



Eight Ways To Advocate for Your Jewish Child in Their School **A Guide To Advocating Thoughtfully and Effectively**

At JCRC Bay Area, we believe in starting with the lowest level of intervention and working collaboratively with school officials to build inclusive environments that honor every student's identity:

1) Build Relationships Early

Talk to teachers at the beginning of the school year about any concerns you have. Offer to partner with the teacher in creating a positive learning environment that respects the identities of all students. Work in a constructive way to get the teacher invested in your child. *As soon as possible, make note of the holidays when your child will be absent from school and request make-up assignments.*

2) Share Key Resources

Bring teachers a copy of the JCRC Jewish Holiday Calendar, an informational brochure of key observance dates and practices. Determine which administrators are responsible for your school calendar and make sure they get a copy of the JCRC Calendar. JCRC sends this annually to Bay Area public school districts, but it may not necessarily reach the desk of the appropriate administrator.

Feel free to share our other JCRC resources with teachers and administrators. JCRC can also provide recommendations of workshops and programs for teachers and families on issues of cultural sensitivity and discrimination.

3) Get Involved

- a) Find out if parents can serve on the school calendar committee or in an advisory capacity to the committee.
- b) Review school board agendas and minutes. Participate in the school board meetings through public comment.
- c) Determine if there is a grievance committee at your school site or in the district. Learn about the issues this committee tackles and consider joining.

4) **Know The Laws**

Did you know that Santa Claus and Christmas Trees are legally allowed on a public school campus? This fact may be surprising, so don't hesitate to discuss with teachers how they might present a more balanced picture of holidays or curriculum that doesn't marginalize students of different faiths.

5) **Know The Policies**

Being familiar with your school and district policies is one of the best ways to ensure the district is serving your student in the way they purport to.

6) **Escalate Appropriately**

If an issue comes up that requires attention, start at the right level and escalate through proper channels as needed, moving from the teacher to the counselor, then to the principal, the mid-level administrator, and finally the district administrator.

7) **Seek Community Support**

Contact the JCRC Bay Area when you need assistance. We can work with you to ensure positive results with the least amount of outside intervention. A meeting with school officials may be required to determine if there are systematic problems in the school and/or district that require further attention.

8) **When It's Urgent, Act Fast**

In the most serious cases, when antisemitic threats or graffiti are involved, contact JCRC Bay Area immediately. *There might be a need for intervention by law enforcement.*