



**Testimony of Nicole Neily  
President, Parents Defending Education  
Before the House Education & Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood,  
Elementary, and Secondary Education  
September 10, 2025**

**“From Playground to Classroom: The Spread of Antisemitism in K-12 Schools”**

Chairman Kiley, Ranking Member Bonamici, and distinguished members of the subcommittee: thank you for inviting me.

My name is Nicole Neily, and I’m the president and founder of Defending Education. I’m also the executive director of PDE Action.

Much attention has been paid to universities in the wake of October 7<sup>th</sup>; less well-known, however, is the fact that K-12 schools across the country have faced similar problems. Discrimination and harassment based on national origin or shared ancestry is never acceptable – but when directed at minor children with a limited ability to defend themselves, such behavior is particularly vile.

Yet frighteningly, our country’s learners are now being taught the world’s oldest hatred – by the very people who parents have entrusted to shape the minds of their loved ones.

**Today’s teachers are activists.**

In most states, aspiring teachers must obtain credentials through education schools before entering the classroom. However, many of America’s schools of education now instruct teachers to view the world through an oppressor-oppressed matrix in which inconvenient minorities like Jews and Asians are categorized as “oppressors,” that “teaching is a political act,” and that the job is to “cultivate social justice activists and change agents.”<sup>1</sup> Universities’ penchant for considering activism in faculty hiring decisions<sup>2</sup> has only worsened this situation. It’s little wonder that our country’s children are being used as foot soldiers to avenge perceived historical injustices.

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<sup>1</sup> Defending Education, “CorruptED,” August 8, 2024. <https://defendinged.org/investigations/corrupted/>

<sup>2</sup> John Sailer, “How Universities Get Away With Hiring Radicals,” City Journal, February 20, 2025. <https://www.city-journal.org/article/universities-fellow-to-faculty-programs-activists>

## Unions are manipulating teachers.

Activists have spent the last decade infiltrating the nation's two largest teachers' unions to enlist them in the fight against Israel – an effort that has yielded significant dividends. Unions have functioned as a superhighway to disseminate Jew-hatred for years, with support for anti-Israel/pro-Palestinian resolutions coordinated through special interest caucuses like the NEA's "Educators for Palestine" and "AFT4Palestine." In July, NEA members voted to sever ties with the Anti-Defamation League at their annual meeting, only walking back the vote following widespread public outcry.<sup>3</sup>

This is an issue at not only the national level, but also in state and local affiliates as well. Back in 2021, unions in Los Angeles<sup>4</sup> and San Francisco<sup>5</sup> both voted on BDS resolutions; more recently, the Massachusetts Teachers Association has obsessed<sup>6</sup> over Israel, voting on several anti-Israel resolutions,<sup>789</sup> hosting multiple webinars vilifying Israel,<sup>101112</sup> and

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<sup>3</sup> Russell Contreras, "Teachers' union NEA members endorse cutting ties with ADL," Axios, July 8, 2025.

<https://www.axios.com/2025/07/08/gaza-war-adl-teachers-union-nea-vote>

<sup>4</sup> Anti-Defamation League, "L.A. teachers union to consider BDS resolution that has divided LAUSD community," July 12, 2021. <https://la.adl.org/news/l-a-teachers-union-to-consider-bds-resolution-that-has-divided-laUSD-community/>

<sup>5</sup> Gabriel Greschler, "San Francisco teachers group becomes first US K-12 union to endorse BDS movement," Times of Israel, May 27, 2021. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/san-francisco-teachers-group-becomes-first-us-k-12-union-to-endorse-bds-movement/>

<sup>6</sup> American Jewish Committee, "Politicizing K-12 Classrooms: Ideology, Prejudice, & the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA)," March 13, 2025. <https://www.ajc.org/newengland/report/politicizing-k-12-classrooms>

<sup>7</sup> Massachusetts Teachers Association, "Motions," December 9, 2023. <https://www.massteacher.org/mta-membership/meeting-agendas-and-alerts/ec-and-board-motions>

<sup>8</sup> Massachusetts Teachers Association, "NBI #19," Annual Meeting of Delegates, April 26-27, 2024.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-N2sbMwtNcHlCMGsJssx1MxV7lsBb\\_zC/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-N2sbMwtNcHlCMGsJssx1MxV7lsBb_zC/view)

<sup>9</sup> Massachusetts Teachers Association, "NBI #05," Board of Directors Meeting, June 6, 2024.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-RPfpI9R-3FD2JyOfMk5tc\\_Nvu\\_AkvfL/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-RPfpI9R-3FD2JyOfMk5tc_Nvu_AkvfL/view)

<sup>10</sup> Defending Education, "Massachusetts Teachers Association hosts 'antiracism' event in support of Palestinians; board member accuses Israel of 'genocide,' 'apartheid,' and 'ethnic cleansing'; claims that a way to bring peace is to 'end' Israel," March 20, 2024. <https://defendinged.org/incidents/massachusetts-teachers-association-board-member-accuses-israel-of-genocide-apartheid-and-ethnic-cleansing-claims-that-a-way-to-bring-peace-is-to-end-israel/>

<sup>11</sup> Defending Education, "Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) hosts blatantly partisan webinar; accuses 'right wing' people of attempting 'to define antizionism as antisemitism and to exclude histories of Israel/Palestine from textbooks and curricula'; states that 'many Christian Zionists are antisemites,'" July 12, 2024. <https://defendinged.org/incidents/massachusetts-teachers-association-mta-hosts-blatantly-partisan-webinar-accuses-right-wing-people-of-attempting-to-define-antizionism-as-antisemitism-and-to-exclude-histories-of-israel-palest/>

<sup>12</sup> Defending Education, "Massachusetts Teachers Association partnered with anti-Israel organization Massachusetts Peace Action to host webinar; webinar included anti-Israel sentiment and political activism," November 4, 2024. <https://defendinged.org/incidents/massachusetts-teachers-association-partnered-with-anti-israel-organization-massachusetts-peace-action-to-host-webinar-webinar-included-anti-israel-sentiment-and-political-activism/>

promoting one-sided resources.<sup>13</sup> And following 10/7, the Oakland Education Association hosted a now-infamous unauthorized “Teach-In for Gaza.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Activist networks create an echo chamber.**

Classroom antisemitism is reinforced by outside activist networks like the Arab Resource Organizing Center (AROC), which currently has a Memorandum of Understanding with San Francisco Unified School District<sup>15</sup> to provide “workshops in classrooms” focused on “cultural empowerment.” AROC has been a regular participant in disruptive pro-Palestine protests over the last few years, shutting down the Bay Bridge<sup>16</sup> in 2023 and occupying Senator Alex Padilla’s office two weeks ago.<sup>17</sup><sup>18</sup> In addition, groups like BLM at School<sup>19</sup> and the Middle Eastern Children’s Alliance<sup>20</sup> provide teachers with lessons and activities that can be incorporated into the school day. The alleged value of these resources is repeated by other entities like the Zinn Education Project,<sup>21</sup> creating the impression that these materials have been vetted and widely adopted by fellow teachers.

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<sup>13</sup> Jaryn Crouson, “EXCLUSIVE: Teachers Association Promotes ‘Antisemitic’ Student Training Material Calling Israelis ‘Zionist Bullies,’” Daily Caller, February 18, 2025. <https://dailycaller.com/2025/02/18/exclusive-teachers-association-promotes-antisemitic-student-training-material-calling-israelis-zionist-bullies/>

<sup>14</sup> Defending Education, “Oakland Unified School District emails reveal ‘Teach-in for Gaza’ materials featured pro-Hamas, anti-Israel content,” October 7, 2024. <https://defendinged.org/incidents/oakland-unified-school-district-emails-reveal-teach-in-for-gaza-materials-featured-pro-hamas-anti-israel-content/>

<sup>15</sup> San Francisco Unified School District, “Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - Authorization to Enter Into MOU with Community Based Organizations,” Board Minutes, August 8, 2023. <https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/sfusd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=CU2NLP607BD5>

<sup>16</sup> KQED News Staff, “Bay Bridge Reopens After Protesters Calling for Gaza Cease-Fire Shut Down Westbound Lanes,” KQED, November 16, 2023. <https://www.kqed.org/news/11967536/protesters-calling-for-gaza-ceasefire-block-bay-bridges-westbound-lanes>

<sup>17</sup> Stu Smith, “BREAKING: Arrests underway at Senator Alex Padilla’s San Francisco office after radical activists stormed and occupied the space,” August 27, 2025. <https://x.com/thestustustudio/status/1960859677140328452>

<sup>18</sup> Jerry Wu, “138 Gaza war protesters arrested after they storm Sen. Padilla’s S.F. office,” San Francisco Chronicle, August 27, 2025. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/protesters-storm-sen-padilla-s-s-f-office-21016997.php>

<sup>19</sup> Kristine Watrobski, “‘BLM at School’ group that blamed Israel for terrorist invasion supported by teachers’ unions in past,” ABC33/40, October 23, 2023. <https://abc3340.com/news/nation-world/blm-at-school-group-that-blamed-israel-for-terrorist-invasion-supported-by-teachers-unions-american-federation-of-teachers-aft-national-education-association-nea-black-lives-matter-at-school-randi-weingarten-becky-pringle-crisis-in-the-classroom>

<sup>20</sup> StandWithUs, “The ‘Teach Palestine’ Curriculum: Political Indoctrination Disguised as Education,” August 1, 2025. <https://standwithus.com/library/factsheets/the-teach-palestine-curriculum/>

<sup>21</sup> Zinn Education Project, “Teaching About Palestine-Israel and the Unfolding Genocide in Gaza,” January 10, 2025. <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/teaching-palestine-israel>

## **Accordingly, teachers spread biased information.**

In classrooms, an alarming number of teachers have exploited their authority over students to teach a one-sided version of the conflict to captive audiences of minors,<sup>22</sup> demonize Israel,<sup>23</sup> and pressure student newspapers to alter coverage of the war.<sup>24,25</sup> Still others have tried to influence coworkers, lobbying peers to donate to Hamas-linked charities<sup>26</sup> and confronting colleagues who dare present an opposing viewpoint of the conflict.<sup>27</sup>

## **Administrative malaise encourages bad behavior.**

Sadly, anti-Jewish incidents haven't been adjudicated with the same determination as similar acts committed against other ethnic groups – sending a clear message to students and families that not all individuals are valued equally.

Many districts avoided making public statements after 10/7 unlike the way they did after the death of George Floyd, the Atlanta spa shooting, and the Kyle Rittenhouse verdict. Other districts simply swept problems under the rug; in California's Sequoia Union High School District, the school dismissed swastikas at a school as mere "Buddhist religious symbols."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> 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/>

<sup>23</sup> Deirdre Bardolf, "NYC elementary teachers draw from anti-Israel propaganda to twist 'Wheels on the Bus' to celebrate the eradication of Jewish state," New York Post, January 27, 2024.

<https://nypost.com/2024/01/27/metro/nyc-teachers-twist-wheels-on-the-bus-to-celebrate-israel-hate/>

<sup>24</sup> Defending Education, "Henrico County Teacher Frames 10/7 Attack on Israel as 'Hamas Resistance,' Insists School Newspaper Not Print Student Article about Impact on Community," March 18, 2024.

<https://defendinged.org/incidents/henrico-county-teacher-frames-10-7-attack-on-israel-as-hamas-resistance-insists-school-newspaper-not-print-student-article-about-impact-on-community/>

<sup>25</sup> Defending Education, "New Trier Township High School District 203 equity liaison signed up for training sessions on 'exploring justice for Palestine' and 'settler colonialism'; journalism students were encouraged to use sources funded by the government of Qatar," September 30, 2024.

<https://defendinged.org/incidents/new-trier-township-high-school-district-203-equity-liaison-signed-up-for-training-sessions-on-exploring-justice-for-palestine-and-settler-colonialism-journalism-students-were-encouraged-to-us/>

<sup>26</sup> James Reinl, "Seattle teacher EXPOSED for raising money for radical Palestinian cleric who denies Hamas' Oct 7 carnage and says sex slaves are 'permissible,'" Daily Mail, March 8, 2024.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13173565/Seattle-teacher-money-radical-Palestinian-cleric-Hamas-Oct-7-sex-slaves.html>

<sup>27</sup> Defending Education, "Arlington Public Schools English Teacher Agitates in District and Classroom about Gaza War; Assigns Biased Projects to Students; Accuses Israel of Settler-Colonialism and Genocide; Notes She Donates to Hamas-linked Charity," September 25, 2024. <https://defendinged.org/incidents/arlington-public-schools-english-teacher-agitates-in-district-and-classroom-about-gaza-war-assigns-biased-projects-to-students-accuses-israel-of-settler-colonialism-and-genocide-notes-she-donates-t/>

<sup>28</sup> Sue Dremann, "Nazi swastikas or anime? Symbols found at Woodside High School prompt investigation," Palo Alto Online, November 6, 2023. <https://www.paloaltoonline.com/news/2023/11/06/nazi-swastikas-or-anime-symbols-found-at-woodside-high-school-prompt-investigation/>

Pro-Palestinian walkouts – frequently facilitated<sup>29</sup> by administrators<sup>30</sup> themselves – were tolerated at a time when walkouts on other issues would be punished, demonstrating clear viewpoint discrimination.

**The time to act is now.**

K-12 antisemitism is now a self-perpetuating ecosystem – and pupils are paying the price. Although it won't be easy to address this problem, identifying the root causes and vectors is a critical first step – because American children deserve an education free from bias, and Jewish students deserve an education free from harassment so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it interferes with their learning. Thank you.

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<sup>29</sup> The National Desk, “Maryland school faces scrutiny over ignored records request on anti-Israel walkout,” June 7, 2024. <https://thenationaldesk.com/top-videos/maryland-school-faces-scrutiny-over-ignored-records-request-on-anti-israel-walkout-parents-defending-education-maryland-jewish-alliance-northwood-high-school>

<sup>30</sup> Defending Education, “James W. Robinson Secondary School principal described student protest against Israel as a ‘Humanitarian Walkout in solidarity with Palestine’; explains that students will be excused if their parents feel they should stay at home,” December 20, 2023. <https://defendinged.org/incidents/james-w-robinson-secondary-school-principal-described-student-protest-against-israel-as-a-humanitarian-walkout-in-solidarity-with-palestine-explains-that-students-will-be-excused-if-their-parent/>