



Name: Amy Awad

Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:

I am parent of two daughters attending West Carleton Secondary School and also have two siblings that studied with the board this school year. I would like to address the Board on the necessity of hiring an Arab-speaking coach. We are an Arabic speaking family and have seen first hand the impact of lack of awareness, sensitivity and culture/language knowledge from school staff. We have seen fellow students being called antisemitic by staff or teachers for trying to explain their perspective, present their own culture, language and history. We have also seen students being told they were no longer welcome in class for expressing their views. Recently, my daughters were told by a history teacher that any number of civilian casualties in the assault on Gaza was justifiable and that there was no such thing as "proportionality." This was in the presence of her Palestinian friend, whose family lives in the Gaza strip and is suffering in ways that are difficult to fathom. Both students and staff are in a need of an Arabic-speaking coach that has a good understanding of the different manifestations of anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian racism and that can create the needed inclusive school and student community through training, and awareness raising. It is an investment worth making for the significant and growing Arab population within the school that according to the first annual public report (2020-2023), produced by the Human Rights and Equity Advisor Office, lack identity based support and who also face systemic racism, discrimination and bias within disciplinary processes.