

Resolution to condemn antisemitism in District 28

APPROVED at the January 4, 2024 Calendar Meeting by a vote of the CEC D28 members present at the time of the vote (7 in favor / 0 opposed / 4 abstain / 1 absent)

Sponsor: Vijah Ramjattan, KA

Co-Sponsors: Lu Zhao, Kalyanaram Gurumurthy

WHEREAS, “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”¹

WHEREAS, Antisemitism has gained strength in popular culture and “is shifting from fringe to mainstream”² influencing our students through social media and pop culture³.

WHEREAS, on October 7, 2023, a US-designated terrorist organization, Hamas, carried out a terrorist attack on Israeli civilians viciously murdering over 1,200 people,⁴ including the elderly, women, and children, sexually assaulting young women and capturing over 200 hostages, many of whom are still being held to present day.

WHEREAS, Israel militarily responded to the October 7th terrorist attack with the ultimate goal of eliminating Hamas from Palestine, which response has caused tens of thousands of Palestinian civilian casualties and displacement of the elderly, women, and children.

WHEREAS, due to the highly emotionally charged nature of the Israel-Hamas conflict, there have been various opinions (as opposed to facts) and misinformation being circulated on social media from which many young people derive their information without being provided historical, unbiased, and fact-based information.

¹ *Defining Antisemitism*. (2016, May 26). United States Department of State. Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://www.state.gov/defining-antisemitism/>.

² Adediran, K. (2022, December 7). *The Normalization Of Antisemitism | Exploring Hate | PBS*. Exploring Hate. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/exploring-hate/2022/12/07/the-normalization-of-antisemitism/>.

³ *The Antisemitic Environment: How Social and Media Exposures Predict Antisemitic Beliefs | ADL*. (n.d.). Wwww.adl.org. Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/antisemitic-environment-how-social-and-media-exposures-predict-antisemitic-beliefs>.

⁴ Frayer, L. (2023, November 11). *Israel revises down its death toll from the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks to about 1,200*. NPR. Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://www.npr.org/2023/11/11/1212458974/israel-revises-death-toll-hamas-attacks-oct-7>.

WHEREAS, during the year 2023⁵ and after the escalation of the Israel-Hamas conflict there has been a sharp increase in antisemitic incidents, which include physical assaults, harassment of Jewish students, numerous non-peaceful protests, signs, and chants with antisemitic themes and swastikas on display across New York City, including District 28.

WHEREAS, on November 20, 2023, students led a protest that turned aggressive at Hillcrest High School⁶ endangering a Jewish teacher during which the school was on lockdown for two hours, and 25 NYPD officers were dispatched to regain control of the school.⁷

WHEREAS, there have been several instances of students writing “Hail Hitler”, drawing swastikas and in one incident “F**k Palestine” at Hillcrest High School prior to⁸ and after the November 20th protest⁹

WHEREAS, in response to the November 20th Hillcrest High School protest, Chancellor Banks held a press conference at Hillcrest High School on November 27, 2023, during which he stated that on October 10, 2023, the Department of Education (“DOE”) issued a statement condemning the Hamas terrorist attacks as well as issued subsequent communications reiterating that hateful rhetoric has no home in NYC public schools; that the DOE has provided materials and resources for use by schools’ staff, students and families regarding this conflict as well as digital and media literacy; that each school must designate at least one staff member to serve as a respect for all liaison to whom any reports of bullying, harassment and discrimination should be made by staff/students/families, which must be immediately investigated; and that the DOE has collaborated with expert partners to discuss resources, create materials and provide support to schools, such partners include the NYC Council Jewish Caucus, the NYC Commission on Human Rights, the Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes, non-profit organizations such as

⁵ News, J. F. | N. Y. D. (2023, March 27). *Forest Hills man busted for scratching nearly a dozen swastikas in front of Queens synagogue, precinct stationhouse and schools: NYPD*. New York Daily News. Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://www.nydailynews.com/2023/03/27/forest-hills-man-busted-for-scratching-nearly-a-dozen-swastikas-in-front-of-queens-synagogue-precinct-stationhouse-and-schools-nypd/>.

⁶ *Hundreds of students riot at Queens high school as terrified Jewish teacher hides in office*. (2023, November 27). ABC7 New York. Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://abc7ny.com/school-safety-agents-assault-students-arrested-hillcrest-high/14108328/>.

⁷ Archive, V. A., Author, E. the, feed, G. author R., Archive, V. A., & feed, G. author R. (2023, November 25). *Jewish teacher hides in Queens high school as students riot*. Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://nypost.com/2023/11/25/metro/jewish-teacher-hides-in-queens-high-school-as-students-riot/>.

⁸ Archive, V. A., Author, E. the, feed, G. author R., Archive, V. A., & feed, G. author R. (2023, December 2). *NYC school hit with swastika graffiti months before riot against Jewish teacher*. Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://nypost.com/2023/12/02/metro/nyc-school-hit-with-h-graffiti-months-before-riot-against-jewish-teacher/>.

⁹ Archive, V. A., Author, E. the, & feed, G. author R. (2023, December 9). *Swastika, “F--k Palestine” scrawled on wall at NYC school where teens rioted against Jewish teacher*. Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://nypost.com/2023/12/09/metro/swastika-f-k-palestine-scrawled-on-wall-at-nyc-school-where-teens-rioted-against-jewish-teacher/>.

the Anti-Defamation League and Facing History & Ourselves, and Muslim and Jewish community leaders.¹⁰

WHEREAS, District 28 areas of Kew Gardens, Forest Hills and Rego Park are heavily populated by Jewish families, which comprise 50% of all households in these areas and in which 9% of Jewish households include a Holocaust survivor.¹¹

THEREFORE, be it resolved:

- that Community Education Council 28 (“CEC28”) unequivocally condemns antisemitism whenever and wherever it occurs and stands with all families of District 28 against anti-Jewish hate.
- that CEC 28 condemns the way the Hillcrest High School protest against a Jewish teacher was handled by the school administration which caused school disruptions, school property damage, and endangered the welfare and safety of the Jewish faculty member.
- that CEC 28 condemns the repeated use of antisemitic symbols and offensive language by students at Hillcrest High School and all other schools regardless of at whom they were directed.
- that CEC 28 fully supports Chancellor Banks and the DOE in their efforts to eliminate hateful rhetoric from public schools and to provide resources and materials to NYC schools after collaborating with expert partners.
- that CEC 28 calls upon the DOE to provide a timeline for when collaboration with various expert partners will take place and when the ensuing resources and materials will be provided to NYC public schools.
- CEC 28 calls upon the DOE to ensure that resources and materials provided to schools are unbiased and fact-based.
- that CEC 28 demands accountability from the DOE that resources and materials provided to schools are utilized by schools and that the DOE requires schools to report back to the DOE how such resources and materials are being utilized.
- that CEC 28 urges the DOE to support courageous and curious conversations in safe, inclusive and welcoming spaces in NYCPS about the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict where students can express their feelings, concerns and fears.

¹⁰ *LIVE: Chancellor Banks is addressing recent events at Hillcrest High School.* (n.d.). [Www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTGV9FIEhXk). Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTGV9FIEhXk>.

¹¹ *JEWISH COMMUNITY STUDY OF NEW YORK 2011 GEOGRAPHIC PROFILE BRONX BROOKLYN MANHATTAN QUEENS STATEN ISLAND NASSAU SUFFOLK WESTCHESTER.* (n.d.). Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://www.ujafedny.org/api/v2/assets/785690/>.

- that CEC 28 calls upon the DOE to use the expertise of existing NYC educational institutions such as the Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust¹² and The Jewish Museum¹³ to educate NYC public school students about the horrors of the Holocaust as well as the richness of the Jewish culture.
- that CEC 28 calls upon all families, educators, school administrators, politicians and high profile people within District 28 and citywide to stand up and speak out against any forms of antisemitism and anti-Jewish rhetoric.

¹² *Museum of Jewish Heritage — A Living Memorial to the Holocaust*. (2014). Museum of Jewish Heritage — a Living Memorial to the Holocaust. Retrieved December 31, 2023, from <https://mjhny.org/>.

¹³ *The Jewish Museum*. (n.d.). The Jewish Museum. Retrieved December 31, 2023, from https://thejewishmuseum.org/?gclid=CjwKCAiA-bmsBhAGEiwAoaQNmlf3F5U08hpvvl1WaNu_dd2GD5W6bZ6rqbXDsWy5ONO4xQ8-mz4y7hoCPxIQAvD_BwE.