

From: Ellen Brotsky

Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 3:29 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: Superintendent; [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Include Arab-American Studies in the Model Ethnic Studies Curriculum

I email to express my strong support of the Model Ethnic Studies Curriculum and its inclusion of Arab-American studies under Asian studies. Ethnic studies, like all curriculums, must keep up with changing times if it is to be useful to our young people. Since 9/11, there has been rising anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia in the United States so it is essential that ethnic studies include Arab-American studies.

As a Jewish-American working for peace and human rights in the Middle East, I strongly object to those in the Jewish community who to paint the ESMC as antisemitic because it includes information on the violation of Palestinian human rights occurring in Israel. Acknowledging the history and current situation in Palestine doesn't erase Jewish suffering or knowledge of antisemitism, rather, it strengthens the ability of young Jews and young Arabs to understand one another and work together to defeat those who try to "otherize" both communities. This is what ethnic studies is all about – helping youth listen to, learn about, and empathize with those whose history and narratives are marginalized.

Ellen Brotsky

Mother of two girls who benefitted from the teaching of Ethnic Studies at Berkeley High School
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