

From: Emma Hartung

Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 7:05 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: Superintendent; [emails redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] In support of ESMC & Arab American Studies

Dear Commission,

I am writing in support of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum and specifically the inclusion of Arab American Studies.

As a Jewish American educated in public schools for K-12, an African & African American Studies major during my undergraduate studies at Stanford, a former public school teacher, and now a higher education administrator, I know firsthand how critical ethnic studies curriculum are for students of all ages, both for insight into one's own cultural history and that of others.

Ethnic Studies has always been linked to increases in positive personal, academic, and social outcomes for students, but it has never been as urgent as now, with rises in xenophobic attacks during COVID-19, police and vigilante violence against Black people across the country, and more. In the post-9/11 era, exacerbated by Trump's Muslim ban, Arab American students especially are desperately in need of curriculum that reflects their histories and current realities. Specifically, I never learned about Palestinian or Palestinian American history or current struggles as a student and never felt welcomed to teach that history during my time as a public school teacher, creating a massive knowledge gap and leaving space for dangerous generalizations and assumptions to fill that gap.

We must do better for our young people now that we have the opportunity. The ESMC, Arab American Studies specifically, and opportunities to learn about Palestinian past and present within that are all critical for young people across California to be able to develop a strong sense of themselves and of U.S. and world history. **I hope the commission will take full advantage of this opportunity by approving the ESMC with Arab American Studies and Palestine included!**

Warmly,

Emma Hartung

Santa Clara, CA