

On January 16th, 2025, the US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) announced the [results](#) of its investigation into pervasive antisemitism at HCPSS schools. OCR documented numerous abuses and the failure of HCPSS to protect Jewish students; they concluded that HCPSS had likely become a hostile environment for Jews. The investigation resulted in an [agreement](#) whereby HCPSS is required to take a range of corrective actions, many of which must commence by March 2025.

To demonstrate seriousness about ending the hostile environment and to effectively protect students going forward, HoCoJAG believes HCPSS **must**:

1. Use a nationally recognized expert in K-12 antisemitism to guide training, policy, and curriculum changes. The same people who failed to recognize and address pervasive antisemitism for more than a year can't be the ones to train others or choose those who will. HoCoJAG recommends the [CEI](#) (CAMERA Education Institute), [AJC](#) (American Jewish Committee), [ADL](#) (Anti-Defamation League), or the [Brandeis Center](#).
2. Adopt the [IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism](#) into [Anti-Discrimination Policy 1010](#). The IHRA definition is the only widely accepted definition; it has been adopted by the [United States](#), every western democracy, 37 US states, [Montgomery County](#), and by [Harvard University](#) as part of its own recent settlement to mitigate rampant antisemitism. It is almost certain to become federal law this year as part of the [Antisemitism Awareness Act](#).
3. Amend [policy 9020](#) regulating student expression, consistent with the First Amendment and Tinker precedent, to require students to document which protected classes might be harmed, steps they will take to prevent harm, steps they will take to ensure expression abides by school anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies, and concrete consequences for student groups that fail to do so. HoCoJAG attorneys have drafted precise language to aid with this and would be happy to share it.
4. Require HCPSS faculty and staff to attend universal, mandatory training, clarifying their obligation under Title VI to prevent the creation of a hostile environment for any protected class (including Jews) and enumerating concrete consequences for failure to do so.

Taking these steps can help prevent further harm to Jewish students and students of all protected classes. Using broadly recognized outside experts and widely accepted definitions can save HCPSS time, resources, and show the seriousness that may help prevent costly future litigation.

