

From: Raja Gangopadhy

Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 4:32 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: Superintendent; [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] You must include Arab American Studies in the CA Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Hi,

I understand that the IQC is meeting in August to consider a revised curriculum for Ethnic Studies, and there has been opposition to keeping the CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum intact, including the proposed Arab American studies curriculum.

I am emailing you today as an Arab American born and raised in the United States, and as someone who previously worked in education in a support capacity (not as an educator, but worked closely with educators). I believe strongly that insufficient cultural and historical competency is at the root of many conflicts today, and that learning about Arab culture and history are an essential aspect of any true peace movement.

The question of whether it is antisemitic to cover Arab American studies is a disingenuous one to me. It suggests that Arabs are inherently antisemitic, and that somehow studying our history and culture is in opposition to the Jewish struggle for self-determination and freedom. On the contrary, Arab and Jewish culture have much in common, and an honest study of our cultures would do much to heal wounds in a complex conflict, rather than exacerbate them or unfairly tip the scales of power in favor of one perspective over the other. Instead, it fundamentally changes the conversation. For this reason, the history and current struggles of Palestine must be included in any curriculum.

I sincerely hope you take this request to heart. If you believe in the purpose of education, in the value of knowledge and its contribution to the arc of justice, you must also believe in including Arab American studies in the curriculum. Not to do so is to selectively exclude a body of knowledge essential to understanding the world we live in, and hence it is irresponsible not to expose students to Arab American studies. The knowledge gained will only help learners be better equipped to face the many challenges we as a human race face in the next hundred years.

Thank you,
Raja Gangopadhy