

**From:** Sintia Issa

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 11, 2020 1:40 PM

**To:** Ethnic Studies; Superintendent; [emails redacted]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Include Arab American Studies in CA Ethnic Studies Curriculum

**Sintia Issa - Arab, Bay Area resident. Historian of Arab visual culture, educator, curriculum developer, writer, PhD candidate at UC Santa Cruz.**

First, I write as an Arab who lived through and survived imperial wars in the Middle East from the moment I was born. I believe that challenging imperial wars in the Middle East begins with a non-racist education here, one that underscores geopolitics and the long history of colonialism.

Second, as a Bay-Area residing Arab and community member, I recognize that my community has not been given adequate representation and pedagogical resources to make sense of its history and forge its future. This ESMC is an embodiment of pedagogical inequity, especially that the Arab American community has been an essential part of California, north and south, for many decades.

Therefore, I demand that the original committee reconvenes asap to revise the ESMC and include not only Arab American but also Pacific Islander studies—like us, Pacific Islanders have also endured US imperialism and erasure in educational curricula. Most crucially, Pacific Islanders and Arab American scholars must lead the development of Pacific Islander and Arab American curricula within ESMC.

In order not to perpetuate its historical erasure, Palestine must be included in the new curriculum. This would support communal ties with Palestine, long at risk of being severed. Studying Palestine would also foster a historical consciousness among all youths so they understand imperialism, racism, and settler colonialism from the US to Palestine, as they aspire to a justice-oriented future.

Adding to the long history of US imperialism in the region, today we are witnessing dangerous developments in the US today, returning ghosts of racial violence that never really disappeared. To fight this ugly turn, educational justice is essential, and if it is to begin anywhere in the US, it is here right in California.