

Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

August 12th, 2020

Dear Members of the Instructional Quality Commission:

On behalf of the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA) and the Iranian American community at large, I am writing to request the incorporation of more substantial and comprehensive history of Iran and the Iranian people, including Iranian Americans, in the California Department of Education's Ethnic Studies program.

As representatives of the Iranian American community, the majority of whom reside in California, we believe it is vital that the Ethnic Studies program is inclusive of the histories of all ethnic and religious groups, whether majority or minority, from the Middle East, North Africa, and West Asia. As the current recommendations to the Ethnic Studies program stand, we are concerned by the narrow scope of the curriculum covering these diverse communities.

In a time of increased misinformation about our communities, it is more important than ever for state curriculum to accurately reflect the richness, depth, and diversity of Iran and the Iranian people. These histories are not only of extreme benefit to the students who come from these backgrounds, but also to the students who do not share these connections as they learn to navigate the communities in which they reside and become responsible citizens of our increasingly diverse country.

As mentioned above, the Iranian American community's largest population center is in the state of California. Iranian Americans have made substantial contributions to the socio-economic and cultural fabric to the state of California and the U.S. at large and are especially prominent in the fields of science, technology, innovation, medicine, finance, law, and business. Our community, as well as the aforementioned communities, are Americans whose history deserves sufficient recognition in California's Ethnic Studies program. We welcome the opportunity to connect experts in Iranian history and culture with the commission for the development of such inclusive curriculum.

We ask that the Instructional Quality Commission of the California Department of Education take these recommendations into consideration in its upcoming meeting on August 13th. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns and please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Respectfully yours,



Leila Golestaneh Austin, PhD
Executive Director