

From: Phil
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 8:40 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: Superintendent; [email redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] CA Model Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Dear Members of the CA Board of Education's Instructional Quality Commission (IQC),

I am writing to implore you to keep the CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) intact, including the proposed Arab American studies curriculum.

It's never been clearer how important Ethnic Studies is. The racial disparities in the impact of Covid-19, the xenophobic targeting of Asian Americans as "vectors" of disease, and the national uprising in response to the murder of George Floyd point to the need for anti-racist education: All students need Ethnic Studies in their K-12 curriculum to build empathy, unity and solidarity with each other, strengthening our movements for justice. The ESMC is structured around the core pillars developed by the founders of Ethnic Studies in 1969: American Indian studies, Africana/Black studies, Chicanx/Latinx studies, and Asian American studies. Following a decades-long tradition in higher education, the ESMC includes Arab American studies within Asian American studies. Leading Asian American scholars, including the National Association of Asian American studies, have issued statements defending the inclusion of Arab American studies in the CA ESMC.

As a lawyer who has worked for the protection of refugees from many parts of the world, I have witnessed first-hand the effects of xenophobia and Islamophobia. I have experienced anti-Semitism and have travelled to Israel and Palestine. For these reasons, I know how important it is to include West Asian American studies in the ESMC, including the history and current struggles in Palestine. It is neither anti-Semitic to defend the human rights of everyone nor is it anti-Semitic to include Palestinian history and current movements in ethnic studies.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Phil Weintraub