

Ms. Monica Colucci, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: COMBATING ANTISEMITISM

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC

PLAN: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS, & INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS

In the months following the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel, antisemitic incidents in the United States increased exponentially, reaching a total of 3,291 incidents between October 7, 2023, and January 7, 2024, according to Anti-Defamation League (ADL) preliminary data. This represents a 361-percent increase compared to the same time one year prior, which saw 712 incidents.

In April 2024, the ADL released the final statistics for antisemitic incidents in 2023, reporting a total of 8,873 incidents of assault, harassment, and vandalism across the country. The total represents a 140 percent increase from 2022, already a record-setting year, and the highest level recorded since the ADL started tracking this data in 1979.

The *ADL Audit of Antisemitic Incidents* also recorded in response to the attack and conflict, a dramatic spike of 5,204 antisemitic acts post October 7th, reflecting global trends as Jewish communities worldwide faced heightened tensions and hatred on college campuses, in the public square, and at anti-Israel demonstrations. With those incidents, the 12-month total for 2023 surpassed the totals of the past three years combined and averaged about twenty-four anti-Jewish incidents a day in the United States.

The past two years have seen a significant increase in antisemitic related incidents both nationwide and throughout the State of Florida. Florida saw a total of 269 incidents recorded, a 42% increase from 2022, and an all-time high. This figure is more than double the number of incidents recorded in the state in 2021. The states with the highest number of incidents were New York, California, New Jersey, Florida, and Texas. South Florida counties, as has historically been the case, had the highest number of combined incidents, a total of 102 incidents (a 38% increase), with twenty in Palm Beach, thirty-five in Broward, and forty-seven in Miami-Dade.

At the Board Meeting of June 17, 2020, Dr. Martin Karp, Board Member, proffered Board Item H-11 (Revised3 Good Cause, RE: Address Scapegoating, Stereotyping, Antisemitism and All Forms of Hatred). Multiple Board Items have also been proffered with respect to recognizing the Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust.

Public schools are anchors of our communities. They create opportunities for students to learn about different cultures, perspectives, and values. Our top priority is the well-being of all students, faculty, and staff.

Given today's environment and the alarming statistics related to incidents of antisemitism, we must protect the safety and well-being of all Jewish students.

School Board Policy 0100, Definitions, Anti-Semitism, explains that antisemitism is a certain perception of the Jewish people, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jewish people, rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism directed toward a person, his/her property, or toward Jewish community institutions or religious facilities. The policy further asserts that discrimination against employees and students or resulting from institutional policies that are motivated by anti-Semitic intent must be treated identically to discrimination motivated by race under State law. Examples of acts considered to be anti-Semitism are set forth in Florida Statute 1000.05.

The purpose of this item is to request that the Superintendent explore the feasibility of: establishing an interfaith/intergroup taskforce, create forums for students to engage in ways that move conversations toward cultivating empathy and building bridges within the community, offer training to faculty members on how to approach discussions related to these issues in the classroom that promote balanced and respectful dialogue, as provided by Policy 2240, and conduct a comprehensive review of the curriculum, to determine where education about antisemitism currently exists, and identify opportunities for improvement and expansion

This item has been reviewed and approved by the Office of the General Counsel as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. MONICA COLUCCI:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to:

1. explore the feasibility of establishing an interfaith/intergroup taskforce,
 - a. create forums for students to engage in ways that move conversations toward cultivating empathy and building bridges within the community, and
 - b. offer training to staff members on how to approach discussions related to these issues in the classroom that promote balanced and respectful dialogue as provided by Policy 2240,
2. conduct a comprehensive review of the curriculum, to determine where education about antisemitism currently exists and identify opportunities for improvement and expansion, and
3. initiate rulemaking to adopt and/or amend relevant School Board policies to ensure alignment and/or compliance with state statutes, as may be necessary.
4. Present the results at the October 9, 2024, Academics, Innovation, Evaluation & Technology Committee meeting.