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Lawsuit: SBUSD 'anti-Caucasian,' 'anti-Christian,' 'anti-male'

Parents group targets material provided by Just Communities Central Coast

By SCOTT STEEPLTON, NEWS-PRESS CITY EDITOR
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A local parents group claims the Santa Barbara Unified School District violates federal law through so-called "unconscious bias" and "inclusivity" instruction that in reality promotes values that are "overtly and intentionally" "anti-Caucasian, anti-male, and anti-Christian."

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Forms of Oppression

Forms of Oppression	Privilege Group	Target Group
Sexism	Men	Women
Racism	White People	People of Color
Heterosexism	Heterosexual People	LGBTQ People
Genderism	Traditionally gendered people	Transgender and Genderqueer People
Classism	Wealthy People	Working Class & Poor
Ableism	Generic / "Able"	People living with Disabilities
Ageism	Adults, 18-65 years old	Youth & Elders
Religious Oppression	Christian People	All others

Forms of Oppression: This graphic provided in material from Just Communities Central Coast, lists supposed forms of oppression and the "privileged" groups it benefits and the "target" groups it "disadvantages."

In a 20-page lawsuit and about 180 pages of exhibits filed late Monday in U.S. District Court

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in Los Angeles, a nonprofit called Fair Education Santa Barbara Inc. argues that the training programs provided by Just Communities Central Coast recently adopted by the district are radical, discriminatory and illegal.

The district "has wholeheartedly supported and promoted JCCC's discriminatory program and has paid JCCC more than \$1,000,000 since 2013 alone," according to the suit filed on behalf of the parents group by attorney Eric P. Early. On Oct. 9, the lawsuit continues, the district renewed its contract with JCCC for another year at a cost to taxpayers of nearly \$300,000.

"This action is brought against the anti-Caucasian, anti-Christian organization calling itself Just Communities Central Coast Inc., and its willing enabler, SBUSD — two organizations that have had a veritable revolving door of employees working for each — to obtain, among other relief, and without limitation, a declaratory judgment and an injunction."

The district's attorney, Joseph Sholder, told the News-Press via email that prior to the suit being filed, he sent to Mr. Early correspondence "discussing in detail why there was no legal or factual basis for the claims made in the complaint."

"The complaint contains nothing new, and we continue to believe that the lawsuit is meritless and intend to vigorously oppose it," Mr. Sholder said.

The lawsuit claims the defendants "have employed and continue to employ policies and procedures (for teaching SBUSD's teachers and students) that unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex and religion."

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Documents from Just Communities filed in support of the plaintiff's claims include one listing two "key terms" when it comes to race:

"WHITE PEOPLE: A term used to describe people of European ancestry who have historically held positions of dominance and social power in Western society. This term has changed over time based on societal notions of those in power.

"PEOPLE OF COLOR: A term of solidarity referring to people of Latino/a, African, Arab/Middle Eastern, Asian & Pacific Islander, Native American, Indigenous, and Multiracial heritages. This term is sometimes preferred to other common terms, such as minority and non-white."

Another plaintiff claim is that the district is in violation of board policy over obtaining conflict of interest statements regarding its relationships with Just Communities of the Central Coast.

"Fair Education SB is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that at least 7 individuals, including present SBUSD Board member Ismael Paredes Ulloa, and present Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education Shawn Carey, have been employed at one time or another by both entities and/or its major donors. These conflicts of interest help explain SBUSD's apparent zeal to contract with JCCC."

Neither was immediately available for comment.

Fair Education Santa Barbara also claims the defendants are in violation of the United States Constitution "by intentionally supporting, promoting and implementing JCCC's programming in SBUSD's schools with

knowledge of its racially discriminatory content and application, which has created a racially hostile educational environment for many teachers and students."

Fair Education Santa Barbara seeks to stop the dissemination and use by the district of the Just Communities material.

The six-count lawsuit includes federal and state claims of intentional discrimination on the basis of race and intentional discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion and sex, as well as violation of California's laws requiring competitive bidding for government contracts.

Just Communities, said Mr. Sholder, has a "long and enviable" track record of working with staff on a voluntary basis, in Santa Barbara and elsewhere "to minimize discrimination and prejudice in all its forms."

Despite how it's being portrayed, he said, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion program is not "an anti-Caucasian anti-Christian outlier. In fact, it is similar to those used in educational and other institutions."

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