

Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong recommendation that the Vermont Agency of Education explicitly incorporate ethnic groups that have historically endured persecution or genocide into the new State Education Quality Standards. I also urge the inclusion of a specific focus on combating "antisemitism" within the curriculum. This updated educational framework must encompass the Jewish experience in the United States and across the globe.

In light of current events, maintaining silence regarding antisemitism and the Jewish experience within the United States can inadvertently contribute to the propagation of prejudice. Antisemitism is on the rise in the United States and statistically serves as the primary basis for religion-based hate crimes. By not educating Vermont's youth about the Jewish American heritage and history, we inadvertently fuel antisemitism, racism, and hatred. It is essential for students to gain insight into this history to comprehend the United States' relationship with its ethnic minority groups. Antisemitism is not an isolated concern, as it affects Vermont just as it does the rest of the nation. Recent instances such as the discovery of swastikas painted on buildings in my community in Norwich, VT, and the necessity for local synagogues to implement security measures like crash barriers, armed guards, and bulletproof glass in response to concerns, underscore the pressing nature of this issue.

The White House has issued the National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, with its first pillar emphasizing the importance of raising awareness and understanding of antisemitism and its threat to America, along with fostering a deeper appreciation of Jewish American heritage. It begs the question: why would Vermont consciously opt to exclude Jewish American history from this curriculum?

Vermont is celebrated for its reputation as an inclusive, tolerant, and progressive state. I kindly request that the new curriculum adequately addresses the issue of antisemitism to ensure that Vermont continues to embody these values.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Rosenbloom

Norwich, Vermont