

From: Mika Hernandez

Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 3:31 PM

To: Ethnic Studies; Superintendent; [emails redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Include Arab American and Pacific Islander Studies in CA Ethnic Studies

Hello,

My name is Mika Hernandez. I am a fourth generation Asian American here in California, and I was born and raised in the Bay Area. I attended California public school K-12. I am an active and committed community member of Alameda County.

I am writing to express my concern and disappointment about the latest revisions to the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. While I was thrilled by the move to integrate Ethnic Studies into our public schools, the current version **erases** and **excludes** Pacific Islander and Arab American studies and this is not acceptable. The ESMC curriculum must reflect the histories, experiences, and current realities of Arab American and PI communities in order to be comprehensive and accurate.

As an Asian American and a product of the public schools here in Alameda County, I know how life-altering it would have been to see my histories reflected and uplifted through my time in the classroom. I often felt that my stories did not matter. A 2020 report researched and written by the teenage members of Arab Youth Organizing (AYO) found that more than 66% of the students surveyed said they received most of their information on Arabs and/or Muslims from the internet or television; only 2.3% learned about Arabs and/or Muslims at school. It is disheartening to know that our youth may continue to feel as I felt; as if the histories, lineages, and experiences of their ethnic and racial communities do not matter.

Ethnic studies emerged from the desire and need to learn about, uplift, and connect across varied by intertwined third world histories and experiences. Without Arab American and PI studies, this important educational experience is incomplete. Please do not let a diluted version of the ESMC curriculum go through. This will not do justice to the established Ethnic Studies pedagogy and framework. I implore you to pass an ESMC that includes Pacific Islander and Arab American studies course outlines and includes Palestine in Arab American studies.

Thank you for your time.

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mika hernandez