



July 1, 2024

East Brunswick Superintendent Cited “Gross Lack of Oversight”



Students spoke to news media about a history of unaddressed antisemitism at East Brunswick schools.

After the superintendent claimed he and the board have “taken seriously” the response from students and the community to the yearbook incident, the public comment period gave voice to people identifying with the Jewish Student Association and people identifying with the Muslim Student Association providing numerous accounts of East Brunswick schools failing to reckon with a long-standing and systemic history of antisemitism and Islamophobia, respectively—among other speakers.

Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey reiterated calls for East Brunswick school and board of education



Jewish Federation in the Heart of NJ arranged for students from area schools to meet with Senator Vin Gopal, Chair of the New Jersey Senate Education Committee, to relay their experiences of antisemitism in school and to begin discussing remedies for the near and long term.

Jewish Federation in the Heart of NJ’s Reaction

At the East Brunswick Board of Education meeting June 6, 2024, Superintendent, Dr. Victor Valeski, said the board had concluded its internal investigation of how a high school yearbook photo, now identified as a group of Muslim students, had been placed in the space intended and labeled to show the Jewish Student Association photo—among other alterations and omissions pertaining to representation of the Jewish Student Association in the book.

Calling the cause of the incident a “gross lack of oversight,” based on the conclusions of an internal investigation, he went on to announce, “We will now initiate a special council investigation by an outside investigator to validate what we have already seen and to draw a thorough, fair conclusion.”

officials to return to conversations with Federation and families affected by antisemitism and its mishandling in East Brunswick schools to construct a path forward and correct the district’s, schools’, administrators’, and teachers’ unacceptable missteps of the past, including dismissing one student’s report of antisemitism, not once but twice, saying the student ‘wasn’t offended enough.’

The school is now working with Jewish Federation on this front.

Federation also called for the New Jersey State Legislature to cease in its delays and cancellations of votes on two important bills, [S1292] and [S2937], helping people responsible for recognizing and responding to antisemitism do so.

On June 20, the NJ Senate committee responsible for those bills voted yes and the bills will now go on to face similar votes in committee and the full Senate. If they pass, they will go to the Governor to sign. Federation urges the community to contact lawmakers to support the bills.



Jewish Federation spoke to media outlets from CBS New York to News12 NJ, and beyond, to reinforce the need for high-level attention to the issue of systemic antisemitism from school officials, lawmakers, and the community at large.

Meanwhile, East Brunswick’s external investigation report had been issued. Among its findings of no purposeful antisemitism, it said: The yearbook advisor says she is “really not up on international matters.” Someone involved in the investigation, whose name was redacted in the report, observed with surprise that this faculty member/club advisor was “not aware of the conflict in Israel and Gaza.”

“Given what we have learned about the behavior of adults at that school toward students experiencing antisemitism, this adult’s disregard for the effects of arguably the biggest development in world history, in this lifetime, to personally affect major segments and indirectly affect all of the student body and the surrounding community, speaks to the kind of indifference that led to atrocities in our past,” added Susan Antman. “For a teacher or advisor in a high school with a history of tension between diverse segments of the student population to indulge in the luxury of ignorance is, in our estimation, a product of bias. While this person may not be aware of her bias, this sort of indifference is no less damaging and no less wrong.”

For more information and to contact NJ lawmakers connect with Jewish Federation in the Heart of NJ.

“While we will never legislate away hate or generations of bias, these bills provide guardrails to support school leaders in doing the right thing at the right time,” said Susan Antman, Federation’s Executive Director.

That same week, Federation took several students who had experienced antisemitism in East Brunswick and in Marlboro schools to meet NJ Senator Vin Gopal, chair of the Senate Education Committee. They told him of their personal experiences and teed-up discussions for remedies going forward.

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