



December 13, 2023

The Honorable Miguel Cardona
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202
Via email: miguel.cardona@ed.gov

Dear Mr. Secretary,

In the wake of the October 7th terrorist attack in Israel, the world has been appalled and shocked by the behavior of teachers and students at American academic institutions. From Ivy League institutions to K-12 classrooms, we have watched in horror as teachers and students have sided with a terrorist organization over innocent victims and children. Jewish students and teachers have had to barricade themselves behind locked classroom doors out of fear for their safety. And high school students have marched through school hallways and participated in school walkouts while chanting antisemitic slogans—even though such conduct directly violates content-neutral restrictions in their school's code of conduct. Events like these have unfolded from coast to coast. School officials have largely failed to act.

As parent organizations and concerned advocates who represent communities and school districts across the country, we urge you to direct the Department to take immediate action to address the inaccurate and antisemitic material and curriculum in K-12 schools that continue to create divisive and hostile environments for both students and staff and to effectively deny students equal access to an education.

Last week, the presidents of Harvard University, University of Pennsylvania, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology testified on Capitol Hill about the raging antisemitism on their campuses. Sadly, the same ideology that has captured their institutions is pervasive in our K-12 schools and baked into teacher training programs. Teachers' unions wield enormous power and they too have become beholden to this toxic ideology.

The evidence is [overwhelming](#) and well documented. K-12 school districts are taking advantage of their captive audience of students by using mandated classes and curriculum to teach appalling material, often under the guise of ["ethnic studies."](#) These courses teach students to dehumanize people based on race, ethnicity and other identity markers. The ethnic studies courses in the [Santa Ana Unified School District](#) courses blame Israel for "ethnic cleansing," accuse Israel of UN war crimes, and refer to Israelis as an "extremist illegal Jewish settler population." [Jefferson Union High School District's](#) ethnic studies curriculum includes a lesson on colonialism that focuses on "Palestinian dispossession of lands/identity/culture through Zionist settler colonialism." These examples are not outliers; it is illustrative of what ethnic studies courses look like from Seattle to Los Angeles to Boston.

[Milwaukee Public Schools](#) held a contest for students promoting "Black Lives Matter at School" just days after the organization released a public statement that accused Israel of "apartheid" and "attempted genocide." In a [Los Angeles Unified School District](#), classroom decorations at the Alexander Hamilton High School in Los Angeles include posters that say "Make Israel Palestine Again," "F*** the Police" and "F*** Amerikkka." Immediately after the October 7th massacre, [Revere Public Schools](#) superintendent sent an email to staff promoting a resource that claimed "Israeli terrorism has been significantly worse than that of the Palestinians."

These are just a few examples that provide a glimpse into what can only be described as a crisis in our schools. The ideological and activist curriculum rampant in K-12 education is neither focused on teaching knowledge or facts nor designed to encourage a healthy exchange of ideas; it is designed to brainwash children into becoming activists for specific political causes that engage in the dehumanization of others. This is educational malpractice. It is driving division and distrust and has created an unsafe environment that effectively denies students, especially Jewish students, equal access to education because they are not included in the so-called "hierarchy of oppression" that now drives so much school policy and instruction.

Inaction is no longer an option.

American parents expect that their children will be able to learn in safe environments at school, free from threats, harassment, and intimidation. The past two months have shown that this is not the case for thousands of students from coast to coast. We request that you leverage the Department's full authority to not only end unsafe environments in the country's K-12 schools, but to ensure that federal resources are not spent on creating and fueling environments that effectively deny students equal access to education. Now more than ever, families need assurance that their children's classrooms are free from inaccurate and antisemitic content.

Sincerely,

Parents Defending Education
American Education Advocates
Awake Americans
Awake Illinois
Baltimore County Parent and Student Coalition
California Foundation for Educational Rights (CFER)
CAPA Nova
Colorado Parent Advocacy Network
Concerned Parents of Round Rock ISD
Courage Is A Habit
Education Veritas
Fight For Schools
Florida Citizens Alliance
Freedom In Education
Hope For PA
Minnesota Parents Alliance
Moms For Liberty
New Trier Neighbors

Olentangy For Educational Integrity
Parents Unite
Parents United For Freedom
Parents United RI
Power2Parent
Protect Ohio Children
Protect Our Kids Now
Protective Parent Coalition
Restore Childhood
Scottsdale Unites For Educational Integrity
SpeakVT
Tri-Town Family Alliance
Truth In Education
United Against Racism In Education
Utah Parents United
Virginia Moms For America
Virginia Mavens
West Valley Parents Uniting

cc: Honorable James Kvall, Under Secretary of Education
Honorable Catherine Lhamon, Assistant Secretary, Office for Civil Rights