

From: Barbara Duhl
Sent: Wednesday, November 11, 2020 5:45 PM
To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>
Cc: AROC [email redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Input on Ethnic Studies Curriculum

To the Instructional Quality Commission:

As a retired San Francisco Unified School District middle and high school teacher and the parent of two graduates of our public schools, I am writing to express my concern about recent revisions of the Ethnic Studies Curriculum and to urge you to ensure that Arab American content be placed back into the body of the curriculum. As a Jewish person, I strongly object to inclusion of criticism of the state of Israel as part of the definition of antisemitism. That definition is extremely wrong, dangerous, and chilling to free speech and honest exchange of ideas in our classrooms.

We know, from the demands for racial justice sweeping this county, that it is offensive and dangerous to shunt the histories and perspectives of people of color to the sidelines. These revisions are tone-deaf to the political moment we are living in.

Our children are once again being left to fend for themselves in an increasingly racialized and polarized political climate. California should be a sanctuary, not a place of danger for our students and their families.

Young people in particular face the consequences of Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. Arab and Muslim youth are simultaneously invisibilized and targeted.

For too long, Arab youth have learned little about their history besides offensive and racist images and stereotypes. Arab-American studies curriculum provides a critical intervention to these stereotypes in K-12 education.

Pro-Israel interest groups should not define antisemitism. Definitions that name criticism of Israel as antisemitic are opposed by many Jewish organizations, both within the United States and internationally. These definitions violate our constitutional right to free speech because their application censors virtually all criticism of Israel and advocacy for Palestinian human rights and equality. These definitions also downplay the main source of antisemitism in the United States, which is white nationalism.

**Yours,
Barbara Duhl
San Francisco, CA**