

A MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT FORD MORTHEL: ARAB AMERICAN & SOUTH WEST ASIAN NORTH AFRICAN (SWANA) HERITAGE MONTH



Dear Berkeley Unified Community,

Last year, BUSD joined several local and regional school districts and our neighbor, UC Berkeley, in honoring Arab American Heritage Month for the first time. In an effort to uplift a growing part of our community and move toward inclusivity and evolving concepts of language and community, this year we are adding SWANA, which is an acronym that stands for South West Asian North African.

National Arab American Heritage Month was recognized in April 2021 by President Biden and was launched as an initiative by the Arab American Foundation in 2017. Our district joins the country in recognizing, affirming, and celebrating the many historical and ongoing contributions of the Arab American and SWANA communities both here in Berkeley and beyond- both this month and every month.

The TK-8th Grade Teaching Resource Guide is a compilation of resources that our educators can incorporate into units and lessons throughout the year. The Family Guide is a set of resources that families can explore both now and in the future.

As part of Berkeley Unified School District's values and beliefs, "We take pride in our diversity." We recognize that the communities that fall under the Arab American and SWANA umbrella are richly diverse and unique: from country of origin, language, and religion- to history, culture, and lived experiences. While not all Arab and SWANA countries may be specifically represented in this set of resources, they were created in the spirit of taking great pride in our diverse community and adapting to meet the ever changing needs of our students and families.

We know that there are many examples of how students, staff, school sites and school communities in BUSD are uplifting the achievements and heritage of Arab American and SWANA heritage peoples all year and especially during the month of April.

This year we want to especially uplift one of the linked resources, the Youth Guide created by Arab American youth leaders, which centers student voices and experiences around racism, the rich diversity of the heritages and cultures of Arab Americans & SWANA peoples, as well as the histories and narratives of immigration and resilience.

السلام عليكم
As-aalaam alaikum.
Peace be upon you.

Enikia Ford Morthel
Superintendent, Berkeley Unified School District

THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO CELEBRATE ARAB AMERICAN & SOUTH WEST ASIAN NORTH AFRICAN (SWANA) HERITAGE MONTH BUSD FAMILY GUIDE

Compiled by Joemy Ito-Gates, Ethnic Studies TSA for Berkeley Unified School District in collaboration with Arab American & SWANA community members



Yazan Mesmar

1. LISTEN

Listen to the Lived Experiences of Arab American & SWANA People

- [YOUTH GUIDE & POSTER](#) created by Arab Resource & Organizing Center youth leaders
- [VIDEO](#) Fireworks at Sea: The Power of Yemeni American Women
- [VIDEO](#) "Takalam! Oakland Arab Youth Speaking Up!"
- [PODCAST](#) The Queer Arabs Podcast
- [VIDEO](#) Arab, How You See Me

2. LEARN

Learn About Arab American & SWANA History and Local Organizations

- [OVERVIEW TEXT](#) Arab Americans: History, Culture, and Contributions
- [LIST](#) of Arab American & SWANA heritage people to know
- [VIDEO](#) the Islamic Golden Age of Science
- [VIDEO](#) The Ethiopian Jews of Israel
- [WEBINAR](#) Anti Black Racism in Southwest Asian and North Africa + Diaspora
- [Arab Resource and Organizing Center](#)
- [Golden Thread Productions](#)
- [Middle East Children's Alliance](#)
- [Center for Middle Eastern Studies at UCB](#)

[BUSD Reading List for Arab American & SWANA Heritage Month](#)



Portrait of Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim, Sudanese politician and women's rights activist by Nourie Flayhan

3. LIFT UP

Lift Up and Celebrate Arab American & SWANA Cultures With Your Family

- [VISIT](#) the virtual gallery tours at the Arab American National Museum
- [WATCH](#) videos of Zawaya, Arabic Arts organization ASWAT concerts
- [ENJOY](#) videos of English and Arabic story time from the Arab American National Museum
- [MUSIC VIDEO](#) "Love Them Anyway" by student activist, Faiza Almontaser
- [ARABIC & FRENCH](#) songs by Leila Milki
- [LEARN](#) about the world's oldest university, The University of Al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco, which was founded by Fatima al-Fihri