

**From:** OCR  
**To:** OCR Philadelphia  
**Cc:** (b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)  
**Subject:** FW: Subject: Request for Investigation into Anti-Semitic Harassment at Montgomery County Public Schools  
**Date:** Monday, February 12, 2024 12:41:18 PM

---

February 12, 2024

Dear OCR Philadelphia Office,

The email below is being forwarded to your office for review and appropriate handling.

Thank you,

OPEN Center Customer Service Team  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education

---

**From:** (b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 11, 2024 1:51 PM  
**To:** OCR <OCR@ed.gov>; OCR DC <OCR.DC@ed.gov>  
**Subject:** Subject: Request for Investigation into Anti-Semitic Harassment at Montgomery County Public Schools

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

Dear Office for Civil Rights,

I am writing to bring to your attention a concerning pattern of anti-Semitic harassment within the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) district in Maryland. As an advocate for equality and justice, I am deeply troubled by the documented cases of discrimination that have occurred, and I urge the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) to conduct a thorough investigation into these incidents.

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, discrimination based on race or shared ancestry is expressly prohibited in educational institutions that receive federal funding. The instances of anti-Semitic harassment within MCPS clearly violate this federal law, as Jewish students have been subjected to derogatory remarks, stereotypes, and targeted acts of intimidation solely because of their religious and cultural identity.

The failure of the school district to adequately address and mitigate these incidents is unacceptable and creates a hostile environment for Jewish students to learn and thrive. Despite repeated reports and evidence provided by concerned individuals, MCPS has not taken sufficient action to address the root causes of this discrimination or provide adequate support to those affected.

Enclosed with this email, I have included documentation of multiple discriminatory incidents, including firsthand accounts, witness statements, and any other relevant evidence that may

assist in your investigation. It is my hope that OCR will prioritize this matter and take decisive action to ensure that MCPS complies with federal law and upholds the rights of all students to a safe and inclusive educational environment.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to the prompt initiation of an investigation and the implementation of necessary corrective measures to address the systemic issues of discrimination within Montgomery County Public Schools.

Sincerely,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)

“

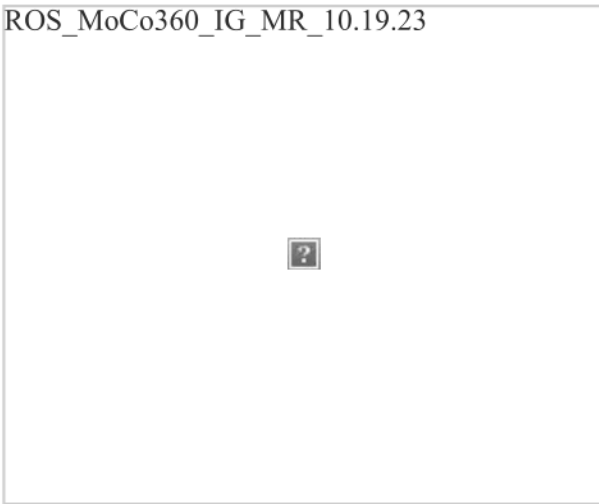
For years, the district has been plagued with antisemitic graffiti and hateful conduct at all grade levels. These incidents have generally been met with flaccid messaging from administrators, generically condemning all forms of hate, thereby diluting attention away from the specific issue at hand, antisemitism.

Additionally, with MCPS’s commitment to restorative justice practices, where students engage in dialogue rather than facing academic repercussions, there are few deterrents to combat this behavior. Having created a climate in which antisemitic actions go largely unaddressed and unpunished, it is no surprise that last year, 61% of all hate/bias incidents in MCPS were anti-Jewish, even though Jews make up only about 10% of the total population.”

<https://moco360.media/2024/02/02/opinion-mcps-must-combat-antisemitism-in-its-schools/>

“

Instead, in the wake of those attacks, we were met with news of disturbing instances of antisemitic content involving at least four educators. One staff member concluded her work emails with the statement, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” which many in the Jewish community consider a pro-genocide slogan for the killing of Jews. Another educator purported the terrorist attack was fabricated and that Israelis kill Palestinians to steal their organs, an antisemitic trope as old as time.



While the district commendably and promptly placed these teachers on administrative leave, it feels like they are kicking the can down the road. We know that the protection afforded by the teacher’s union almost ensures their eventual reinstatement.

It’s the same story when students are the perpetrators of hate and bias, proving the issue isn’t just union protection of a few bad actors.

Student walkouts have caused significant disruptions in classrooms and have fostered an atmosphere of hostility towards Jewish students and teachers. Many of these walkouts were excused, giving a whiff of imprimatur despite being marred by the unsettling presence of antisemitic rhetoric.

“““

Expressions seen and heard at these protests like “Kill the Jews,” “Bring Hitler back,” “We can’t breathe since 1948,” and “Victory to Palestinian resistance” indicate a troubling endorsement, by walkout participants, of violence against Israel and the Jewish community.

Recently, at one of our middle schools, a student told another student that “Hitler should have killed more Jews” and that “Jews celebrate when people die.”

During a Holocaust lesson a question was asked, “Why do people make a big deal of this? They are clearly exaggerating.” The district lacks a cohesive strategy to

address these incidents, therefore staff are left floundering to deliver meaningful consequences. A restorative justice circle was offered to parents.”

<https://moco360.media/2024/02/02/opinion-mcps-must-combat-antisemitism-in-its-schools/>



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE WANAMAKER BUILDING, SUITE 515  
100 PENN SQUARE EAST  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107-3323

REGION III  
DELAWARE  
KENTUCKY  
MARYLAND  
PENNSYLVANIA  
WEST VIRGINIA

February 26, 2024

**IN RESPONSE, PLEASE REFER TO: 03-24-1177**

**Sent via email only to:** [Monique\\_T\\_Felder@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Monique_T_Felder@mcpsmd.org)

Monique Felder, PhD  
Interim Superintendent  
Montgomery County Public Schools

Dear Dr. Felder:

This letter is to notify you that the U.S. Department of Education (Department), Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is opening for investigation the above-referenced complaint filed against the Montgomery County Public Schools (the District). The Complainant alleges that the District discriminated against students on the basis of national origin (shared Jewish ancestry) by failing to respond to incidents of harassment during the 2023-2024 school year.

OCR enforces Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), 42 U.S.C. Section 2000d *et seq.*, and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 100, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin, including shared ancestry, in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from the Department. Because the District receives federal financial assistance from the Department, OCR has jurisdiction over it pursuant to Title VI.

OCR is opening the following issue for investigation:

Whether the District failed to respond to alleged harassment of students based on national origin (shared Jewish ancestry) in a manner consistent with the requirements of Title VI.

Please note that opening the complaint for investigation in no way implies that OCR has made a determination on the merits of the complaint. During the investigation, OCR is a neutral fact-finder, collecting and analyzing relevant evidence from the Complainant, the District, and other sources, as appropriate. OCR will ensure its investigation is legally sufficient and fully responds to the allegation in accordance with the provisions of the [Case Processing Manual](http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/ocrspm.pdf) (<http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/ocrspm.pdf>) (CPM).

Our goal is the prompt, appropriate resolution of the complaint. While we are proceeding with an investigation, there are other approaches that can achieve this goal. In particular, please note the section on resolution of a complaint prior to the conclusion of an investigation. If the District expresses an interest in resolving the complaint and OCR determines that resolution of the complaint prior to the completion of the investigation is appropriate, OCR may attempt to negotiate an agreement with the District pursuant to CPM Section 302.

Attached is a request for data necessary to investigate this complaint. The Department’s regulation implementing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, at 34 C.F.R. § 100.6(c) gives OCR the authority to request this information. Please note that OCR has the right of access to records that are necessary for OCR’s investigation, even if those records contain names or other personally identifiable information. *See* 20 U.S.C. §§ 1232g(b)(1) and 1232g(b)(3) regarding the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; *see also* 34 C.F.R. § 100.6(c) and 34 C.F.R. § 99.31(a)(3)(iii).

OCR requests that the District submit this information within 21 calendar days of the date of this letter (i.e., by **March 18, 2024**). We prefer that you submit information electronically, if feasible. If any item in our request is unclear, or if you experience any difficulty complying with this request, please contact us at the telephone number(s) provided below prior to the expiration of the 21-day period. Please be aware that OCR may need to make additional requests for information in the future. If OCR needs to conduct an on-site investigation, we will notify you in advance.

Please be advised that the District must not harass, coerce, intimidate, discriminate, or otherwise retaliate against an individual because that individual asserts a right or privilege under a law enforced by OCR or files a complaint, testifies, or participates in an OCR proceeding. If this happens, the individual may file a retaliation complaint with OCR.

Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), it may be necessary to release this document and related correspondence and records upon request. If OCR receives such a request, we will seek to protect personally identifiable information that could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy if released, to the extent provided by law.

We look forward to your cooperation during the resolution of this complaint. If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth Cavallucci, the Investigator assigned to this case, at (215) 656-6939 or [elizabeth.cavallucci@ed.gov](mailto:elizabeth.cavallucci@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)

Andrea DelMonte  
Team Leader/Supervisory Attorney  
Philadelphia Office  
Office for Civil Rights

Attachment

