

House Committee on Education and Workforce

Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education

Understanding the Root Causes of Antisemitism in K-12 Education

BRANDY SHUFUTINSKY

Director, Education and National Security Program

Foundation for Defense of Democracies

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Chairman Riley, Vice Chair Miller, Ranking Member Bonamici, members of the subcommittee, on behalf of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies' (FDD's) program on Education and National Security, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

There has been a surge of antisemitism in our nation's schools, both at the university and K-12 levels. The terrorist attacks waged against Israel on October 7, 2023, sparked much of what Jewish and Zionist students and educators are facing on campuses. However, anti-Jewish bigotry has been on an upward trend in educational spaces for several years prior.

Elected officials and community leaders have started to address the problem in educational settings and materials, but there is a considerable amount of work to be done to counter this intentional phenomenon.

FDD's Education and National Security program is researching its root causes, which include domestic malign actors and foreign funding. We have started to uncover some disturbing findings.

There are multiple ways anti-Jewish ideology is becoming institutionalized in K-12 education, including teacher training programs, foreign-funded learning materials, radical union members, and curriculum development organizations.

FDD has found foreign funding going directly to developing curriculum and funding K-12 teachers' salaries in multiple states. Multiple public school districts receive funds from Qatari Foundation International, an instrument of the Qatari royal family that is somehow able to operate as a 501(c)(3) in the United States outside of Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA) regulations.

Our research has also found university education departments to be a source that spreads anti-Jewish biased materials into K-12 schools. The connections between university education departments and K-12 school districts must not be ignored.

Some of the leading state university systems in the United States have been actively and directly connected to the antisemitic materials being taught in the K-12 system. Approximately three-quarters of California's public school teachers are graduates of a University of California program,¹ with additional teachers coming from the California State University system. The City University of New York system provides one-third of New York City's new teachers.² In Illinois,

¹ "Fact Sheet: California K-12 teachers educated at the University of California," *University of California, Institutional Research and Academic Planning*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/files/uc-educated-k-12-teachers.pdf>)

² "Admissions," *City University of New York*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.cuny.edu/admissions/undergraduate/programs/education>)

almost one in six teachers is a graduate of Illinois State University, the leading teacher provider in the Midwest.³

FDD has uncovered evidence that the nation's largest teachers' unions, such as United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), for example, are perpetuating anti-Zionism and antisemitism in Los Angeles schools by endorsing antisemitic training and antisemitic organizations

Across the nation, groups that are hostile to the Jewish state and even to the Jewish people have found multiple avenues of influence through which they can shape our education system. They often work quietly, benefiting from the widespread assumption that American schools would never allow bigotry to permeate their curricula. The most pressing need right now is for transparency, so that parents and their elected representatives can see what is taught in their children's classrooms and who is paying for it.

Domestic Malign Actors

Many parents believe that curriculum and lesson plans are standardized by state or federal governments. This is not true. Although state- and district-level policies guide teaching standards, teachers in K-12 schools have great flexibility to create the lessons they teach to their students. They often rely on outside resources, choosing learning materials, books, and video clips, to build their own curricula.

Outside organizations frequently provide professional development and free or low-cost curricula that teachers adopt. Partnerships are common between public school districts and community organizations. These partnerships often bring resources, tools, and services into schools. They also serve as a method for encouraging positive relationships between schools and local community members. Unfortunately, these partnerships can have unintended consequences, such as politicizing the classroom or ushering antisemitism into our K-12 systems.

In recent years, bad actors have taken advantage of this school-community dynamic by designing and promoting learning materials that fuel anti-Jewish bigotry. California's 2021 legislation requiring high school students to complete one ethnic studies course prior to graduation is a case in point. Many school districts already offered elective courses introducing students to the history and culture of America's racial, ethnic, or religious minorities. However, organizations sharing a critical theory agenda pushed for a new required course to tell the stories of select American minorities through oppressed/oppressor narratives developed by faculty in ethnic studies departments in the University of California system and elsewhere. The 2021 legislation did not clearly require a new ethnic studies course based on these narratives; however, some school districts interpreted this new legislation as either a requirement or an invitation to create such a course. Within a short time, several community organizations exploited the opportunity

³ "Annual Report: 2018," *Illinois State University College of Education*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://education.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/annual-report/2018%20College%20of%20Education%20Annual%20Report.pdf>)

and began receiving six-figure contracts to develop school and/or professional development curricula that presented an anti-Jewish bias and rewritten history. These organizations include Xicanx Institute for Teaching and Organizing (XITO) and the Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA), which I will later describe.

Additionally, school districts have turned to community organizations to provide culturally responsive anti-racist programs. Some of these organizations, such as Woke Kindergarten and the Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC), also bring antisemitic perspectives into the K-12 environment.

Community organizations have also partnered with school districts to provide for other needs as standards evolve to reflect perceived social values or new curricular goals.

Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC)

On October 7, 2023, as Hamas and other Gazans were kidnapping, raping, torturing, and murdering Israelis, an AROC post on Instagram stated, “Palestine is rising! Gaza is rising!” — in effect, an endorsement of the massacre.⁴



AROC is a San Francisco-based community organization with the following stated mission:

“We organize to fight for racial and economic justice and the dignity and liberation of our Arab, and Muslim communities ... We see our struggles here as a domestic manifestation of global militarism and racial capitalism, and as the root causes of the political, social and economic instability of our homelands. **In that spirit, we see the liberation of our people as inextricably tied to the liberation of all oppressed people.**”⁶

⁴ Aroc updates, *Instagram*, October 7, 2023.

(https://www.instagram.com/p/CyHUMSOoHGGe/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “About,” *Arab Resource & Organizing Center (AROC)*, accessed September 8, 2025.

(<https://www.araborganizing.org/about/>)

In July 2023, the San Francisco Unified School District signed a memorandum of understanding with AROC to provide leadership development, cultural empowerment, and academic support programs directly to students.



Somehow, AROC interprets its purported mission of social justice and liberation as a reason to cheer Hamas’ antisemitic violence. Less than two weeks after it celebrated October 7, AROC went on to publish a Student Walkout for Gaza Toolkit, calling on high school students to walk out of their schools on October 18, 2023 — not to protest murdered Jews, but to oppose Israeli self-defense, which it described as “genocide.”⁷



Xicanx Institute for Teaching and Organizing (XITO)

⁷ “National Student Walkout for Gaza: Wednesday, October 18, 2023,” *Arab Resource & Organizing Center*, accessed September 8, 2025.

(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s5qgE6HeVXjNiWuA9i9R591vOn3oIdpcSAhlmOCGaz8/edit?tab=t.0>)

⁸ Arocupdates, *Instagram*, October 16, 2023. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/Cyc6icBOWyB>)

The Xicanx Institute for Teaching and Organizing (XITO)⁹ is a nonprofit organization that provides professional development for teachers and administrators and develops K-12 curriculum. According to a recent federal tax filing, XITO has provided “professional development to over 3,000 K-12 educators across the country.”¹⁰

XITO regularly offers workshops that accuse Jews of taking part in a “settler colonial movement” — in essence, denying the historic relationship of the Jewish people to the land of Israel, a key premise of those who seek to dismantle the Jewish state.



XITO partners with other community groups, such as the Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA).¹¹ Together, they presented “Settler Colonialism From Turtle Island to Palestine” as a workshop for ethnic studies.¹²

Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA)

A recent report published by the Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI) highlighted a connection between the Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA), makers of the “Teach Palestine Project,” and the Union of Health Work Committees (UHWC) in Gaza, which is closely connected to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).¹³

The PFLP is a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization.¹⁴ Connections between the terror group and UHWC came to light after the 2019 murder of 17-year-old Israeli Rina Shnerb —

⁹ “About,” *Xicanx Institute for Teaching & Organizing (XITO)*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.xicanxinstitute.org/about>)

¹⁰ 2022 Form 990, *Center for Community Education*, November 30, 2023. (<https://app.impala.digital/view-990/378392/2023>)

¹¹ “Gaza Emergency,” *Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA)*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.mecaforpeace.org/>)

¹² “Past Institutes,” *Xicanx Institute for Teaching & Organizing (XITO)*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.xicanxinstitute.org/all-institutes>)

¹³ “Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA) Counter-Terrorism Brief,” *Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI)*, April 7, 2025. (<https://networkcontagion.us/reports/4-7-25-middle-east-childrens-alliance-meca-counter-terrorism-brief>)

¹⁴ U.S. State Department, Bureau of Counterterrorism, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>)

Israeli authorities charged several UHWC employees with fraud and other illicit financial activity on behalf of the PFLP.¹⁵ According to the watchdog group NGO Monitor, a 1993 USAID-engaged audit identified UHWC as an affiliate of the PFLP.¹⁶

The main link between MECA and the UHWC is Mona el-Farra, MECA's director of Gaza programming and a former deputy director of the UHWC.¹⁷

MECA is open about the fact that it has sent money directly to UHWC, and claims the money was for "humanitarian purposes."¹⁸ According to an article el-Farra published in November 2023, she is a current member of UHWC, not just a former deputy director. The article, titled "From Gaza with rage," condemned Israel repeatedly without mentioning Hamas' crimes.¹⁹

According to another report from NCRI, New York City public school teachers have also used Teach Palestine content in their classrooms, as their contract gives them discretion to do so. The NCRI report also found that a caucus within the United Federation of Teachers, a union representing over 200,000 active and retired teachers, recommended resources from Teach Palestine and Rethinking Schools for classroom use.²⁰

¹⁵ "Al Awda Health And Community Association," *Front Line Defenders*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/organization/al-awda-health-and-community-association>); Matthew Levitt, "A Blurred Line Between Civil Society and Terrorism," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, November 2021, No. 112. (https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/sites/default/files/pdf/PolicyNote112Levittv2_0.pdf)

¹⁶ "AWDA (formerly Union of Health Work Committees – UHWC), *NGO Monitor*, May 19, 2025. (<https://ngo-monitor.org/ngos/union-health-workers-committee>)

¹⁷ "Gaza Emergency," Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA), accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.mecaforpeace.org>)


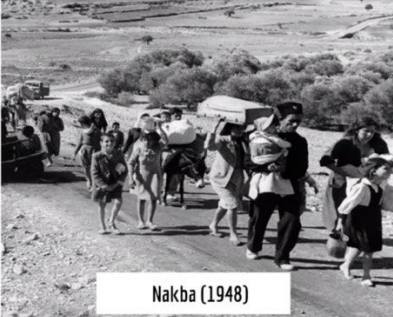
¹⁸ "Medical Aid Arrives in Gaza," *Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA)*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.mecaforpeace.org/meca-projects/medical-aid-arrives-in-gaza>)

¹⁹ Dr. Mona El-Farra, "From Gaza With Rage," *Eurasia Review*, November 17, 2023. (<https://www.eurasiareview.com/17112023-from-gaza-with-rage-oped>)

²⁰ "Entryism Exposed," *Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI)*, October 2024. (<https://networkcontagion.us/wp-content/uploads/Entryism-20241015-V1.pdf>)



Anchoring Palestine in a Settler Colonial Framework

Trail of Tears (1838)

- Long history of dispossession; expulsion; and ethnic cleansing
- History continues and tactics are varied

Nakba (1948)

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Woke Kindergarten

Although California’s ethnic studies legislation is aimed at high schools, anti-Jewish activism is touching children in their early elementary school years. Programs like Woke Kindergarten target 5-year-old students with a cartoon character named “Lil’ Comrade” and materials like the So You Want a Free Palestine? A Resistance Guide for Kids.²² Additionally, Woke Kindergarten has worked with school districts across the country, providing training and curriculum development.

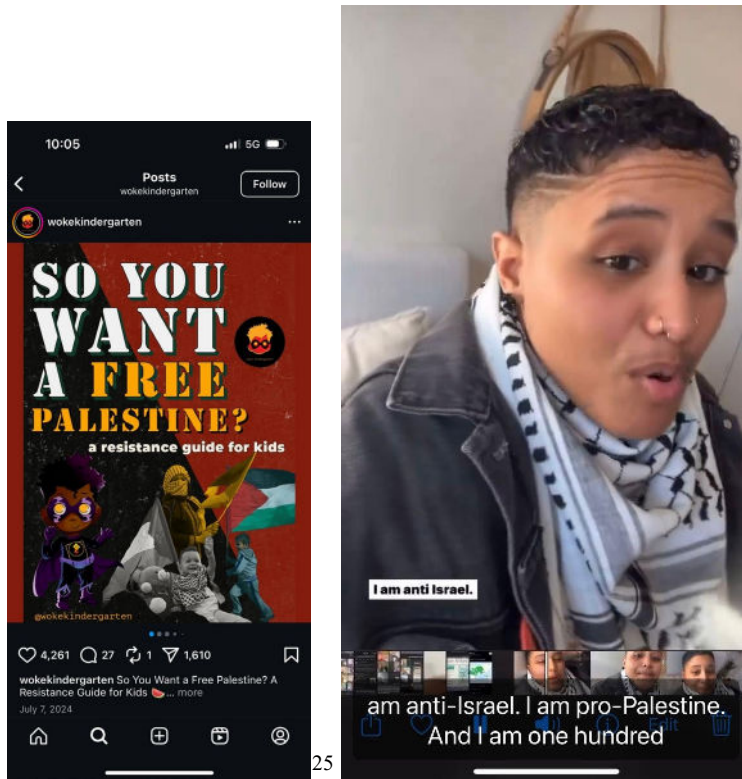
²¹ “Past Institutes,” *Xicanx Institute for Teaching & Organizing (XITO)*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.xicanxinstitute.org/all-institutes>)

²² “Home,” *Woke Kindergarten*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.wokekindergarten.org/>);

Wokekindergarten, *Instagram*, July 7, 2024. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/C9JXyPqsqki/?igsh=OTZhMjZxc3JsaWpw>)

Recently, Hayward Unified School District (HUSD) awarded Woke Kindergarten a \$250,000 three-year contract.²³

After the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack, the executive director of Woke Kindergarten, Akeia Gross, posted a video on social media, stating, “I am anti-Israel.... Israel has no right to exist. I believe the United States has no right to exist.” HUSD cancelled its contract with Woke Kindergarten a few months later, yet the district superintendent insisted that such opinions did not hinder the program’s implementation in Hayward schools. It has been reported that Gross is currently teaching in a New York City kindergarten.²⁴



²³ Madilynne Medina, “East Bay school terminates \$250K contract with controversial anti-racist program,” *SFGate*, February 15, 2024. (<https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/hayward-school-woke-kindergarten-ended-contract-18670432.php>)

²⁴ “Woke Kindergarten’ activist now teaching in NYC Kindergarten,” *K12 Trackers*, August 31, 2025. (<https://k12trackers.substack.com/p/woke-kindergarten-activist-now-teaching>)

²⁵ Wokekindergarten, *Instagram*, July 7, 2024. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/C9JXyPqsgki/?igsh=OTZhMjZxc3JsaWpw>)



PARCEO

PARCEO was established in 2011 as a research, resource, and education institute that collaborates with community organizations and educational institutions. One of PARCEO's recent endeavors was the creation of the Curriculum on Antisemitism from a Framework of Collective Liberation.²⁶ Resources on the PARCEO website include a video presentation by Lara Kiswani, executive director of AROC, which celebrated the "rising" of October 7.²⁷

Using its curriculum, PARCEO has held training sessions for educators in multiple school districts, including the San Francisco Unified School District, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and New York City.²⁸

After antisemitic incidents in San Francisco schools, the American Jewish Committee (AJC) was brought into the district to provide mandatory training to the school community. However, fringe pro-Hamas groups, like the misnamed Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), objected to AJC support for the Jewish state while praising PARCEO.²⁹ Public radio reported that, "The training sessions led by the American Jewish Committee, initially scheduled for last month, were canceled because parents and community groups expressed concern about the organization's pro-Israel position."³⁰

²⁶ "Curriculum on Antisemitism from a Framework of Collective Liberation," *PARCEO*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.antisemitismcurriculum.org>)

²⁷ "Handouts & Resources," *PARCEO* (<https://www.antisemitismcurriculum.org/copy-of-resources>)

²⁸ Dave Huber, "School district offers 'alternate' antisemitism training b/c original defends Israel's right to exist," *The College Fix*, October 19, 2024. (<https://www.thecollegefix.com/school-district-offers-alternate-antisemitism-training-b-c-original-defends-israels-right-to-exist>); Educatenotindoctrinate, *Instagram*, February 11, 2025. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/DF9Ts75RmfO>)

²⁹ "The Root of Violence Is Oppression," *Jewish Voice for Peace*. (<https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/2023/10/07/statement23-10-07/>)

³⁰ Riley Cooke, "SFUSD Antisemitism Training Sparks Controversy as Some Educators Opt for Alternative," *KQED*, October 10, 2024. (<https://www.kqed.org/news/12008739/sfusd-antisemitism-training-sparks-controversy-as-some-educators-opt-for-alternative>)

Supported by the local teachers' union, several teachers boycotted the mandatory AJC training and attended the one facilitated by PARCEO.³¹ Seth Morrison, a JVP spokesperson, attacked AJC for weaponizing the concept of antisemitism.”³²

University Departmental Influence on K-12

There is a clear connection between university campuses and what is taught in neighboring K-12 school districts. Many school districts partner with local colleges and universities, relying on resources developed by academic institutions to bolster classroom materials.

As school districts move away from traditional textbook-based curricula, curriculum developers often partner with universities and academics to develop web-based learning resources. This makes it possible for curricula to undergo edits without having to reissue entire textbooks.

In early 2025, it was reported³³ that antisemitic curricula developed by Brown University's Choices Program were distributed to over 8,000 K-12 school districts across all 50 states.³⁴ The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism Policy (ISGAP) reported that the Qatar Foundation International (QFI) collaborated with the Choices Program, which, through the years, has drastically changed the tone of the curriculum and restricted access to it by placing it on a password-protected platform.³⁵ This raises three major issues that are fueling anti-Jewish bigotry in K-12 schools, including (1) a foreign power influencing what is being taught in American K-12 classrooms, (2) a lack of transparency in what is being taught, and (3) universities having a significant impact on K-12 education.

The University of California, Santa Cruz

The University of California, Santa Cruz's (UCSC's) Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Department (CRES) promotes the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (LESMC) on their website.³⁶

³¹ Dave Huber, "School district offers 'alternate' antisemitism training b/c original defends Israel's right to exist," *The College Fix*, October 19, 2024. (<https://www.thecollegefix.com/school-district-offers-alternate-antisemitism-training-b-c-original-defends-israels-right-to-exist>)

³² Riley Cooke, "SFUSD Antisemitism Training Sparks Controversy as Some Educators Opt for Alternative," *KQED*, October 10, 2024. (<https://www.kqed.org/news/12008739/sfUSD-antisemitism-training-sparks-controversy-as-some-educators-opt-for-alternative>)

³³ David Israel, "New Report Uncovers Qatari Influence and Anti-Israel Bias in US K-12 Education," *Jewish Press*, March 13, 2025. (<https://www.jewishpress.com/news/middle-east/qatar/new-report-uncovers-qatari-influence-and-anti-israel-bias-in-us-k-12-education/2025/03/13>)

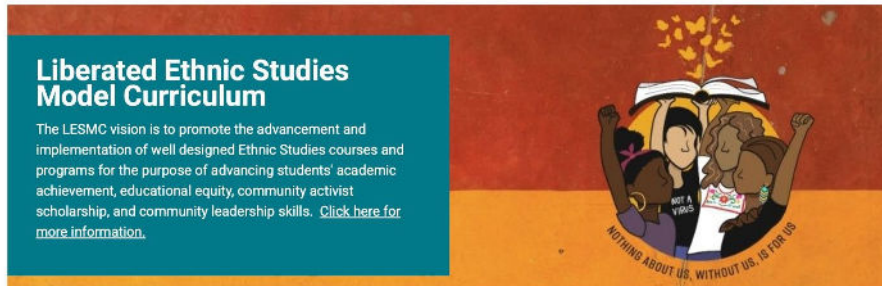
³⁴ "Foreign Influence and Anti-Israel Bias in K-12 Classrooms," *The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism & Policy*, March 2025. (https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/K12_Report_Final_20250310.pdf)

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ "Critical Race & Ethnic Studies," *University of California, Santa Cruz*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://cres.ucsc.edu>); "Home," *Liberated Ethnic Studies: Model Curriculum Consortium*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.liberatedethnicstudies.org>)

CRITICAL RACE & ETHNIC STUDIES

About Undergraduate Graduate Faculty Courses



Members of the LESMC include the authors of the original draft of California’s Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, which promotes anti-Israel ideology, targeting Jewish identity.³⁷ The Liberated Ethnic Studies Coalition celebrated the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack, posting the “Free Palestine” graphic below on their social media.

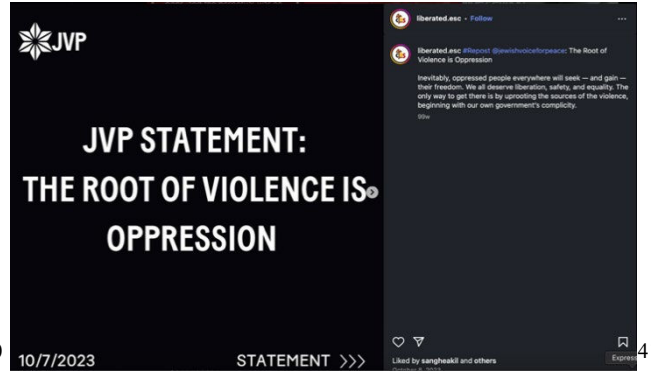


These same activists celebrated the terrorist attack with another social media post, stating, “Inevitably, oppressed people everywhere will seek — and gain — their freedom. We all deserve liberation, safety, and equality. The only way to get there is by uprooting the sources of the violence, beginning with our own government’s complicity.”³⁹

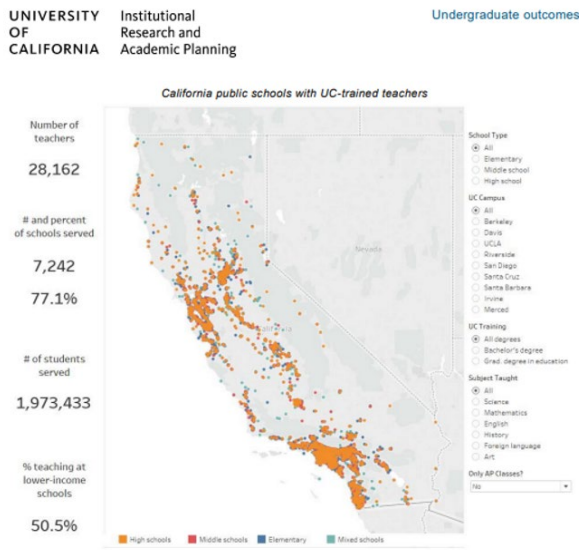
³⁷ John Fensterwald, “‘Liberated’ ethnic studies courses challenged amid allegations of antisemitism,” *EdSource*, August 30, 2024. (<https://edsources.org/2024/liberated-ethnic-studies-course-challenged-amid-allegations-of-antisemitism/718347>)

³⁸ Liberated.esc, *Instagram*, October 8, 2023. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CyJr8wVAXUX>)

³⁹ *Ibid.*



UCSC is the recipient of a grant that will fund new graduates as they begin their teaching careers in Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Salinas Union High School District, and Santa Cruz City Schools.⁴²



Almost 2 million public school students take classes from UC-trained teachers every year.²

UCLA Teacher Certificate in Ethnic Studies — Rethinking Schools: Teaching Palestine

When considering the root causes of antisemitism in K-12 education, one must consider the teacher education programs that equip educators with pedagogical frameworks, teaching resources, and guidance on managing classrooms.

⁴⁰ Liberated.esc, *Instagram*, December 18, 2023. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/C1AW6B2g5Yy>)

⁴¹ Liberated.esc, *Instagram*, October 8, 2023. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CyJar-qPdbK>)

⁴² Allison Arteaga Soergel, “For future teachers, state funding puts dreams within reach,” *University of California, Santa Cruz*, May 30, 2025. (<https://news.ucsc.edu/2025/05/for-future-teachers-state-funding-puts-dreams-within-reach>)

⁴³ “Fact Sheet: California K-12 teachers educated at the University of California,” *University of California, Institutional Research and Academic Planning*. (https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/_files/uc-educated-k-12-teachers.pdf)

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) produces the largest number of California public school teachers, with approximately 76 percent of all public school teachers across the state receiving an education from one of its programs.⁴⁴

Number of teachers and schools with post-1999 UC training, by UC campus

	Berkeley	Davis	UCLA	Riverside	San Diego	Santa Cruz	Santa Barbara	Irvine	Merced
Number of teachers	2,788	4,215	5,214	3,412	2,453	2,825	3,816	3,330	175
Number of schools	1,692	2,459	2,680	1,915	1,704	1,870	2,590	2,151	169
% teachers <50 mi. from campus	65%	45%	76%	73%	46%	51%	20%	74%	40%

UC-trained teachers work in 7,200 California public schools, or 3 out of 4 schools in the state.

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UCLA’s K-12 Ethnic Studies Certificate program is using Teaching Palestine, published by Rethinking Schools, as a resource for the UCLA K-12 Ethnic Studies Certificate program.⁴⁶



⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ “UCLA Ethnic Studies Certificate Program For TK-12 Teachers, *UCLA Institute of American Cultures*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.teachethnicstudies.org>); “Teaching Palestine,” *rethinking schools*, accessed September 7, 2025. (<https://rethinkingschools.org/books/teaching-palestine>)

⁴⁷Zinneducationproject, *Instagram*, August 8, 2025. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/DNGO38DANIh>)

According to a report published by the North American Values Institute (NAVI), Teaching Palestine presents prejudicial views of Israel and Jewish history. The authors claim, “We are not biased,” yet one then declares they are “against the state of Israel.”⁴⁸

The resources used in Teaching Palestine not only promote a biased view of Israel but also spread one-sided ideas about U.S. history, as indicated by the cartoon below.



Note: PDFs of graphic organizers, articles, and other materials described in this unit are in the “Resources” column of the Borders and Walls Unit Outline at teachpalestine.org.

Rethinking Schools: Teaching Palestine

As the House Education and Workforce Committee widens its investigation into rampant antisemitism on UC campuses, attention should be paid to the influence of the University of California and other state universities on K-12 schools.⁴⁹

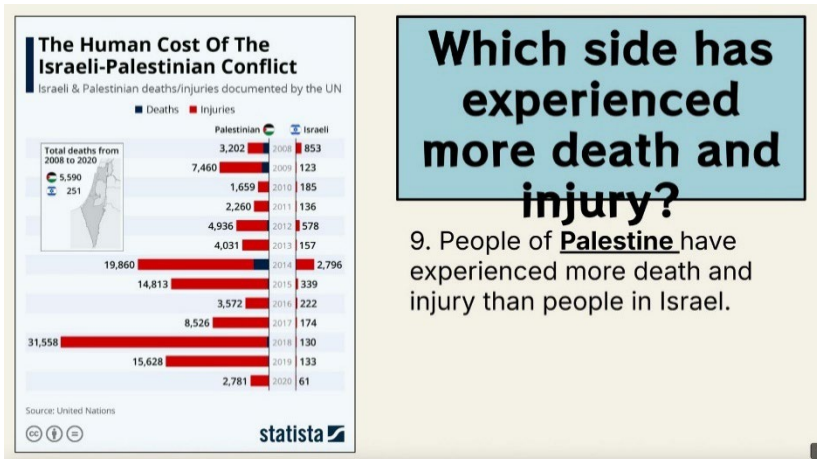
Sequoia-Union High School District

During the 2023-24 academic year, an ethnic studies teacher from the Sequoia-Union High School District in Northern California caused a firestorm when one of their ethnic studies lessons

⁴⁸ “Backgrounder: Rethinking Schools’ Teaching Palestine,” *North American Values Institute*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://45557309.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/45557309/NAVI%20Resources/Backgrounder:%20Rethinking%20Schools%E2%80%99%20Teaching%20Palestine.pdf>)

⁴⁹ Jaweed Kaleem, “GOP widens UC antisemitism investigations, hitting UCLA, UC San Francisco medical schools,” *The Los Angeles Times*, August 30, 2025. (<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/gop-widens-uc-antisemitism-investigations-hitting-ucla-uc-san-francisco-medical-schools/ar-AA1Ldegp?ocid=BingNewsSerp>)

used a video clip created by TRT World, the Turkish state broadcaster.⁵⁰ The clip whitewashed Hamas terrorism while claiming the group only seeks statehood for the West Bank and Gaza, rather than the destruction of the Jewish state.



Not only did the ethnic studies lesson use antisemitic tropes to justify the Hamas-led October 7 terrorist attack, but it also framed Jewish self-determination in their homeland as a land grab, rewriting history and denying Jewish ties to their indigenous and historic homeland.

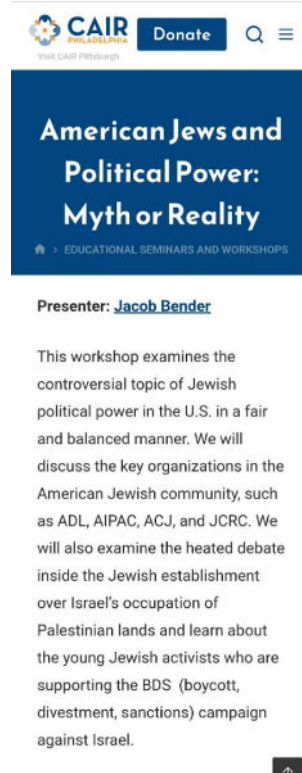


School District of Philadelphia

The Philadelphia branch of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) recently announced a partnership with Philadelphia-area K-12 schools as part of a campaign to make

⁵⁰ Nicholas Mazzoni, “Sequoia district community split over controversial Israel-Hamas lesson,” *The Almanac*, January 19, 2024. (<https://www.almanacnews.com/education/2024/01/19/sequoia-district-community-split-over-controversial-israel-hamas-lesson/>); TRT World, “How did Israel become a country?” *YouTube*, 2017. (<https://youtu.be/nufBpHmWhtQ?si=4Oj71n0ko6iq9eFC>)

schools more inclusive.⁵¹ CAIR is staunchly anti-Zionist, and its executive director, Nihad Awad, described how “happy” he felt to see the people of Gaza “victorious” on October 7.⁵² The group openly spreads anti-Jewish rhetoric, including through an educational workshop titled “American Jews and Political Power: Myth or Reality.”⁵³



The U.S. Department of Education launched a federal civil rights investigation in 2024 after receiving complaints alleging antisemitism in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). The investigation was launched after district administrators failed to adequately respond to anti-Jewish incidents perpetrated by students and teachers, including reports of district employees using their personal social media accounts to fuel anti-Jewish activism and harass parents.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Cairphilly, *Instagram*, August 25, 2025.

(https://www.instagram.com/p/DNypMzvXDGA/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

⁵² MEMRI, *X*, December 7, 2023. (<https://x.com/MEMRIReports/status/1732712958281629864>)

⁵³ Jacob Bender, “American Jews and Political Power: Myth or Reality,” *CAIR Philadelphia*, Screenshot by *The Free Beacon*. (<https://freebeacon.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/n6rnq95v9elf1.jpeg>)

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ David Swindle, “U.S. teacher 'reassigned offsite' while school district investigates alleged Jew-hatred,” *National Post*, September 7, 2024. (<https://nationalpost.com/news/us-teacher-reassigned-offsite-after-alleged-jew-hatred/>); Dana Carter, *Facebook*, October 16, 2023. (<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1GCKLGNdD1/>); “Philadelphia school district reaches agreement after Title VI investigation,” *Jewish News Syndicate*, December 20, 2024. (<https://www.jns.org/philadelphia-school-district-reaches-agreement-after-title-vi-investigation/>)



The antisemitism experienced by Jewish and Zionist students, parents, and teachers in Philadelphia public schools exemplifies how both internal and external entities fuel anti-Jewish bigotry. Ismael Jimenez, who is responsible for overseeing social studies curricula for SDP, excused Hamas' role in kidnapping innocent Israelis during the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack, stating, "When we look at October 7th, this didn't happen out of the blue, right? This is generations, right, of folks who feel like their voice has been denied."⁵⁷

This same individual is involved with the Racial Justice and Organizing Committee (RJOC), a community organization that offers teach-ins for local educators and administrators. RJOC members who also serve as Philadelphia classroom teachers engaged in anti-Israel demonstrations justifying the October 7 massacre, blaming it on colonization.⁵⁸ and went on to develop Teaching Palestine-Israel from the Perspective of Civil Rights and Black Power Activists.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Dana Carter, *Facebook*, October 16, 2023. (<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1GCKLGNdD1/>)

⁵⁷ "Ismael Jimenez," *LinkedIn*. (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ishx2022/>); Alana Goodman, "Jewish Groups Call Out Philly School District After Administrator Blames Israel for Oct. 7," *The Washington Free Beacon*, July 11, 2025. (<https://freebeacon.com/campus/jewish-groups-call-out-philly-school-district-after-administrator-blames-israel-for-oct-7/>)

⁵⁸ "About Us," *Racial Justice Organizing*. (<https://sites.google.com/view/racialjusticeorganizing/about>); Adam Sanchez, "Defenders of Israel Attempt to Silence Anti-Racist Educators in Philadelphia," *rethinking schools*. (<https://rethinkingschools.org/articles/defenders-of-israel-attempt-to-silence-anti-racist-educators-in-philadelphia/>); Pennfsjp, *Instagram*, May 30, 2024.

(<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C7m0eEsJmGy/?igsh=MTR1ZjQyYTJlc3B1Mw==>)

⁵⁹ Hannah Gann, Nick Palazzolo, Keziah Ridgeway, and Adam Sanchez, "Teaching Palestine-Israel from the Perspective of Civil Rights and Black Power Activists," *Zinn Education Project*, 2024.

(<https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/teaching-palestine-israel-black-power/>)



When Jewish parents raised their concerns about rampant antisemitism in the district to the governor, they were met with inaction.⁶¹

Similar patterns have emerged in districts across the United States — activist teachers access antisemitic learning materials from community organizations and bring those materials into classrooms with little to no oversight. Those materials offer justifications for their anti-Jewish lens, teaching children anti-Jewish tropes as facts, and encourage them to engage in antisemitic activism. The lines between learning and justice become indistinguishable, making classrooms less about learning and more about activism that targets Jews and Israel.

⁶⁰ Racial Justice Organizing Committee, *Facebook*, August 6, 2025.

(<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1MxPv3g8PE>); Racial Justice Organizing Committee, *Facebook*, August 6, 2025. (<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1MxPv3g8PE>)

⁶¹ Alana Goodman, “‘Quite Shocking to Us’: Local Parents Fighting ‘Cesspool’ of Anti-Semitism in Philly Schools Say Josh Shapiro’s Office Stopped Meeting With Them,” *The Washington Free Beacon*, July 7, 2025.

(<https://freebeacon.com/campus/quite-shocking-to-us-local-parents-fighting-cesspool-of-anti-semitism-in-philly-schools-say-josh-shapiros-office-stopped-meeting-with-them/>)

Dublin Unified presented the following slides as part of their Ethnic Studies course.

Reviewing Critical Concepts

Identity Intersectionality Privilege	Institutional Power Individual Power Collective Power	Oppression Institutional Oppression Interpersonal Oppression Internalized Oppression
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Given the current events happening, we are going to explore some of these concepts in the context of what is happening in Israel & Gaza.

What You Can Do Beyond Reading the News About Gaza

Contact Congress

There are several calls to action right now that will guide you through the process of contacting your reps in Congress to urge them to take a stand against the United States' military funding and supplying of weapons to Israel.

Both of the below campaigns provide scripts and call prompts to easily connect you with your House Reps. and Senators:

Jewish Voice for Peace: bit.ly/stoptfuelingviolence

U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR): act.uscpr.org/a/callforgaza

The Influence of Unions

The National Education Association's (NEA) Representative Assembly voted to sever ties between the NEA and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), an organization that fights antisemitism.⁶² The NEA is the largest labor union in the United States, representing almost 3 million members. The proposal was reversed by NEA's Executive Board, but not before it earned widespread attention.

The ADL vote was a symptom of deeper dysfunction, with union leaders and activists putting anti-Israel activism ahead of education. A key development that has not received enough attention is the ties between the NEA and the General Union of Palestinian Teachers (GUPT). In 2023, NEA President Becky Pringle visited teachers and union leaders in Israel and the Palestinian Arab territories. During this trip, Pringle met with the GUPT general secretary, Saed Erziqat, who openly calls for "continuous escalation" of violent attacks and has met with the secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a U.S.-designated terrorist organization.⁶³

⁶² Becky Pringle, "2025 Representative Assembly Update," *National Education Association*, July 18, 2025. (<https://www.nea.org/about-nea/leaders/president/from-our-president/2025-representative-assembly-update>)

⁶³ Nic North, "Striking teachers union's links to pro-terror group," *The Jewish Chronicle* (UK), February 2, 2023. (<https://www.thejc.com/news/striking-teachers-unions-links-to-pro-terror-group-000eqhnm>); "PFLP-GC terror group says leader was arrested by Syrian authorities," *The Times of Israel* (Israel), May 3, 2025. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/pflp-gc-terror-group-says-leader-was-arrested-by-syrian-authorities/>)



Saed Erziqat and Talal Najj

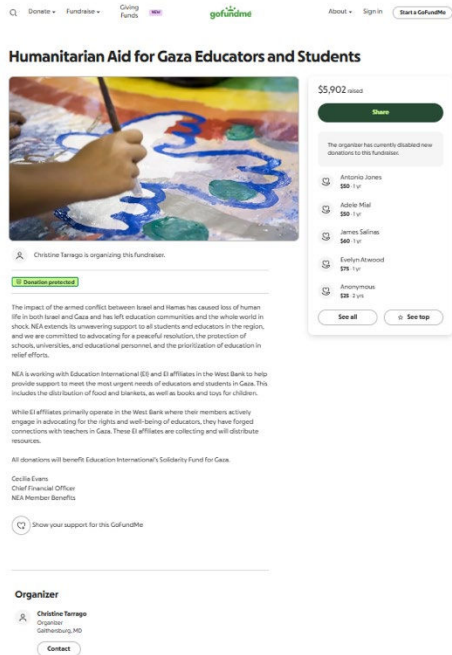
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After her visit, a NEA executive launched a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds for its Palestinian Arab union affiliates, including the GUPT.⁶⁵ The United Federation of Teachers in NY, United Teachers Los Angeles, and the Massachusetts Teachers Association are other examples of teachers' unions that have promoted antisemitism in their K-12 systems.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Nic North, "Striking teachers union's links to pro-terror group," *The Jewish Chronicle* (UK), February 2, 2023. (<https://www.thejc.com/news/striking-teachers-unions-links-to-pro-terror-group-o00eqhnm>)

⁶⁵ Christine Tarrago, "Humanitarian Aid for Gaza Educators and Students," GoFundMe, December 6, 2023. (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/humanitarian-aid-for-gaza-educators-and-students>); "Solidarity with teachers and students in Palestine," Education International, November 20, 2023. (<https://www.ei-ie.org/en/item/28305:solidarity-with-teachers-and-students-in-palestine>); Nic North, "Striking teachers union's links to pro-terror group," *The Jewish Chronicle* (UK), February 2, 2023. (<https://www.thejc.com/news/striking-teachers-unions-links-to-pro-terror-group-o00eqhnm>)

⁶⁶ Luke Tress, "Jewish educators in NYC say they're leaving teacher union due to antisemitism," MSN, August 29, 2025. (<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/jewish-educators-in-nyc-say-they-re-leaving-teacher-union-due-to-antisemitism/ar-AA1Lqym9?ocid=BingNewsSerp>); Aaron Bandler, "Lawsuit: Jewish Teachers Object to UTLA Dues Over Union's Antisemitism," *Jewish Journal*, October 16, 2024. (<https://jewishjournal.com/news/375911/lawsuit-jewish-teachers-object-to-utla-dues-over-unions-antisemitism/>); Kristina Rex, "Massachusetts teachers' union under fire for alleged antisemitic educational materials," *CBS News*, February 18, 2025. (<https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/massachusetts-teachers-association-alleged-antisemitism/>)



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Foreign Funding

Foreign funding is helping to develop curricular materials and hold professional development workshops for educators and administrators. Qatar Foundation International (QFI), the U.S.-based wing of the Qatar Foundation, which is controlled by the Qatari royal family, funds Arabic language and culture teachers and curricula in numerous elementary, middle, and high schools.⁶⁸

FDD has evidence of grant contracts, curricula, and teaching materials used in QFI-funded K-12 programs. QFI itself reported in 2020 that two schools within the DCPS school system participated in its Grants to Schools program.⁶⁹

P.S. 261 is a Brooklyn elementary school that has been getting QFI funds since at least 2019. The Arabic teacher at P.S. 261 was awarded the QFI Arabic Teacher Excellence Award for 2023 and attracted national headlines after using a map of the Middle East that labeled Israel as Palestine.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Christine Tarrago, “Humanitarian Aid for Gaza Educators and Students,” *GoFundMe*, December 6, 2023. (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/humanitarian-aid-for-gaza-educators-and-students>)

⁶⁸ “Community,” *Qatar Foundation International*. (<https://www.qf.org.qa/community/qatar-foundation-international>)

⁶⁹ “Grants to Schools,” *Qatar Foundation International*, Screenshot by Wayback Machine, November 2, 2019. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200925000129/https://www.qfi.org/opportunities/grants-to-schools>)

⁷⁰ “2023 Arabic Teacher Excellence Award Recipients,” *Qatar Foundation International*. (<https://www.qfi.org/news/2023-arabic-teacher-excellence-award-recipients>)

Another recipient of the QFI Arabic Teacher Excellence Award for 2023, Fadi Abughoush, is an Arabic language and culture teacher at a public high school in Chicago.⁷¹ Abughoush has worked with the U.S. State Department student exchange program, working with students domestically and in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Jordan. He also posted extreme views on social media, including images showing President Joe Biden covered in blood and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seemingly eating a baby — which is little more than an updated antisemitic blood libel. The same teacher also shared a post praising slain Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar.



Arab Canadian Lawyers Association (ACLA)

ACLA was incorporated in Toronto in July 2021. Jerry Khouri, Dania Majid, and Ameena Sultan are listed as ACLA directors, with both Khouri and Majid sitting on the steering committee of Hearing Palestine, a self-described “intellectual hub” at the University of Toronto.⁷² ACLA and Hearing Palestine serve as additional examples of the crossover between community organizations and schools that fuel anti-Jewish biases.

The government of Canada awarded ACLA \$99,950 (CAD) in grant funds as part of Canada’s Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Program. This award runs from January 2025 to March 2026.⁷³

⁷¹ “Abughoush,” Chicago Arabic Teachers Council. (<https://voices.uchicago.edu/catc/abughoush>)

⁷² “Jerry Khouri,” Pathway Group. (<https://pathwaygroup.com/team/jerry-khouri>); “Dania Majid,” OpenGovCA. (<https://opengovca.com/director/dania-majid>); “Ameena Sultan,” *OpenGovCA*, accessed September 7, 2025. (<https://opengovca.com/director/ameena-sultan>); “News,” *Hearing Palestine*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://palestinestudies.artsci.utoronto.ca>)

⁷³ “Grants and Contributions,” *Government of Canada*. (<https://search.open.canada.ca/grants/record/pch,016-2024-2025-Q4-1371509.current>)

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Grants and Contributions:

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Title:	Understanding Anti-Palestinian Racism: Educational Resources and Training for Inclusive Practices
Agreement Number:	1371509
Agreement Value:	\$99,950.00
Agreement Date:	Jan 1, 2025 - Mar 31, 2026
Description:	Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Program - CAHAP - Projects
Organization:	Canadian Heritage
Location:	Toronto, Ontario, CA M5C 2B8
Reference Number:	016-2024-2025-Q4-1371509
Agreement Type:	Contribution
Report Type:	Grants and Contributions
Recipient's Operating Name:	ARAB CANADIAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
Recipient's Legal Name:	ARAB CANADIAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
Program:	Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Program - CAHAP - Projects

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In 2023, ACLA received \$2,000 (CAD) from the Enhancement of Official Languages Program — Promotion of Linguistic Duality, to fund the French translation of ACLA’s report, titled “Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framings and Manifestations.”⁷⁵

The ACLA anti-Palestinian racism initiative demonstrates how a program funded by a foreign government can generate publications that fuel anti-Israel activism in U.S. schools. As described below, ACLA’s work has become a key source for U.S.-based activists.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ “Grants and Contributions,” *Government of Canada*. (<https://search.open.canada.ca/grants/record/pch,016-2023-2024-Q3-1361738,current>)

professional development program for Balboa High School⁷⁹ staff, titled “Honoring Our Shared Humanity: Understanding and Combatting Islamophobia and its Intersections with Anti-Arab and Anti-Palestinian Bigotry.” The program was facilitated by Maha Elgenaidi, founder and executive director of the Islamic Network Group, and Dr. Lama Rimawi, pediatrician and president and founding member of the IUAPR.⁸⁰

Islamic Network Group (ING)

The Islamic Network Group (ING) has been operating for over 30 years, providing professional development training and educational sessions for educators, students, and professionals across the United States. ING produces curriculum for K-12 teachers to use in their classrooms and reports that their materials are being accessed by teachers in all 50 states and abroad.⁸¹

ING is a well-established community organization that has standing relationships with several K-12 school districts. Now that it is openly collaborating with the IUAPR, it is better able to push anti-Jewish sentiments into classrooms across the United States.

Conclusion

Community organizations, university departments, teachers’ unions, foreign funding, and foreign organizations are fueling antisemitism in K-12 schools. Without transparency at all levels of education, American classrooms are becoming breeding grounds for anti-Jewish bigotry.

President Trump’s recent executive order, “[Transparency Regarding Foreign Influence At American Universities](#),”⁸² is a step in the right direction, and it should be followed by a similar requirement for all educational institutions, including K-12 schools and community colleges.

Since they are responsible for educating children, K-12 school districts should be required to place all curricula and learning materials on publicly accessible platforms. This would allow parents, caregivers, and community members to review what their children are being taught and who provides the materials. According to a recent report, 23 states already provide some form of

⁷⁹ “Balboa High School,” *San Francisco Public Schools*. (<https://www.sfusd.edu/school/balboa-high-school>)

⁸⁰ “Honoring Our Shared Humanity: Understanding Islamophobia,” *Islamic Network Group*. (<https://ing.org/events/honoring-our-shared-humanity-understanding-islamophobia-and-its-intersections-with-anti-arab-and-anti-palestinian-racisms/>); “Events,” Jewish Voice for Peace. (<https://www.jvphealth.org/events/saturday-august-24-at-10-am-pdt1-pm-edt-understanding-and-counteracting-anti-palestinian-racism>)

⁸¹ “Director’s Report: 2023,” *Islamic Network Group*. (https://ing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/2023_brochure.pdf)

⁸² U.S. Executive Order 14282, “Transparency Regarding Foreign Influence At American Universities,” April 23, 2025. (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/04/transparency-regarding-foreign-influence-at-american-universities/>)

curriculum transparency.⁸³ Transparency could also serve as a deterrent for bad actors who seek to exploit the flexibility of the K-12 school system.

Recommendations for Congress:

State and Federal Foreign Influence Legislation: Several states have already passed foreign influence legislation that would require nonprofits receiving a majority of their funding from a foreign principal to register with the state’s attorney general. Education nonprofits can register at the state or federal level. Some organizations have used this loophole to find states with less stringent foreign influence reporting requirements. Congress should work with states to expand these requirements and provide federal resources for states to report which countries are seeking to establish nonprofit entities and the kinds of activities they are engaging in.

Changes to “Academic Exemption” of FARA: Nonprofit entities engaged in educational programming are generally exempt from FARA registration and disclosure requirements. While the definition of academic activities has shifted over time, Congress should mandate that certain activities be covered under FARA regulations. One of those activities should be the development of K-12 educational materials and curriculum. If a U.S. entity is acting on behalf of a foreign principal to develop teaching materials used in U.S. schools, that entity or person should be required to register under FARA and provide information on these activities.

Changes to Foreign Giving to Nonprofits in the U.S.: Foreign governments are currently able to give money to foundations and other nonprofit entities in the U.S. with little oversight. These nonprofits are able to be established as 501(c)(4) groups under the U.S. tax code and engage in political activities in the U.S. Therefore, Congress should take steps to ensure that these 501(c)(4) organizations, primarily funded by foreign governments, are not engaging in advocacy or political activities geared towards education policy in the U.S. This is one of the direct pathways for foreign governments to influence the U.S. political system and for nonprofits accepting foreign money to influence K-12 education.

Oversight of Foreign Curriculum Use: Nonprofit entities in the U.S. are providing curriculum and training for schools to use at the K-12 level. These curricula are being implemented and used as teaching guides with little understanding of the entities that developed them and almost no oversight by local school boards. To the extent possible, Congress should investigate entities providing curriculum and ascertain whether foreign entities are influencing the substance of the material. Reports continue to show that foreign governments utilizing education nonprofits are seeking to influence the opinions of K-12 students in the U.S. while smothering any criticism of those foreign governments. Congress should work with states to identify organizations providing foreign-influenced curriculum and set strict limits on how it can be used at the K-12 level.

Monitoring Foreign Teacher Exchanges: Foreign governments continue to provide teacher training and trips to influence public and private school employees in the U.S. These trips often

⁸³ Sarah Schwartz, “Inside the Effort to Shed Light on Districts’ Curriculum Choices,” *EducationWeek*, November 26, 2024. (<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/inside-the-effort-to-shed-light-on-districts-curriculum-choices/2024/11>)

are described as cultural exchanges and an opportunity for further teacher development. Largely, these trips are meant to influence the teachers and the students they teach to have a favorable view of the sponsoring countries and refrain from engaging in criticism of those host countries. Congress should mandate reporting on all teacher exchange programs for schools that accept federal funding and work with the State Department to analyze the training content and the foreign contacts that are maintained by teachers after they return.

Additional Investigations by Congress of Connections Between Higher Education and K-12 Education: FDD and other organizations have created significant reporting and analysis of nonprofits, student organizations, unions, and faculty associations in higher education. Foreign influence campaigns have permeated all of these groups, but less is known about how these entities are also influencing K-12 education. Congress should mandate a task force from the Department of Education and the Department of Justice to investigate ties between institutions of higher learning and primary education to determine the vulnerabilities of these systems. A federal government-led effort would have the ability to collect more information and compel records to be made public for entities influencing the K-12 space that have yet to be identified. The task force could also include the Internal Revenue Service to examine the legal structures of nonprofits and foundations engaged in foreign influence operations in the K-12 space.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.