

November 28, 2023

To the Councilmembers:

I am providing this public testimony in opposition to the \$3,000,000 grant to MPCS, specifically regarding the 'Combating Hate' portion of this funding, which comes from a state grant.

Specifically, the memorandum from Dr. Monifa McKnight, MPCS Superintendent, states that the funds are to be used to implement "the district-wide anti-hate/bias plan." However, this plan explicitly excludes antisemitism.

In 2021-2022, over the course of the work sessions on the anti-racism survey and audit, members of the Montgomery County Jewish Parents Coalition requested repeatedly that antisemitism be included in the anti-racism work and training modules. We were told no repeatedly. So, any 'combating hate' training by nature will not include antisemitism.

The memorandum from Dr. McKnight also states that the request is in part "In response to the increased number of hate-bias incidents experienced throughout the district in the school year 2022-23." Most of those incidents were incidents of antisemitism. They include numerous swastikas in schools, prominent graffiti on the school sign at Walt Whitman High School, and Jewish students being coerced into "Restorative Justice" circles with their antisemitic student perpetrators.

In addition, in the memorandum from Ms. Tiffany Ward, the Director of the County Executive's Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, she states specifically that the program "will advance equitable outcomes for low-income children, students of color, and their families" This will exclude many Jewish students and their families, as MCPS does not automatically consider Jews to be "students of color" even though all ethnic Jews are indigenous to what is now modern day Israel and are thus middle eastern. In general, Jewish students are being treated very inequitably, as they must contend with antisemitic peers, antisemitic teachers such as the DEI teacher, Sabrina Khan-Williams at Tilden Middle School, and school sanctioned walk outs where fellow students chant antisemitic and anti-Israel slogans, such as those charging Israel with "Genocide"

I request that this funding be halted until it includes antisemitism training, and from a reputable, non-tokenizing (i.e. not Jewish Voice for Peace, IfNotNow, Jews United for Justice, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, or JStreet) Jewish organization vetted by Montgomery County Jewish Parents Coalition.

Thank you,

Nicole Kashtan

Montgomery County Jewish Parents Coalition