

**From:** alia

**Sent:** Monday, August 10, 2020 4:49 PM

**To:** Ethnic Studies; Superintendent; [email redacted]

**Cc:** AROC info

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Include Arab American Studies in CA Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Dear Elected Officials,

I am writing to implore you to include Arab-American studies as part of California's ethnic studies curriculum. I am Arab-American and have been a middle school teacher in Oakland Unified School District for over 10 years. During my time as an educator, I have had many Arab and Pacific Islander students who are extremely proud of their cultures, languages, and identities. Unfortunately, not much of the pre-packaged curriculum includes representation of these groups. In a time when our cultures are actively being attacked by white-supremacist and euro-centric curriculum, it is even more important that we become culturally *sustaining* educators.

Our public education system needs to value and center the experiences of our students. Countless research shows that when students feel seen, their cultures and communities celebrated, that engagement with education and sense of self-worth increases. Now, as President Trump has dubbed Covid-19 the "China Virus," and since the Gulf Wars, we have been in an extremely Islamophobic environment - we need Arab-American students as a part of the ethnic studies curriculum. I can't imagine how my life would have been different if I would have seen myself in what I was studying - I would have been less ashamed, closer to my extended family, and understood more who I was.

Please do not water down what is at the core of ethnic studies: to celebrate the histories and accomplishments of each of our unique cultural heritages.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alia Ghabra

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