the California State Ethnic Studies Bill, AB 331, recently presented to the State legislature by Assemblyman Jose Medina, adopted and sent to the Governor, who has now requested that more work be done on it. We are appealing to you, as a recognized public figure, known for your stand on justice and equity, to voice your support for the inclusion of instruction about Arab and Muslim culture into the required State curriculum for all grade levels. Apparently, the Arab-American lessons that appeared in the first draft of the Bill were removed. We are requesting that such invaluable lessons be placed back into the Bill, to be approved by the Governor. We also strongly suggest that EVERY ethnicity be represented on the State Committee for Ethnic Studies.

There is a critical need to address the Islamophobia that affects our students in San Diego County, and in California as a whole. Providing the needed funding for instructional materials and the training of teachers is essential if we are to combat these biases.

Thank you for your continuing commitment to our diverse community. Thank you for your time and energy in doing what you believe is right and just. Making sure that all children feel safe and wanted in their classrooms and schools is one more piece of the ever-growing need for inclusion.

Sincerely,

Lallia Allali

Master of Art in Leadership Studies

Leadership Coach

SDUSD DELAC Chairperson