

School District Defends Decision to Discriminate in Favor of Muslim Students

The San Diego Unified School District's superintendent and board of education filed their answer to a federal civil rights lawsuit brought by five families and two local organizations challenging the District's "anti-Islamophobia initiative." The multi-year program was developed under the direction of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) as a "holistic" plan to supposedly protect Muslim students and their families from bullying and discrimination.

"The District asking the Court to defer to their judgment on a program that is fundamentally at odds with the Constitution. But instead of promoting 'diversity' and 'inclusion,' school officials are setting up a student community divided into religious blocs, which would only escalate religious hostility and conflict. The Supreme Court has long held that people should be treated as individuals, not according to the gods they do or do not worship." said Daniel Piedra, executive director of the Freedom of Conscience Defense Fund, which is representing the families pro bono.

As part of the initiative, staff and students must be taught by CAIR officials "how to become allies to Muslim students," and CAIR is empowered to revise school curriculum for a more "inclusive" portrayal of Islamic history and culture. CAIR is notorious for its anti-Israel activism and ties to Islamic terrorism. Indeed, federal prosecutors identified CAIR as a Muslim Brotherhood front group, and the United Arab Emirates officially designates CAIR as a terrorist organization.

In its answer, the district admitted the scant statistics of any problem of Muslim bullying but denies that CAIR was the

prime motivator behind the initiative. Disclosed records show, however, that CAIR was the principal architect of the initiative, and CAIR officials were even invited by the superintendent to edit and finalize the initiative's so-called "Action Steps" for implementation. Despite the lack of any evidence of a bullying problem and in the face of widespread outcry by the school community, the District justifies the initiative as being an academic decision made under the sound judgment of the Board of Education.

"The superintendent and school board are claiming that discriminating among students along religious lines will promote school harmony and student wellbeing. Tellingly, the segregationist school boards argued the same thing about race in the 1950s," Piedra says.

As part of the lawsuit, FCDF filed a motion for preliminary injunction last month, asking the court to put a halt to the district's relationship with CAIR and the implementation of the Islamic organization's curriculum recommendations. A tentative hearing on that motion is scheduled for next month.