

From: Larry Christian

Sent: Friday, November 13, 2020 9:39 AM

To: Ethnic Studies; Superintendent;

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

When the CDE recommended "adding a sample lesson on Arab American Studies that focuses on the Arab American experience in the United States" to Appendix B of the Model Curriculum (see Attachment 11 to Item 2A of the August 13 agenda), the public could reasonably have expected that such a sample lesson would be developed as part of Appendix B. Instead, what we got was a kind of bait-and-switch. The idea of a lesson plan on the Arab American experience in Appendix B was replaced by an expanded appendix with a lesson plan dealing with stereotypes of Arab American in media. There is nothing that addresses Arab American identity or experience.

Instead, what we get is a plain attempt to appease those who have an interest in inhibiting any discussion of Arab American identity and, especially, the role of Palestine in that identity. This effort goes so far as include in 2 places (lesson plan #2 in Appendix D and proposed edit #10 in Appendix C) definitions of antisemitism that includes language intended to marginalize discussion of Palestine and Palestinians. These definitions are offered by organizations well-known for their pro-Israel advocacy.

This use of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum to squelch discussion of the identity of Arab Americans is an example of why a robust inclusion of Arab American studies in the ethnic studies curriculum is so important.

Larry Christian