

June 14, 2022

Alberto M. Carvalho
Superintendent
Los Angeles Unified School District
superintendent@lausd.net



Sent via Email

Dear Superintendent Carvalho:

The Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism (FAIR) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing civil rights and liberties and promoting a common culture based on fairness, understanding, and humanity. We have nearly 100 chapters and tens of thousands of members nationwide, including throughout California. Our website, fairforall.org, can give you a fuller sense of our identity and activities.

We write in response to an [incident report](#) regarding the Los Angeles Unified School District (“LAUSD”) submitted to FAIR on May 28th through our transparency website, fairtransparency.org. That report states:

May 16, 2022 at 11:41 am PST sends email to all parents with LAUSD enrolled kids for Career Technical Education program. Clicking the link leads to a “magic link” to fill in your email that then emails a link to canvassing, door knocking for LA Democrat candidates. Monday May 16, 5:25pm PST, they send a CORRECTED LINK: www.mobilize.us/LAUSD/event/452370/ that goes to a true tech career info sessions Fridays May 27, 2022, 11:42am PST LAUSD sends another email for Career Technical Education Program which similarly through a magic one-time link goes to more door knocking, canvassing. I am in Colorado vacationing, the link goes to Colorado Democrat campaign event and relates me platform like Reproductive Rights rallies [sic].

In investigating further, FAIR was able to confirm that the “magic link” does indeed direct the user to Democratic candidates and other causes in their current local area. The link does not appear to include any opportunities relating to Republican or Independent candidates’ causes. Based on our understanding, this is the second time LAUSD has sent this link to LAUSD parents, giving the impression that the school system is directing families and students on the basis of specific political alignment.

Promoting specific political ideology via a public school system’s communications system may be a violation of the California Education Code. It is clear that the magic link that was sent to parents in the district is “political” and “sectarian” because the contents of the page linked are aligned with narrow ideologies held by only certain political factions. The California Education Code prohibits the adoption of instructional materials that contain “sectarian or denominational doctrine or propaganda contrary to law.” The legislature’s stated purpose for Section 60044 is to guard against the “threat to the apolitical nature of public school governance and academic content standards in California.” The California Supreme Court

has expressly recognized the importance of objective, apolitical education as a necessary counter measure to “the development of sophisticated techniques of political propaganda and mass marketing,” saying that “education plays an increasingly critical role in fostering ‘those habits of open-mindedness and critical inquiry which alone make for responsible citizens, who, in turn, make possible an enlightened and effective public opinion.’”

That public education should be free from political influence is a well-settled principle, the importance of which is difficult to overstate. In the spirit of offering apolitical education and opportunities to public school students, this email campaign seems like a misinformed effort at best. We urge LAUSD to carefully consider the impact on students of this one-sided campaign.

We would like to give LAUSD an opportunity to respond. Please let us know within the next five business days if you intend to do so.

Very truly yours,

Leigh Ann O’Neill
Staff Attorney
Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism

*cc: george.mckenna@lausd.net, monica.garcia@lausd.net, scott.schmerelson@lausd.net,
nick.melvoin@lausd.net, kelly.gonez@lausd.net, jackie.goldberg@lausd.net, tanya.franklin@lausd.net*