



February 11, 2022

For Immediate Release

For additional Information, Contact:

Steve Doremus, Hamilton County Schools Communications Officer
Phone: (615) 944-5992
Email: Doremus_s@hcde.org

In its efforts to ensure that all students and staff experience a climate of belonging and support, Hamilton County Schools last week launched a rigorous investigation into a parent complaint concerning classroom activities involving the Bible History elective course at East Hamilton Middle School. The investigation was led by counsel and included multiple interviews with the teacher, students who were in the class at the time referenced, and the parent who raised the concerns.

The investigation determined the following concerning the teacher's alleged use of the word "torture" during a lesson surrounding the Hebrew name of God on February 2.

- The teacher made a reference to the fact that Jewish people do not say the Hebrew name of God as represented and, in essence, that to hear or say that word would be a torturous or difficult experience for them. Some students recalled the discussion while others did not. None of the students interviewed believed that the teacher was instructing them on how to torture a Jewish person or that her comments were rooted in malice.
- We cannot conclude that the teacher intended to actually instruct her students about how to 'torture' a Jewish person, and none of the students interviewed who recalled the comment interpreted it negatively. While it does not appear that the statement was intended to cause offense, it did. No student should feel singled out or marginalized in class as a result of a teacher's instruction.

Additional concerns brought forth by the parent were also investigated, and a review committee is being formed by the district's partner to evaluate course content and reference materials.

Hamilton County Schools is committed to restoring a positive learning experience between the teacher and students. As a District, we will continue to take appropriate steps to ensure all students feel accepted and supported while receiving the opportunities and access needed to thrive in our classrooms, and we will continue to support teachers as they learn and grow in their profession to accomplish that goal.

3074 Hickory Valley Road • Chattanooga, TN 37421

Tel: 423-498-6762 • www.hcde.org