

Andre Gao's Response to HoCoJAC BOE 2024 General Election Survey

As an Asian American, I have shared similar experiences to those of members of the Jewish community. I fully understand your concerns regarding certain HCPSS policies, and I support your proposed policy changes.

1. I believe it is important to amend Policy 1010 to clarify whether decisions regarding discrimination hinge on the intent of the speaker or the effect on the audience, and to ensure that this standard is applied consistently to all student groups.

It is crucial for HCPSS to have a clear and widely accepted definition of antisemitism. The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is a good starting point.

Disputes over what constitutes antisemitism should be referred to outside subject matter experts or organizations that are nationally recognized authorities on antisemitism and have the support of a majority of the Jewish community.

Using coded words, phrases, slurs, or symbols to refer to an identifiable minority group or to call for violence against that group should be considered as direct references or calls for violence against that group.

Demonizing, delegitimizing, or applying a double standard to an identifiable group is discriminatory.

All incidents of discrimination for each protected class in HCPSS should be tracked and reported, and we should have a written mitigation plan for protected classes that experience discrimination at a disproportionate rate.

2. I believe it is important to update HCPSS Policy 1080 to include antisemitism and the Jewish community in the appropriate sections, making this policy more inclusive.
3. I believe that no identifiable group should be subjected to bullying, harassment, hatred, or intimidation within HCPSS. Calls for violence against an identifiable group, or expressions of support for organizations that advocate such violence, constitute intimidation toward members of that group.
4. For HCPSS Policy 9020, I believe that bullying, intimidation, harassment, discrimination, and other violations of HCPSS Policies 1010 and 9460 should not be considered protected speech. I believe the implementation guidelines should be revised to ensure that planned political activities are safeguarded against being disruptive or hostile to any individual or group of students.
5. For HCPSS Policy 7030, I believe that teachers and staff should ensure the well-being of all students. Their personal and political expressions must not undermine the core HCPSS values and mission; instead, they should contribute to a safe, nurturing, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all students.
6. I believe HCPSS should strive to comply with Title VI for schools and universities to ensure that all student groups are protected and do not experience a hostile environment. All student groups should experience the same welcoming, nurturing, and inclusive environment within HCPSS.