



Fairfax Schools To Let Students Opt Out Of Holocaust Lesson, Citing Students With 'Different Experiences'

Description

US : Virginia's largest school district will let students skip a presentation from a Holocaust survivor, saying the diverse district includes students with "different experiences."

"We understand that all students have different experiences. If you prefer to opt your child out from participating in this presentation, please email your child's history teacher and they will be provided an alternate assignment. Please email your child's history teacher with any questions that you may have," a letter from Cooper Middle School said.

The letter referred to a scheduled presentation from a Holocaust survivor to seventh-graders, according to Adele Scalia, a mother of one of those middle schoolers.

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) claimed it is advertising an opt-out for the benefit of Jews.

"Each year, Cooper MS invites a Holocaust survivor to speak with students to affirm meaningful learning experiences that increase representation of all identity groups that are essential to student learning.

Some Jewish students have previously expressed discomfort while engaging in dialogue around this visit. For that reason, school leadership makes every effort to partner with families of these students, who are 12 and 13 years old, to keep them informed.

This opt-out allows the family the opportunity to make the best informed decision on behalf of their student," it said in a statement to The Daily Wire.

Scalia said on social media that she is drawing "less charitable (but more likely) conclusions." The Left has been pressured by Islamic extremists to demonize Israel following Hamas' terrorist attacks on the Jewish nation on October 7, and liberals have used the same language of "colonization" and "oppression" that they apply to whites in the U.S. to Israelis.

"If the email had said 'We understand that some students are very sensitive and Mrs. X's stories my be

disturbing and traumatizing to them...' I would have given them the benefit of the doubt. But it didn't," Scalia wrote.

Fairfax County contains a hotbed of Muslim extremism. A mosque there, attended by several 9/11 hijackers as well as the Fort Hood terrorist, was presided over by the father of Abrar Omeish, who until this year was a member of the Fairfax County school board.

Omeish voted against an FCPS resolution offering a moment of silence for victims of 9/11 and another for victims of October's Hamas attacks on Israel, said the decisive World War II victor at Iwo Jima was "unfortunate," and gave a graduation speech encouraging students to "remember your jihad" and reject capitalism.

Jennifer Katz, a founding member of United Against Anti-Semitism and a Jewish parent of two FCPS students, told The Daily Wire that hearing from a Holocaust survivor is supposed to be emotionally difficult, and is part of gaining a full understanding of the tragedy.

"If a specific student is directly tied to the Holocaust or a Holocaust survivor, and the topic is too sensitive for them, then it can be handled on an individual basis. To make a blanket opt out option is misguided and wrong," she told The Daily Wire.

"Given the hostile climate for many Jewish students nationwide, mandatory Holocaust education is more important than ever. The Holocaust is more than just learning that six million Jews were killed, it's learning how this was able to happen in the first place," she said.

The opt-out of the Holocaust lesson in FCPS, whose school board is entirely Democrat, is a reversal from the Left's position on opt-outs on topics like transgenderism and anti-racism, which typically holds that hard truths are often uncomfortable, that it is the role of a school to instill certain values, and that on some issues, there are not two sides, but only good and evil.

"When a parent chooses to censor a lesson over its content, their child loses the opportunity to engage with a different perspective. This robs the child of the benefits to critical thinking, social development, and civic engagement that come from grappling with diverse perspectives.

In engaging with difference, we promote the type of informed thinking that forms the bedrock of democracy. In avoiding difference, we stifle it," an education researcher wrote in Time Magazine, layout out the dominant view of Democrat politicians, who have sought to prevent parents from opting their students out as schools have increasingly pushed Democrat politics under the guise of diversity and inclusion, social emotional learning, sex ed, and other topics

In Montgomery County, Maryland, which borders Fairfax, the Muslim group CAIR sued the all-Democrat school board over its refusal to let parents opt their students out of lessons pushing gay and lesbian topics. MCPS fought vigorously and successfully to deny opt-out rights.

With some people claiming that the Holocaust did not even occur, the lesson is one of the last chances to hear from someone who survived it first-hand, as survivors are perishing of old age.

Prior to the election of Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin, a video promoted by Virginia's state Department of Education, then presided over by Democrat Atif Qarni, sought to dampen the emotional resonance of 9/11, advising teachers not to call it "terrorism" and to focus on "anti-Muslim racism" while making sure not "to reproduce what's understood as American exceptionalism."

By Luke Rosiak

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