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Group Files Another Lawsuit Against Santa Barbara School District Over Cultural Proficiency Training

Fair Education Santa Barbara sues Santa Barbara Unified again, after first case is dismissed in federal court



Attorney Eric Early blasted implicit bias and cultural proficiency training Tuesday night at the Reagan Ranch Center and announced a lawsuit against Santa Barbara Unified School District. (Joshua Molina / Noozhawk photo)

By Joshua Molina, Noozhawk Staff Writer | @JECMolina | April 9, 2019 | 11:18 p.m.



Fair Education Santa Barbara has filed another lawsuit over cultural proficiency training, although this time it has named **Santa Barbara Unified School District** Superintendent Cary Matsuoka as a defendant.

The group is **fighting the district** over its \$294,430 agreement with the nonprofit organization Just Communities to provide cultural proficiency and implicit bias training.

Just Communities Central Coast has provided customized training and professional development for the district in the past around issues of diversity, inclusion and

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equity, and the workshop is designed to help school staff increase their understanding of how race, socio-economic class, and individual and system-wide bias affect the learning environment.

Fair Education Santa Barbara filed an earlier lawsuit in Los Angeles that was dismissed by the U.S. District Court Central District California, which stated the group didn't have legal standing to assert its claims of intentional discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion and sex.

"We're gonna take back this state and take back this country," said Eric Early, the Los Angeles attorney representing Fair Education and plaintiffs James Fenkner and Sheridan Rosenberg, who were not listed in the earlier lawsuit filed by the group.

"These people who are fighting on the other side are really just a bunch of cowards and we really need to start fighting back and that is what we are going to do."

The school district's legal team told Noozhawk in a statement that, "Having been unsuccessful in the federal court, Fair Education Inc. is seeking a do over in Santa Barbara Superior Court hoping to achieve a different result. We do not anticipate that there will be any more successful here than they were in federal court."

Early spoke at an event Tuesday night at the Reagan Ranch Center on State Street and announced the lawsuit, and said the group has plans to halt to halt cultural proficiency and implicit bias training in the Santa Barbara Unified School District.

About 150 people attended the event, which required an RSVP to attend. Early said Fair Education Santa Barbara was formed for various reasons, including "equality for all races, creeds, colors, religions, nationalities and sexual orientation.



About 150 people attended a 'Town Hall' event about implicit bias training Tuesday at the Reagan Ranch Center. (Joshua Molina / Noozhawk photo)

"We want equality for everybody," Early said.

The lawsuit names Matsuoka, Santa Barbara Unified School District, and Just Communities as defendants.

"Under the guise of promoting so-called 'unconscious bias' and 'inclusivity' instruction, SBUSD and Matsuoka employ and pay for JCCC to teach district teachers and students with a curriculum which is overtly and intentionally anti-Caucasian, anti-male, and anti-Christian," the lawsuit alleges.

Early and the plaintiffs want the current training contract with Just Communities voided and want any future contracts to be put out for bid, rather than the district contracting directly with Just Communities.

The lawsuit also includes elements of Just Communities' curriculum, which lists privilege groups as: Men, white people, heterosexual people, traditionally gendered people, wealthy people, abled people, adults 18-65, and Christian people. Those groups have power over the so-called target groups, according to the lawsuit documents, which include: women, people of color, LGBTQ people, transgender and genderqueer people, working class and poor people, people living with disabilities, youth, and elders.

One of the speakers at the event, journalist and filmmaker Matthew Vadum, claimed the Just Communities training is teaching racism.



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"They are trying to share their values, their sinister un-American values with students and they think that everyone needs to be taught about the dangers of whiteness," Vadum said.

At Tuesday's event, Early said "far-left social justice crazies" and "this mainstream media, which seems to be populated by the same kind of people," are popping up all over the country.



James Fenkner, a plaintiff in the lawsuit challenging Santa Barbara Unified's implicit bias training, speaks during a Tuesday night event at the Reagan Ranch Center. (Joshua Molina / Noozhawk photo)

— *Noozhawk* staff writer Joshua Molina can be reached at jmolina@noozhawk.com. Follow *Noozhawk* on Twitter: [@noozhawk](#), [@NoozhawkNews](#) and [@NoozhawkBiz](#). Connect with *Noozhawk* on Facebook.

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Here's how it works: You share your questions with us in the nearby box. In some cases, we may work with you to find the answers. In others, we may ask you to vote on your top choices to help us narrow the scope. And we'll be regularly asking you for your feedback on a specific issue or topic.

We also expect to work together with the reader who asked the winning questions to find the answer together. Noozhawk's objective is to come at questions from a place of curiosity and openness, and we believe a transparent collaboration is the key to achieve it.

The results of our investigation will be published here in this Noozhawk Asks section. Once or twice a month, we plan to do a review of what was asked and answered.

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