

From: MARY SALOME

Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 3:03 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: Superintendent; [emails redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] In support of the CA Model Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Hello,

For almost a year, teachers, activists, students, and community members have been struggling to convince the CA Board of Education to keep the CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum intact, including the proposed Arab American studies curriculum. It's time to heed our call.

As a third-generation Syrian American, I'm tired of feeling invisible or demonized, and I don't want this for young people. We want to be included with accurate portrayals that reflect our lived history and realities.

Arab American scholars and Ethnic Studies practitioners have given this a lot of thought, and believe Arab American studies fall within the rubric of Asian American studies. We are from Southwest Asia. During a time when Islamophobia and xenophobia are writing us out of visibility except through a racist lens, we all need to stand for this.

I need to be explicit in stating that inclusion on its own is not enough. Curricula must include the history and current struggles of Palestinians, from the point of view of Palestinians. We can't let fear of being called anti-Semitic stop us from standing for human rights for all. Many Jewish people can distinguish between anti-Semitism and critique of Israel. Listen to them. Listen to the community of scholars reaching out to you. Listen to me. It's time for change.

Thank you for your time.

Mary Salome