

From: Mark Pickus

Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 4:26 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment on Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

My name is Mark Pickus. I am Jewish, an Oakland native, product of Oakland Public Schools and a retired public school educator. I taught in the New Haven Unified School District in Union City. Before that I was actively involved at UC Berkeley in the 1969 struggle for Ethnic Studies. That fight was about centering the history and narratives of people of color which were marginalized and distorted in an education system based in a white Eurocentric perspective. Arab-American studies was included as part of Asian American Studies and I urge you to restore it there in the model curriculum. Study of the Palestinian diaspora must be part of this. And that includes examining the role that the establishment of the state of Israel on Palestinian land has played on the creation of Palestinian exiles. Ethnic Studies requires a hard look at uncomfortable truths. We could never expect to understand the struggles of indigenous peoples here in the U.S. without a critical look at the role of white European settlement. And we would reject attempts to prevent that examination by labelling it anti-white or anti-European. As a progressive Jew, I completely reject the notion that an examination of Palestinian history and struggle including Israel's role is somehow antisemitic.