

NORWALK BRANCH NAACP

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Norwalk, Connecticut 06852

Our Mission:

Ensure **the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all citizens.**

Achieve equality of rights and eliminate race prejudice among the citizens of the United States.

Remove all barriers of racial discrimination through democratic processes.

Press Release

December 2, 2021

Contact: Brenda Penn Williams, 203-554-8995

The Norwalk NAACP has been informed of, yet, another incident where Norwalk Public Schools Teachers have used racist language in front of students. The most recent was on Tuesday, November 30, 2021. The incident on Tuesday was the second incident within the last couple of months that a Norwalk Public Schools Teacher actually used the N-word directly in the presence of their students. In this most recent incident students implored the teacher to refrain from using the word and actually told other teachers of the incident in an effort to cause such use to be stopped. The teacher said the N-word in varying ways repeatedly and in a negative way, even though it is understood that a teacher cannot use this language in a classroom filled with students and expect it to have anything other than a negative connotation, no matter the intent or the context.

Again, Tuesday is not the only situation where such language has occurred. We were made aware that Central Office had been informed of all of the particulars concerning this most recent situation and we have asked what they intend to do about it. The only response that we've been provided with at this juncture is "The issue is being investigated and addressed", which is all that we've gotten from them thus far. We are extremely concerned with this response as the previous incident was addressed in a manner that equates to pretty much nothing. The teacher remains in the classroom with the same students having to tolerate her even after they have witnessed her use of the N-word. Surely, there has to be a recognition that some students might well have been traumatized with the language used and might feel some resentment each and every time that they have to enter this teacher's classroom. Needless to say, we were disappointed with actions (or non-action) that was taken by the School District after they supposedly investigated and acted in that previous incident.

We are outraged that these types of incidents are now continuing and we are particularly incensed that teachers are allowed to engage in negative racist language without penalty or consequence. It seems that the Norwalk Public Schools District is quick to weigh-in on students and impose discipline on them even in sketchy or insignificant actions or activity, and particularly in the case of black and brown students but are so very reluctant to impose discipline on teachers when they have clearly engaged in inappropriate and unacceptable behavior.

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There is no room in our school District for these types of situations to continue to occur. In our opinion, and we would hope to the majority of Norwalkers, that there is absolutely no place in any of our schools where use of negative racial language in front of students is acceptable. No matter the context, the use of the "N" word should never be used in our classrooms, especially in a repetitive situation as was the case on Tuesday. Students were actually imploring the teacher to refrain from her continual use of the word, and that is a shame.

This situation cannot be ignored and it cannot in any way be condoned. We have been made aware of several instances of racially insensitive incidents in the Norwalk Public Schools System which have included both students and adults. We regret that Central Office has not meaningfully addressed them and believe, that because of their failure to do so, that future incidents will continue to occur.

Our students, our parents and all of Norwalk deserve to be able to go about their day-to-day activities without being subject to hate language or hate crimes, and this is especially so in our school system. We are obligated to stand up against these types of actions every single time that they occur and make every possible effort to keep them from occurring in the future. We have heard directly from parents, students, teachers, administrators and other members of our community and are clear that there is an expectation that these sort of situations cannot be tolerated and cannot be allowed to continue without consequence.

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