

From: Samia Shoman
Sent: Thursday, November 12, 2020 8:01 PM
To: Ethnic Studies; Superintendent; [email redacted]
Cc: [email redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Nove 18-19 IQC - Public Comment

Dear Members of the Instructional Quality Commission,
I was born and raised in California, as a matter of fact I grew up in Sacramento. I am a product of CA public schools and universities, and was a public high school Social Science educator for 16 years. For the past 6 years I have been serving as an administrator at the district office level, where I am overseeing the implementation of Ethnic Studies for all 9th graders.

I was also one of the original members of the Model Ethnic Studies Curriculum Committee.

I have the honor to work with 17 teachers district wide in making sure that our students have access to a rigorous and relevant course that pushes them to think critically and builds their capacity to situate themselves in our society in a productive way, understanding the need for social and racial justice, and how to work towards that.

The most important role in my life is being the mother to fourth grade twins. Our family identifies as Palestinian and Muslim American. It is important to me that my children's identities are validated in their educational experiences; that they see themselves in the curriculum in positive ways, and understand the history from which their ancestors come. This is something I never experienced in my K-12 education. Instead I learned of the Arab World only in negative contexts. It is the reason I was embarrassed to have my immigrant parents come to campus and why I felt I needed to leave my Arab identity at home when I went to school each day.

Arab students are often overlooked and ignored. They are coded as 700 (white) in school information systems and have not had a formal place in curriculum. Ethnic Studies is a way to change this. Arab American studies are parts of departments of Asian American studies nationwide. This is why the lesson(s) on Arab Americans should be included in its rightful place in the Asian American section of the Model Curriculum.

I have attached revised lessons that were originally part of the first draft of the curriculum. I would like them to be considered for inclusion in the next draft. They are lessons that honor the immigration stories of Arabs to the US, how they have built their lives here and faced challenges pre- and post - 9/11 and how they have resisted these challenges. The lessons are anchored in Ethnic Studies pedagogy and principles.

Thank you for your consideration,

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Samia Shoman, Ed.D