



When Indoctrination Enters the Classroom: A Call for Accountability in Baltimore County Schools

By Caren Leven, Executive Director, Baltimore Zionist District

In a time of rising antisemitism, radicalization, and violence targeting Jews across America, one would expect our public schools to serve as sanctuaries of neutrality, inclusivity, and fact-based education. Sadly, it appears that is not the case today in Baltimore County.

The Baltimore Zionist District (BZD) recently sounded the alarm on a professional development workshop offered by Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) titled *“Effective Practices to Support Arab and Muslim Families.”* The title may sound benign—even important—but the substance behind it is alarming.

The workshop is being led by Abeer Ramadan-Shinnawi, founder of Altair Education Consulting. Her training materials promote resources and classroom plans that depict Israel as a genocidal oppressor and Zionism as a form of terrorism. Materials promoted include reports from Visualizing Palestine, such as *“Cruel Britannia,”* which accuses the UK of aiding Israel’s alleged genocide in Gaza, and *“Killing the Story,”* which claims Israel systematically murders journalists, an outright lie.

Also promoted is a middle and high school lesson plan titled *“Literature About Palestinians Under Occupation,”* which frames the Israeli-Palestinian conflict exclusively through the lens of Israeli brutality and of Palestinian victimhood. There is no mention of Palestinian terrorism or of their founding documents, such as the Hamas Charter, which calls for the genocide of all Jews everywhere. Training built on lies and omissions that target a minority is not educational it is politicized propaganda. And it is dangerous.

Even more troubling are the consultant’s affiliations. Events tied to her work have included speakers who praised Yahya Sinwar, the Hamas leader responsible for orchestrating the October 7 massacre of Israeli civilians. Trainers who praise a genocidal attack on innocent civilians should not be part of any BCPS program for anyone ever.

This is not education. This is radicalized antisemitic indoctrination under the banner of DEI. Imagine a similar program taught by a trainer of the KKK, making false accusations that put our African-American community at risk. I hope that would immediately be shut down. I ask the same protection for our Jewish minority community as well.

We have contacted BCPS leadership. No one has responded.

Why should this matter to every parent in Baltimore County—Jewish, Christian or otherwise?

Because the real-world consequences of this ideology are now showing up not only in classrooms teaching propaganda instead of facts, but also in violent protests, and at crime scenes. A young Jewish couple was recently murdered in cold blood near a Jewish site in Washington, D.C., reportedly by a gunman shouting “Free Palestine.” There is a direct connection between demonizing Israelis and Jews and extremist violence. This is now undeniable. These hate-filled mantras and slogans that begin in school trainings and rallies are being echoed in acts of violence. They must stop.



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We must draw a line:

BCPS is a public school system, not a political indoctrination camp. Public funds must never be used to normalize antisemitism or promote extremist narratives—especially in a K–12 setting.

We call on BCPS to:

1. Terminate all relationships with Altair Education Consulting and Abeer Ramadan-Shinnawi.
2. Audit all professional development sessions involving Middle East content.
3. Ensure that no politically biased curriculum, content, or resources introduced through professional development are applied or implemented in K–12 classrooms.
4. Reaffirm its commitment to politically neutral, inclusive education for all students and staff.
5. Respond publicly to the concerns raised by the Jewish community.
6. **Adopt the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism** to help identify antisemitic speech.

We also call on the greater Baltimore community:

To our Christian allies: We need your voices now. Silence enables further normalization of hate.




To parents of all backgrounds: Ask your schools what kind of training your teachers are receiving.

To our elected officials: Your silence has been noted. We urge you to stand publicly against hate in our schools.

This began with a concerned BCPS teacher who approached our organization anonymously. But this is no longer just about one workshop. It's about the future of our schools, our children, and the democratic values we refuse to compromise.

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