

## Strategic Considerations for Your Drop the ADL from Schools Campaign

1. **Decide on your objective**—Have clarity on whether you want to focus on getting the ADL out of an individual school, an entire school district, at the state level, or if you want to target the ADL nationally.

President Biden endorsed a [National Strategy for Countering Antisemitism](#) that [we consider problematic](#). This strategy is friendly to ADL policies, thereby making it much easier for the ADL to push for state-level implementation. State-level endorsement of ADL programs and materials makes it easier for districts to use them. In the long term, we need to broadly expose the ADL's dishonest practices, and make sure it is discredited and removed at all levels, but the decision about where to start should be based on your local interests, priorities, and capacity.

Be aware that decision-makers are often very focused on managing risk. The ADL has close relationships with policymakers and media, so decision-makers may face criticism or even lose funding when they publicly break ties with the ADL. That risk might deter decision-makers even if they personally agree with your goals. Ideally, our organizing will overcome this problem by making it “risky” to partner with a racist organization, and “rewarding” to partner with antiracist organizations. However, if that is beyond your community's capacity right now, you might begin with less-public objectives, like getting decision-makers to stop using ADL materials.

Some possible objectives are to get decision-makers to:

- Reverse the authorization of the ADL as approved professional development vendors at the school, district and/or state levels
- Stop using ADL statistics to track and report on bias and stop reporting bias/hate incidents to the ADL or the police
- Cease paid or unpaid consultations with the ADL on all matters, including as experts in bias incident response
- Replace ADL programs and materials at all school levels, even free ones
- End ADL participation in all school-related events
- Remove all references to the ADL on lists of recommended resources at all levels
- Reorient schools away from the bias/hate frame to antiracist, liberatory approaches
- Move schools away from a default to punishment in all incidents of bias and instead leverage teachable moments using restorative justice (when appropriate) and transformative justice when possible
- Incorporate antiracist curricula at all levels—including by broadening genocide education to include Palestinians and other BIPOC people
- Protect educators—and unions that support educators—from censorship for uplifting freedom for everybody, including Palestinians

2. **Educate yourself about the ADL.**

The ADL has wide-ranging and harmful influence on schools and beyond. Familiarize yourself with the materials at the DropTheADL from Schools website and the [#DropTheADL Campaign](#). The Info + Resources section includes valuable articles from a range of news outlets and publications

3. **Determine how the ADL is actually present in your school or district and at what level of authority decisions about curricula and professional development are being made.** Are they providing No Place for Hate programming? Are teachers attending school-sponsored professional development? Is the ADL present at school fairs? Are ADL materials recommended by principals or on websites?

It is possible that the approval of the ADL as a professional development vendor happens at the district or state level, while the principal has the discretion to bring the ADL in for a specific training or as an expert advisor in response to a bias incident. In this case, you would want to raise awareness among principals, while trying to get the ADL removed as an approved vendor. Similarly, ADL programming may happen at the district level with the decision being made by the superintendent with or without participation by the elected school board. In this case, you might want to cultivate champions among the school board to pressure the superintendent. To mobilize the school board, you may need to mobilize parents or students. Often, teachers have a lot of leeway to decide what curriculum they use in class. In this case, you might want to approach individual teachers or department heads, or it might be more effective to work through the teachers' union or a teachers' affinity group. In all those cases, involving students may strengthen your case.

4. **Map the ecosystem in which the ADL works.** Remember the ultimate objective is not only to remove the ADL as an organization, but to neutralize the inaccurate, racist, and divisive beliefs that drive its policies. This may also mean addressing other groups in your local organizing.

In most places the ADL works closely with other Israel-aligned political advocacy groups like the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), American Jewish Committee (AJC), Jewish Federations, Israeli-American Council (IAC) and others. Many of these have dedicated teams focusing on K-12 education and may be sponsoring student or youth groups, or organizing parent groups. In schools, the ADL may work closely with professional development organizations that silence Palestinian narratives or weaponize antisemitism, such as the Institute for Curriculum Services (ICS) or Facing History and Ourselves or regional or local groups like Classrooms Without Borders, which sponsors trips to Israel for educators. Take note of the Zionist groups even more aligned with the right, such as the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA) and the various self-proclaimed "watchdog" groups that publicly attack educators and students with false accusations of antisemitism.. Also relevant are your

locally influential parents groups, including Christian Zionist or other right-wing groups, which may operate primarily through Facebook or WhatsApp groups.

**5. Identify the ADL's allies and partners within the system you're working in.**

Relationships entrenching the ADL may be very intertwined. Is the rabbi on your city's human rights commission also on the board of the ADL? Did the head of your school police team participate in an ADL-funded trip to Israel? Is your local state rep, a former teacher, the one who introduced a resolution with the ADL enshrining the IHRA definition at the state level? Is your congressional rep frequently seen speaking on panels with the ADL? Does your superintendent worship at the same synagogue that proudly hosts monthly meetings of the ADL?

Your organizing will have to consider who and how many people are aware of the ADL's work in schools, how many are supportive, and how exposed decision-makers have been to critiques of the ADL.

**6. Consider your base and potential allies.** Your objectives and tactics will differ if you are acting as students, caregivers, educators, former educators, union members, or community activists. Your influence will vary depending on whether your base of supporters includes or primarily consists of Jews, Palestinians, Muslims, Arabs, other people of color, or is diverse.

Your ability to build a base and expand your allies depends a great deal on how you frame the issues. If you consistently uplift antiracism, you may attract broader support than using a narrower Jewish-Palestinian frame. Focusing on the local impact may attract broader support than a narrower emphasis on Israel and international policy.

**7. Track ongoing developments at various levels and in various sectors so you know what's going on before or while it's happening.**

The ADL and others in its ecosystem have vast networks and resources. They are able to work on near-term and long-term priorities at the same time, often leaving us in a defensive or reactive mode. For this reason, it is advisable to keep on top of developments at all levels, even if you're only working locally. This could mean:

- A. tracking state-level legislation. You can sign up for updates from the legislation round up done by the [Foundation for Middle East Peace](#);
- B. attending or reading the minutes of your local school board and city council;
- C. signing up for emails of the relevant organizations and joining Facebook groups where ADL supporters discuss issues—and going to events run by those groups so you know what they are working on;

- D. getting on the mailing lists of the superintendents, principals, PTOs, police, city commissions, relevant civic organizations including Zionist and antiracist ones and following their social media.

This list is just an example of what you might do depending on your local circumstances.

- 8. **Connect to efforts in other regions.** Find others working to drop the ADL in your state so you can team up to track and influence state-level policies.

Connections are important for learning, coalition work, and protection. Obvious connections include anti-Zionist Jewish groups like Jewish Voice for Peace, If Not Now, and others; Palestinian rights groups including Palestine Youth Movement, Students for Justice for Palestine; antiracist educational organizations including Black Lives Matter in Schools and others; justice-minded faith groups; civil rights and liberties organizations like the National Lawyers Guild, ACLU (though not consistently helpful), and others; critics of surveillance and policing; critical academic and other experts in antisemitism, Jewish studies, genocide studies, etc; and more.

- 9. **Be strategic about risks.**

A known tactic of the ADL and its allies is to attack critics with false accusations of antisemitism. Educators and others need to be very thoughtful about what risks they want to take and minimize the risks whenever possible. One good resource is the [Toolkit for K-12 Educators and Librarians to Protect Themselves Against False Accusations of Antisemitism](#).

Send suggestions or share sample materials to [DropTheADLfromSchools@gmail.com](mailto:DropTheADLfromSchools@gmail.com).