

**From:** JIMENA: Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa on behalf of JIMENA: Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 10, 2020 10:30 AM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Sign Petition Demanding an Inclusive Ethnic Studies Curriculum that Rejects Antisemitism

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September 10th, 2020

21 Elul, 5780

California students deserve a high-quality Ethnic Studies curriculum that teaches the rich ethnic diversity of the Middle East and North Africa. Join us.



**[Click here to sign petition](#)**

***Demand an Inclusive Ethnic Studies Curriculum that Rejects Antisemitism***

In August 2019 and again in July 2020, [a coalition of eleven Mizrahi and Sephardic organizations](#) urged the State of California to include Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) Jews, in its Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC).

Last year and again this summer we submitted full, professionally written classroom lessons for consideration - the only Jewish organizations that did so.

Last month, students and adults from our communities shared their stories and personal experiences in letters and personal testimony, underscoring the need and urgency for lessons on Middle Eastern Jews and antisemitism to be included in the ESMC too.

Our pleas were not enough.

California Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond opted instead to lobby the State Board of Education's advisory commission to include only one ethnic group from the MENA region -- Arab Americans. The commissioners agreed, directing his department to develop a lesson on Arab Americans for approval this November.

Dismissing us and others from the MENA region seeking inclusion -- [Kurds and Iranians of various faiths](#) - the State ignored the rules they must follow - that the ESMC be balanced, portray peoples proportionately, and not discriminate on the basis of nationality, race, ethnicity, or religion.

### **Demand These Four Principles for California's Draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum**

1. California's diverse Middle Eastern and North African populations must be fairly and equitably represented.
2. The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum must include the MENA coalition lesson from, "[Antisemitism and Middle Eastern American Jews](#)," which focuses on the lived experiences Mizrahi Jews in the United States alongside its lessons on Arab Americans (Asian American section of Appendix B).
3. The State of California must draw clear redlines against BDS, antisemitism, and discrimination.
4. The State of California must uphold its promise of transparency and public input in reviewing all proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum content.

### **Take Action by September 30!**

We need thousands to act now - [Click here to sign petition!](#)

All can speak out. If you are a Mizrahi or Sephardic Jew, add a brief description of your family's history and experiences of racialization, discrimination, and

antisemitism IN THE UNITED STATES and share why students would benefit from learning about antisemitism and the stories of Middle Eastern and North Africa Jews.

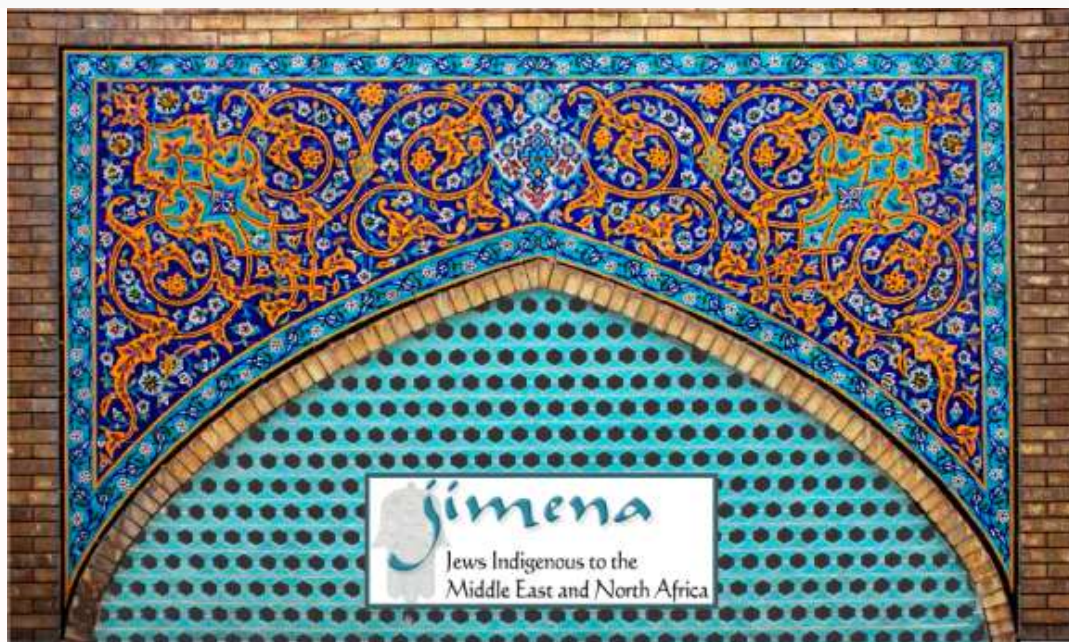
- Call the California Department of Education and leave a message at 916-319-0243
- Have your friends and family do the same.
- Share this on social media and text it to friends. Make sure everyone echoes this message.
- Individual emails can be sent to [ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov](mailto:ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov)



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