

# Anti-Semitism in Newton Typifies Issues Facing Schools

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The Newton schools and Jewish community are rightly concerned about the anti-Semitic graffiti found at F. A. Day Middle School and the anti-Semitic chant at the Newton-Catholic Memorial basketball game. The insistence of some at a raucous ‘community meeting’ last week on immediately addressing those issues shows the intense feelings arising from these events.

Unfortunately, anti-Semitic graffiti and chants are the least of the school’s problems with anti-Semitism. The outburst by some at last week’s meeting represents the frustration of parents and other residents who have been asking for literally years to have their concerns taken seriously, only to be rebuffed time and time again.

Both the Newton Public Schools (NPS) and Jewish communal organizations appear indifferent to the overtly biased and grossly inaccurate material. These texts are not “just” biased; they include falsified primary source documents (the Palestinian National Charter, Hamas Covenant, and others), material prepared by the PLO and anti-Israel advocates presented as “neutral”, and material from unreliable sources, including a radical Sunni Islam website and a 1960’s era oil company public relations brochure.

The problems have been verified by respected organizations including Verity Educate and CAMERA. When asked the schools’ response to the reports, however, administrators said they had not read the reports and did not plan to read them.

Administrators not only refuse to read the reports, they actively punish those who object to the biased material. The state education department found that that the NPS and School Committee Chair Matthew Hills unlawfully retaliated against the child of a parent whose sole ‘crime’ was to discuss her concerns with her child’s teachers and assist Verity Educate in preparing its report.

In response, Hills gave a letter with confidential information about the child to local media (not the Journal) which, to their everlasting shame, published it. The matter had serious repercussions for the family’s safety and peace of mind. Both the NPS and city ignored the situation and the family’s appeals for help. No sanctions were imposed on the perpetrators.

Other parents have publicly stated that they are afraid to come forward with concerns for fear that their children will receive the same treatment.

The ADL has also refused to investigate the issue or review reports. A claimed ‘review’ of texts described in an admittedly deceptive and misleading advertisement by the group Americans for Peace and Tolerance (APT)

was found not to exist; an inaccurate and poorly written ‘review’ released weeks later signaled the approval of a map, prepared by the PLO and handed to students without attribution, that the ADL itself called “deliberately misleading and biased”.

Unfortunately, the ADL has allowed relationships with Newton School Committee members and personal animosity towards Charles Jacobs of APT (peaceandtolerance.org) to overshadow its mission of working against anti-Semitism. In this respect, the ADL and related institutions no longer represent the Jewish people; their mission has become self-perpetuation and the continuation of the status quo.

The absurd contention that after three instances of anti-Semitic graffiti, it was still “a little early to determine whether... it’s a hate crime” is evidence that the ADL is out of touch not only with the Jewish community, but with reality.

What happens in Newton is an example of what we can expect throughout the U.S. in coming months and years. It deserves far more than the response by Jewish organizations and ‘leaders’ to date.

*Evan Jacobi is President of Parents for Excellence in Newton Schools (PENS). More information about the above can be found on PENS’ website, newtonexcellence.org.*