

August 12, 2025

Nicole Mutchnik, Chair, Board of Directors
Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO and National Director
Anti-Defamation League
605 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10158

Sent by email to: Corena Larimer, Associate Counsel for National Litigation (clarimer@adl.org), Jennifer H. Saperstein, Covington & Burling LLP (jsaperstein@cov.com), and Daniel N. Shallman, Covington & Burling LLP (dshallman@cov.com)

Cc: Members of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners

Re: ADL complaint against Baltimore City Public School System

Dear Ms. Mutchnik and Mr. Greenblatt:

We are Jewish students, Jewish teachers, and parents of Jewish students currently enrolled in or recently graduated from Baltimore City public schools. We write to share our thoughts on the [Title VI complaint](#) that the Anti Defamation League has filed with the U.S. Department of Education against the Baltimore City Public School System.

We disagree with the broad assertions in the complaint concerning the “environment” for Jewish students and families in Baltimore City public schools. Now that the Department of Education has [opened an investigation](#) in response to the complaint, we are particularly concerned that the false narrative it presents will be used to push harmful policies and divert limited resources from the school system’s critical needs. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to share our views more directly and prevent such an outcome.

We were deeply saddened to read about the experiences of the four students referenced in the complaint. We hope that the school system will evaluate whether its response to these incidents was appropriate, and, if it was not, that the system’s leadership will consider what steps can be taken so that any future incidents of antisemitism are treated with the seriousness and sensitivity they demand.

Your complaint, however, goes well beyond these incidents and makes broad claims about the entire school system, which serves more than 75,000 students. We do not think those broad claims are grounded in fact. You state, for example, that city schools are “hostile environments for Jewish students,” that “Jewish students face egregious and persistent discrimination and harassment in classrooms and by other students,” and

that “antisemitism permeates” the school system. Those claims are wholly inconsistent with our experiences.

We represent a range of expressions of Jewish identity, but we are all open and proud Jews. Many of us are active in local synagogues and other Jewish organizations. We are also proud Baltimoreans and have chosen to attend or have our children attend city public schools. We value the education that students receive in city schools both inside and outside of the classroom, including education that prepares and inspires them to address the complex challenges of our diverse community. Our group includes families whose students have attended city public schools from pre-kindergarten all the way through high school graduation.

Our own experience is that the school system—its central office leadership, its administrators, its teachers, and its staff—respects and values our families’ Jewish identities. In our experience, administrators and teachers at our students’ schools are committed to maintaining an environment in which all students can thrive, and in which our Jewish families have in fact thrived. This ranges from everyday administrative acts like working to avoid scheduling events or testing on high holidays to significant curricular choices, like selecting the graphic novel *Maus* as required reading in AP World History class. Notably, three of the high schools mentioned in your complaint, Baltimore City College, Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, and Baltimore School for the Arts, have active student-led Jewish extracurricular groups. All three groups hold regular meetings that celebrate our culture and traditions and that are attended by many Jewish and non-Jewish students. The schools themselves have embraced these groups, and we are not aware of any incidents of antisemitism related to any of them.

In the complaint, you demand that the city school system amend its formal rules governing expressive activity on school campuses such that more speech on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would likely be prohibited as antisemitic harassment. You have further demanded that the school system convene disciplinary proceedings for students, faculty, and staff who transgress these new rules when discussing the conflict or when engaged in protest. We are concerned that your complaint and the remedies that you have demanded will chill classroom discussion, narrow the space for open inquiry and debate on campus, and restrict the rights of our students and their classmates to express themselves.

Our commitment to open inquiry and freedom of expression is, in fact, deeply rooted in our identities and experiences as Jews, and in our understanding of Jewish tradition. To be clear, our families have different views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We are united, though, in our view that, in differentiating between free speech and harassment, context matters; that students should not be punished for making moral and ethical

claims or for pointing out perceived injustices; and that student speech on issues of controversy should not be suppressed.

It is noteworthy to us that your complaint was filed during a time when allegations of “pervasive” antisemitism at other educational institutions have been used to justify broad-ranging federal government intrusion in matters of curriculum development, research funding, faculty hiring, and student admissions and discipline. As Jews whose families have experienced antisemitism, we object to the deployment of allegations of systemic antisemitism to achieve unrelated political ends or to justify the punishment of disfavored institutions. It is critical to us that the resolution of the ADL’s complaint not limit the commitment of our city’s public schools to open expression and debate or divert resources from the school system’s critical needs.

We ask that you consider the adequacy of your investigation of the factual basis for the broad claims in your complaint. It seems to us that your investigation was limited to conversations with a very small portion of the many Jewish families who attend Baltimore City public schools. We would very much appreciate the chance to talk with you to describe at greater length our own experiences in city public schools, to explain why we so deeply value the opportunity to attend or to have our children attend city schools, and to describe our concern about the potential impact of your complaint on open inquiry in the classroom and on campus. Please let us know if you would be willing to meet with us.

[To add your name, click here](#)

Sincerely,

Joshua N. Auerbach, parent (Poly, RPEMS, Midtown Academy)
Evan Serpick, parent (Mount Washington, Mount Royal, RPEMS, Poly, City)
Nicole Leistikow, parent (Poly, RPEMS, Midtown Academy)
Jack Serpick, student (Mount Washington, Mount Royal, Poly)
Julie Marx, parent (Poly, RPEMS, Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School)
Joseph Horwitz, student (Poly, RPEMS)
Morris Auerbach, student (Roland Park Elem Middle, Poly)
Edit Barry, parent (Poly, Mount Royal)
Meredith Chaiken, parent (Baltimore School for the Arts, RPEMS)
Laura Abelson, parent (RPEMS)
Micah Berger-Sollod, student (Baltimore School for the Arts)
Gabe Samuels, student (Baltimore City College)
Noah Samuels, student (Baltimore City College)
Rebecca Fishkin, student (Mount Washington, RPEMS, Baltimore City College)
Jill Feinberg, parent (Mount Washington, Roland Park middle, City, Poly)
Mariya Strauss, parent (Mount Washington, Mount Royal, City)

Zackary Berger, parent (Baltimore School for the Arts, City)
Blanca Berger-Sollod, student (Baltimore City College)
Brenda Serpick, parent (Mount Washington, Mount Royal, RPEMS, Poly, City); Teacher (Poly)
Kathryn Frey-Balter, parent (Midtown Academy, Federal Hill Prep, Roland Park, City)
Joseph A. Balter, parent (Midtown Academy, Federal Hill Prep, Roland Park, City)
Claudia Balog, parent (Mount Washington School, Baltimore City College)
Madison Love, student (Baltimore City College)
Ben Serpick, student (Mount Washington, RPEMS, Poly, City)
Jodie Zisow-McClean, parent (Baltimore International Academy); teacher (Montebello Elementary Middle)
Aimee Pohl, parent (Baltimore Design School, Govans Elementary)
Richard Crary, parent (Baltimore Design School, Govans Elementary)
Mirah Crary-Pohl, student (Baltimore Design School)
Malcolm Crary-Pohl, student (Govans Elementary)
Margot Goldberg, parent (Mount Royal); teacher (Western High School)
Ellen Spokes, parent (Poly)
Jennifer Katz, parent (Poly, Baltimore School for the Arts, Francis Scott Key)
Bee Lipson, student (Poly, Francis Scott Key)
Eliana Clayton, staff (Office of Family Engagement)
Mariel Golden, teacher (John Ruhrah Elementary Middle School)
Anne Wolf, parent (Mt Washington, Baltimore School for the Arts)
Jaffa Weiss, parent (Margaret Brent Elementary/Middle School)
Joshua Sharfstein, parent (Mount Washington, City)
Yngvild Olsen, parent (Mount Washington, City)
Jeremy Levinger, teacher (Armistead Gardens)
Ilise Marrazzo, parent (Thomas Johnson Elementary/Middle School, City)
Corey Gaber, staff (North Avenue, External Assignments)
Daniel Levine, parent (Baltimore School for the Arts)
Emily Scarr, parent (RPEMS)
Simon Birenbaum, parent (Midtown Academy)
Whitney Birenbaum, parent (Midtown Academy, Commodore John Rogers)
Julie Lilienfeld, parent (RPEMS)
Matthew Lilienfeld, parent (RPEMS)
Jesse Schneiderman, parent (Wolfe Street Academy)
Jenny Egan, parent (Baltimore Montessori Public Charter)
Melissa Rock, parent (Hampden Elementary/Middle School)
Tanya Kalmar, parent (Crossroads, Green School, RPEMS, Baltimore School for the Arts)
Felice Shore, parent (Mt Washington, RPEMS, City, Baltimore School for the Arts)

Alix Marbury, parent (RPEMS)
Debbie Steinig, parent (City, Poly)
Stephanie Safran, parent (RPEMS, Baltimore School for the Arts)
Jason Eisner, parent (City, Poly)
Eli McBride, student (RPEMS, Baltimore School for the Arts)
Talía Eisner, student (City)
Ellyn Boney, teacher (Calvin M. Rodwell EMS)
Jenny Sax, parent (City)
Benjamin Sax, parent (City)
Maxim Lapushin, parent (Hampden EMS, Poly)
Alyssa Goldenberg, student (RPEMS, Poly)
Mishy Leiblum, parent (Baltimore Montessori Public Charter)
Stuart Katzenberg, parent (RPEMS)
Leah Irwin, parent (Hamilton Elementary/Middle School)
Anna Fitzgerald, parent (The Mount Washington School)
Michael Fuld, parent (Francis Scott Key Elementary/Middle School)
Gracie Greenberg, parent; teacher
Samantha Fuld, parent (Francis Scott Key Elementary/Middle School)
Claudia Leight, parent (Mt Washington Elementary, RPEMS, Poly)
Yael Bloom, teacher (John Ruhrah Elementary Middle School)

[To add your name, click here](#)