

Community Conversation on Racism

Part 3 – Racism in the School System

RESPONSES

The format of this series was designed to allow open and frank dialogue between participants with the agreement not to disclose the identity of anyone in reference to remarks made during these discussions. There was not to be any media reports or documentation other than this summary outline compiled from the information shared during the conversation. The information contributed was used to reflect a profile of the perception of racism and the social determinants of racism. Hopefully this summary can also put light on solutions to develop tolerance, respect and peaceful coexistence between people of different races, genders, religions and/or sexual orientations.

(Questions are indented and participants' responses are in **BLUE**)

1. Give your definition of racism if you had not done so during the last session.

Hatred of another person's color

Any actions done with victim's race in mind

Judging people by race

2. Share a situation where you believe you (or your child) had experienced racism or discrimination as a student (Public school, private school and/or college/trade schools).

Witness racial mistreatment

Black History being neglected or not taught

Trouble getting black teachers

Marriage partner's discrimination

Child was falsely accused of graffiti. Said child had problem with attention span and recommended medication, removed child from public school and placed in private school and never received had any more complaints or issues.

Children engaged in name calling at local elementary school and child came home crying that she was too black and did not want to return to school

Witnessed teacher unable to get classroom under control during a name calling incident

Child experienced name calling when they attended area High School

Child was called racial slurs and blocked from getting on bus by another student

3. Have you ever felt you were mistreated in school and/or felt your child was mistreated because of race, appearance, religion, gender or sexual orientation (gay/lesbian/transgender)?

Yes I felt my child was mistreated because of race

Black children are expelled or suspended from school at a higher racial in comparison to whites

4. Do you (or your child) feel in danger at school and/or less likely to succeed or be given a chance to succeed in the school system?

Felt that the teachers in the school system expect less from African American children

Race related fights in school

Lack of diversity in high-tech and/or high academic classes

5. Why do you think or believe this?

Believes that teachers go by myths about certain cultures and treat students accordingly

Your considered violent when you display emotions about mistreatment of blacks

Witnessed how children and parents are treated and disregarded by staff in the school program

Lack of minorities working in the schools in Hagerstown area

What solutions do you think can eliminate the impact of racism and discrimination in the school system? Example: more diversity in the teaching and leadership staff (teachers of different race, gender, religion, language or sexual orientation); more diversity in teaching subjects such as black history classes; various heritage day observations; more diverse student associations; free access to college education for non-whites; removal or affirmative action rules in regards to education; etc.

More recruitment dollars for education

Explained to children how to handle name calling and remarks about color/complexion

Students we allowed to start a African Heritage Club at area High School

Be more progressive and come up to the modern times – Area is 20 years behind the national level

The pattern of recruiting minorities to work in law enforcement is a regional and national challenge even with large hiring bonuses and mandates to recruit blacks in areas like Baltimore City and Rochester, New York

More diverse student associations

Diversity training for staff to help them deal with racial conflicts among students

Teaching respect and equal treatment for all

Statistical profile of participants in attendance at the "Racism Where We Live" conversation (as indicated on response form):

Male 67% Female 33%

67% African American/Black

0% American Indian/ Alaskan Native

0% Asian or Pacific Islander

0% Hispanic/Latino

33% Caucasian/White

0% indicated "bi-racial" or "mixed"

Religion

Christian: 100% Jewish: 0% Muslim: 0%

Other: 0 %

Comments

The questionnaire was used as a framework to stimulate dialogue in the conversation. The guidelines for exchange in the conversation were as follows:

Everyone was instructed to limit each response to three (3) minutes per contribution.

"Verbal sparring" was allowed and limited to three minutes per contribution/response.

"Venting" was also allowed abiding by the 3 minute limit.

No "teaming up" against anyone speaking was allowed

Additional Remarks:

There was a very diverse turnout for session three, an increase in white male participation in the Racism in the School System session gathering and online responses. Would have liked to have had students participating in this session, however none participated.

If you wish to participate in this series or want assistance starting your own community conversation on racism, contact us. Please feel free to use this information to continue a successful dialogue and hopefully resolve issues concerning racism and discrimination.

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