

**From:** Pamela Burnett  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 27, 2020 2:02 AM  
**To:** [emails redacted]  
**Cc:** [emails redacted]; Ethnic Studies  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Oakland Board Members,

As an alumna of the Oakland Public Schools, grandparent of a current OUSD student, and as a retired University of California educator, I urge you to support the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum led by scholars of color from across California.

The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is important because it provides educational and social benefits, as shown by research measuring greater student attendance, higher gpas, and greater persistence toward graduation. Students who are able to see themselves in context acquire self-esteem, motivation to learn, appreciation of cultural and socioeconomic diversity, and strength of agency on behalf of themselves and others. These qualities are clearly what we need in an adequately educated civil society and healthy democracy.

OUSD's ethnic studies curriculum should be inclusive, bolstering critical OUSD Core values by encompassing, rather than conspicuously overlooking the histories, heritages, and backgrounds of students of Pacific Islander American, Arab American, and Central American descent. How can an OUSD education be respectful, equitable, and culturally responsible to the students of these and other backgrounds if these ethnic studies areas are ignored? How can OUSD avoid assumptions and biases about Pacific Islander Americans, Arab Americans, and Central Americans if knowledge about them is omitted from the curriculum?

To cite a personal example, my granddaughters' other grandmother came to the Bay Area in the early 1980's as a non-English speaking, single mother refugee from El Salvador. I am still bothered by the extent to which my own K-16 education had been profoundly lacking until meeting my new relatives compelled some research. Not only did I gain appreciation for the life-and-death struggles endured by generations of my new family members, I also discovered that knowing more about Central America and its peoples is important to understanding immigration, citizenship, the US, and the role of the US in the world.

Please vote "Yes" on the proposed resolution by directors Torres, Eng, and Hinton to show OUSD's support for Ethnic Studies and our diverse students.  
Thank you for providing a curriculum that is inclusive and complete, so our students can be successful in our diverse society and make better-informed decisions that impact the future.

Sincerely,

Pamela Burnett  
Oakland High School Class of 1966

Grandparent of current Oakland Technical High School student  
University of California Student Affairs Administrator (Retired)  
Remember Them: Champions for Humanity Monument (Past OUSD interdisciplinary curriculum  
resources partner), pro bono docent