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Teach Them To Fish™, LLC

Financial Literacy Homeownership

Speaking in Support of SB# 917

Education, Energy and Environment Committee

THE INSTITUTIONALIZING OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN ALL MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL DRAMATICALLY CHANGE THE CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR OF EVERYONE ENGAGED IN THE LEARNING AND TEACHING PROCESS.

SNOW HILL HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCED A RACIAL INCIDENT INVOLVING SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS, NINJAS, BLACK HOODS, AND THE “N” WORD. THIS RESULTED IN BLACK STUDENTS WALKING OUT OF SCHOOL. THE STUDENTS TOOK THE MATTER TO THEIR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL WHO INVESTIGATED THE INCIDENT AND SUSPENDED THE WHITE STUDENTS FOR A HALF DAY. THE PARENTS OF THE WHITE STUDENTS CONTACTED THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS. AFTERWARDS A MIS-DIRECTED MEETING WAS CALLED WITHOUT THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE. THE SUPERINTENDENT OVER-ROAD THE PRINCIPAL’S HALF-DAY SUSPENSION. THE BLACK STUDENTS WALKED OUT OF SCHOOL.

DURING A MEETING SUPPORTING RESTORATIVE SCHOOLS IN OCEAN CITY, THE MOTHER OF ONE OF THE WHITE STUDENTS WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE SNOW HILL INCIDENT SAID THAT “IF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES HAD BEEN FUNCTIONING PROPERLY IN SNOW HILL”, THE INCIDENT WOULD HAVE BEEN RESOLVED AT THE SCHOOL”.

I HAVE STARTED SEVERAL CIRCLES TO SUPPORT RESTORATIVE PRACTICES ON THE EASTERN SHORE. THE BELIEFS OF THE PARTICIPATING CIRCLE LEADERS ARE THAT THE PASSAGE OF SB# 917 IS A GAME CHANGER!

IT IS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE, VALUES ARE LEARNED IN THE HOME AND COMMUNITY. THESE VALUES CANNOT BE CONTROLLED BY THE SCHOOL. HOWEVER, WHERE SCHOOLS CREATE A CULTURE OF RESPECT, EMPATHY, LOVE AND THAT EVERY VOICE MATTERS, MODELED FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE TO TEACHERS, STAFF, MAINTENANCE, CAFETERIA WORKERS, BUS DRIVERS AND STUDENTS, STUDENTS WILL FEEL SAFE AND WANT TO COME TO SCHOOL, TEACHERS WILL BE ABLE TO TEACH WITHOUT DISTRACTION AND STUDENTS WILL LEARN. SB# 917 PROVIDES THE MECHANISM FOR THIS TO HAPPEN!

OVER TIME, IT WILL BE THE STUDENTS, SERVING AS CHANGE AGENTS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH THEY LIVE AND IN THE SCHOOLS THAT THEY ATTEND.

I URGE YOUR PASSAGE OF SB# 917!