

Parents Sue School District Over Student Field Trip to Mosque

Parents have filed a lawsuit against Palo Alto High School in California after it allowed a field trip to a mosque where students were given Qurans and encouraged to wear hijabs.

A group representing the parents, which includes Jewish parents, a Hindu parent, a Zoroastrian parent, as well as three former Jewish students, alleges the young students were given the idea that Islam is linked to social justice.

Palo Alto Unified School District Superintendent Jason Glass told The San Francisco Chronicle that the district's policy requires "that teachings about religion be academic, and not devotional, and any faith may not be promoted or denigrated," the outlet wrote.



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Zahra Billoo, the executive director of the area's Council on American-Islamic Relations, was mentioned in the lawsuit. Billoo told the outlet, "Public schools and the government have an obligation to remain neutral toward religion, but what neutrality does not mean is shielding students entirely." She added, "The job of educators is to teach students, and to expose them to different worldviews. That's what happened here."

"One of the most important ways we combat hate is to learn about each other," Billoo further stated. "I am concerned that this group of parents not only wants to counteract that for their own children... but is attempting to intimidate schools

and school districts from doing necessary work of educating the next generation.”

Islamic recognition within California schools has been pushed by lawmakers, as a bill sought to designate the Muslim holidays of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as state-recognized days. According to the legislation, community colleges and public schools would “close on ‘Eid al-Fitr’ and ‘Eid al-Adha,’ as specified.” It adds that an academic absence may be had for the days’ observances.

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