

The Washington Post

Letter to the Editor: Nysmith School scandal is roadmap for mishandling antisemitism

Regarding the July 10 Metro article "[Antisemitism alleged at Va. private school](#)":

Amid the hundreds of school-based antisemitic incidents across the DMV to which my organization has responded since the Hamas attacks on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, the handling of the allegations at the Nysmith School in Herndon stands out for its callousness and disregard.

For months, we have worked alongside the courageous Vazquez/Roy family, urging Nysmith's school officials to address the unrelenting and insidious antisemitism to which Vazquez and Roy's children say they have been exposed. Those officials have refused. Rather than acting to protect Jewish students, Nysmith has instead created a toxic environment while those subjected to it are ignored.

When individuals alleged to have spread anti-Jewish hatred are still welcome to attend Nysmith, but children who spoke up to say they were targeted by that hate are not, something is very wrong. When school officials decline to schedule an address by a Holocaust survivor because of the Israel-Gaza war, school officials have truly lost the plot.

We hope the Title VI complaint filed by our colleagues at the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law will provide much-needed relief for the Vazquez/Roy family. But it should not take a lawsuit for a school to live up to its most basic responsibility: ensuring the safety and security of its students.

Virginia, sadly, is no stranger to antisemitism. In 2024, it [ranked](#) in the top 10 states for total antisemitic incidents — with more than half of those incidents occurring in Northern Virginia.

But what's happening here is particularly awful. To properly confront what is happening at Nysmith, officials must start by looking in the mirror. At every step of the way thus far, they have made a bad situation far worse.

Guila Franklin Siegel, North Bethesda

The writer is chief operating officer of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington.

This letter to the Editor was published in The Washington Post, July 20, 2025