

From: Jeneen Nammar

Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 3:43 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: Superintendent; [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please keep Arab American Studies component of the ESMC

Hello,

I am writing today to ask for you to keep the Arab American Studies component of the ESMC. I am a public youth services librarian and Californian. My own father is a Christian Palestinian American and his family was displaced in Jerusalem in 1948. Most of his siblings became Americans through hard work and have tried their best to contribute to our country. When I was growing up in the Texas school system, I never encountered any information in regards to Arab Americans or what my father's family experienced at the creation of Israel. Nor did I hear of Israeli Americans and their contributions to our country. Jewish Studies was of course completely missing too. Well, that was Texas thirty years ago. We've come a long way and this is California. We don't erase children's heritages. California is a leading role model for diversity, non-censorship, and today is an important counter-balance to Texas curriculum.

In regards to concerns of antisemitism, I assure it is entirely unnecessary to avoid the facts of what happened to Palestinians such as my family. It simply happened and is recorded history. In fact there's no way to avoid it if you are teaching contemporary US involvement in the Middle East. There is always a way to convey facts in a respectful and non-censorious manner. Furthermore, if you were to dis-include Arab American Studies in general, you would exclude neighborhoods of Los Angeles and the Bay Area to part of the curriculum- which is a disservice to those children.

Every generation becomes the next history keepers. They are worthy of our trust, and it is important to honor students and their own heritages along the way.

Thank you for your time.

Best Regards,

Jeneen Nammar

Palo Alto, CA