

From: Ifit Borja

Sent: Friday, November 13, 2020 11:39 AM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>; [emails redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Full Inclusion of Arab American Studies & Pacific Islander Studies in the ESMC CA K-12

Dear Members of the IQC, Superintendent Thurmond, and Linda Darling-Hammond,

I am submitting comments in response to the current draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I write to express grave concerns regarding the content that has been removed from the Pacific Islander lessons AND the lack of any Arab American Studies representation in the latest draft of the ESMC

I am Pacific Islander womyn, an Ethnic Studies middle school teacher, and lecturer in Race & Resistance at San Francisco State University, the birthplace of Ethnic Studies. As a womyn of color, I understand the importance of learning and hearing about your peoples and their history. As an Ethnic Studies educator, I have seen first-hand what happens to young people when they learn and hear themselves in lessons and in the classroom, when they hear about the struggle and beauty of their peoples. The change in a young person from the beginning of the year to the end while being in Ethnic Studies is a beautiful thing to witness. Students who used to struggle and had no interest in school, now are invested and wanting to learn and be in school.

While the CDE and Superintendent Thurmond have moved forward to include Pacific Islander curriculum developed by Pacific Islander Studies Educators, I am aware that key content pieces were removed from the ESMC draft regarding Arab American Studies and Pacific Islander Studies.

I urge the commission to address these issues in the ESMC with the following actions:

- **Align all lesson plans to the guiding principles of Ethnic Studies**, which are anti-racist, decolonial and liberatory.
- **Re-insert Arab American studies in its rightful place within Asian American studies**
- **Include the Arab American lesson plan—inclusive of content on Palestine**—submitted to the California Department of Education by members of the original Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) advisory committee.
- **Reject debunked definitions of antisemitism that equate criticism of Israel with antisemitism.**
- **Ensure the Pacific Islander Studies content includes coverage of the complexity and diversity of the Pacific** alongside critiques of power and systems of oppression seen in the work of Epeli Hau'ofa, Lisa Kahaleole Hall, and Kerri Ann Borja's UN Testimony on the Question of Guam.
- **Approve line edits 384, 385, 386, 387, and 388, which delineate the inclusion of important PI Studies resources, discussion questions, and distinctions between regions in Oceania** into the ESMC.

Saina ma'āse (thank you) for the opportunity to submit comments on Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. Please do not hesitate to contact me to provide further information.

Sincerely,

~kerri ann borja
SFUSD Ethnic Studies teacher