

From: Anahita Ghajarrahimi

Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 2:21 PM

To: [emails redacted]; Superintendent; Ethnic Studies

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

To whom it may concern:

As an educator I cannot serve my students while thinking that some of my students' voices and backgrounds have been erased in this curriculum. It's never been clearer how important Ethnic Studies is especially during this political moment that we are living in. The racial disparities in the impact of Covid-19, the xenophobic targeting of Asian Americans as "vectors" of disease, and the national uprising in response to the murder of George Floyd point to the need for anti-racist education:

All students need Ethnic Studies in their K-12 curriculum to build empathy, unity and solidarity with each other, strengthening our movements for justice. The ESMC is structured around the core pillars developed by the founders of Ethnic Studies in 1969: American Indian studies, Africana/Black studies, Chicana/Latina studies, and Asian American studies. Following a decades-long tradition in higher education, the ESMC includes Arab American studies within Asian American studies. Leading Asian American scholars, including the National Association of Asian American studies, have issued statements defending the inclusion of Arab American studies in the CA ESMC. Ethnic Studies has been linked to increases in positive personal, academic, and social outcomes for students.

In the post-9/11 era, exacerbated by Trump's Muslim ban, Arab American students are desperately in need of curriculum that reflects their histories and current realities. TURATH (Teaching Understanding and Representing Arabs Throughout History) is a 2020 report researched and written by the teenage members of Arab Youth Organizing (AYO). According to AYO's findings, more than 66% of the students surveyed said they received most of their information on Arabs and/or Muslims from the internet or television; only 2.3% learned about Arabs and/or Muslims at school.

We need a curriculum that reflects ALL of our students and I demand that Arab Americans studies in its entirety be included in the Ethnic Studies curriculum.

Best regards,

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(she/her/hers)