

From: Dahlia Saba
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 7:10 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: Superintendent; [email redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Protect Arab American Studies in the EMSC

To the California Instructional Quality Commission:

I urge you to support the EMSC and include Arab-American studies in the California curriculum. As a Palestinian-American who recently graduated from high school in California, I remember the week we spent learning about Palestine in my world history class being my favorite part of the course. I had never formally learned about the history of my family, especially not in a school setting, and I felt really valued in the classroom knowing that my history could also be taught. By far that week was the week I was most engaged in the content of that World History class.

To teach a complete history of Israel and Palestine is not Anti-Semitic. The purpose of history is to look at the experience of those in the past to understand what is occurring in the present, and true history requires a nuanced understanding of how different groups of people have experienced the same events in vastly different ways. Only through a nuanced understanding of the past can we ever hope to bring peace to the present, and the current refusal in most classrooms across this country to even acknowledge the experience of Palestinians does nothing to bring a peaceful solution to the violence, and only guarantees that the conflict continues for future generations.

It is impossible to have a complete and accurate history of a group of people without consulting them in the process. For that reason, I insist that revisions to Ethnic Studies curricula be made only in collaboration with scholars who represent that community and Ethnic Studies practitioners. This includes any revisions to the way that Arab American studies are taught in school.

Please protect Arab American studies. Without it, any Ethnic Studies curriculum is incomplete.

Best,
Dahlia Saba