



October 23, 2024

District Parent Advisory Council of the Vancouver School Board,

We are the rabbis and spiritual leaders of the synagogues located in the city of Vancouver and within the Vancouver School Board district. We represent all of the synagogue affiliated members of the Vancouver Jewish community and are duly constituted as the Rabbinical Association of Vancouver to speak as the rabbinic voice of the Vancouver Jewish community.

We write to applaud and support the sadly necessary decision of the District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) of the Vancouver School Board (VSB) to bring in [Project Shema](#) to lead a [webinar](#) on October 30, 2024 at 7:00pm for parents about the dangers and virulent nature of antisemitism within the Vancouver School Board district and to ensure a safe learning environment for Jewish students.

As the spiritual and religious leaders of the Vancouver Jewish community we also want to inform you that we reject attempts by groups like Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) and Parents 4 Palestine (P4P) to cancel or to hijack this much needed training about antisemitism in our public schools. Further we are appalled that IJV and P4P are trying to make a webinar to combat antisemitism in our public school centered on the situation in Israel or Gaza by insisting that they be the organizations to provide antisemitism education to VSB families.

The children and families in our congregations have experienced first hand antisemitism in the Vancouver School Board schools and we know that the training provided by Project Shema is necessary and long overdue.

Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) and Parents 4 Palestine (P4P) are Palestine focused groups and the DPAC antisemitism sensitivity webinar is not about Israel, Palestine or the current conflict. Any attempts by outside groups to characterize it as such is further evidence of the need for antisemitism education and sensitivity training within the Vancouver School Board district.

Independent Jewish Voices is a fringe group with only 1,000 members across Canada. They are publicly associated with and have partnered with and lent their logo to the violent and antisemitic rallies here in Vancouver organized by Samidoun, a designated terrorist

organization by the Canadian government. This association alone should disqualify them from any consideration by anyone as speaking for the Jewish community. They do not represent or speak for the Jewish community writ large neither of course does Parents 4 Palestine (P4P) speak for the Jewish community who are also associated with Samidoun via rallies, logos and partnerships.

The organizers of this webinar have undertaken a public and transparent months-long process of vetting and discussing the merits of bringing in Project Shema to facilitate antisemitism education. The decision to bring in this well respected and non-partisan group which is based in the United States but serves communities across North America was made by a vote of the DPAC Executive at their public meeting. All parties with opinions and views on this initiative were given the opportunity to speak in an open and democratic process; the majority voted to hold this webinar and to engage Project Shema to facilitate it. We applaud DPAC for making this desperately needed resource available to the parents of VSB students.

Signed by:

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The Rabbinical Association of Vancouver (RAV)

The Rabbinical Association of Vancouver (RAV), was formed in the 1980s to represent Vancouver's synagogues and Jewish life in the Lower Mainland – home to an estimated 35,000 Jews. The RAV is composed of the rabbis of all of the synagogues in the lower mainland from across the Jewish denominational spectrum.