



January 20, 2022

## **Superintendent's Message: Denouncing Antisemitism**

Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff, Students and Community Members,

As many of you are aware, our staff and families found antisemitic posters, falsely and nefariously representing pro-vaccine propaganda, at eight Santa Monica schools last week. We are deeply offended by this hate crime. The attempt to associate Jews with vaccines connects to the antisemitic trope that Jews spread diseases and dates back to the Middle Ages when Jews were blamed for the outbreak of the Black Plague. This message was front and central in Nazi propaganda during the Third Reich.

All posters were quickly removed from our campuses and Santa Monica Police Department is investigating the incident. Thank you to our staff, parents and community members who went to work immediately removing these hateful posters from our campuses.

Our Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution in June of 2021: [Denouncing antisemitism in all forms directed at Jewish people and affirming SMMUSD's commitment to the well-being of Jewish Americans.](#)

SMMUSD rejects bigotry of any kind and antisemitic rhetoric, intolerance, harassment, and violence have no place in our schools or in our community. We reaffirm our commitment to providing a safe, welcoming environment for all students, parents, teachers, other school employees, and visitors of any race, religion, ethnicity, and national origin.

As I've stated in the past, we bear a great responsibility as educators for shaping society, as we have the unique privilege of educating our youth as they are forming their worldview. We have a responsibility to ensure equity and opportunity for all students, while at the same time working to create a better and more just world for our students to inherit. With renewed attention on systemic and institutionalized racism in our country, we want to let you know that we stand with our communities in supporting anti-racism policies and reforms that will provide equity, diversity, and inclusion. We embrace the opportunity to learn, grow, and act together in ways that shape our future toward justice for everyone.

Parents may find these Common Sense Media resources on racism and social justice helpful: [https://www.commonsensemedia.org/lists/books-about-racism-and-social-justice.](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/lists/books-about-racism-and-social-justice)

Please stay safe out there. Continue to take care of yourselves and each other.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent