

Dear 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. I oppose this grant as it once again does not include funding to combat antisemitism.

At a time when antisemitic incidents have risen at an alarming pace in our public schools, I cannot support funding for combating hate that does not explicitly include combating antisemitism - and I do not believe you should either. Incidents include numerous swastikas in schools; Jewish students being told by fellow students that they are 'dirty Jews' or called kykes; in one case, this semester, a teacher telling their students in class that 'the Jews killed Jesus.' Just two weeks ago, a second grade student declared to his classmates that he "loves Hamas and hates the Jews." The list unfortunately goes on.

Per a memorandum from Dr. McKnight, these funds will be used in alignment with the implementation of "the district-wide anti-hate/bias plan" which explicitly excludes antisemitism from its definitions of hate and racial bias. As you may know, over the course of the work sessions on the anti-hate/bias/ anti-racism survey and audit, members of the Montgomery County Jewish Parents Coalition repeatedly requested that antisemitism be included in training modules, but these requests were denied. Therefore, unfortunately, any 'combating hate' training by nature will not include antisemitism.

Antisemitism is coming from fellow students and from teachers. This antisemitism most recently included a 'DEI leader/teacher' at Tilden Middle School who posted on social media that 'Israelis murder Palestinians and harvest their organs.' It is frighteningly apparent to students and teachers alike that MCPS faces a problem with rising antisemitism. It is critical that this issue be addressed head on and early on before the problem grows.

I respectfully request that you halt this funding until it is revised to contain explicit training on antisemitism and combating hatred of Jews.

Thank you for your consideration,
Susanna Leaf