

eliminating racism empowering women

ywca press release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YWCA Community Forum to Address Racism in Schools

RALEIGH, N.C. (May 24, 2011) – The YWCA will host a community forum and panel discussion this Thursday to strategize methods of achieving equity in public education. Frank Stasio, host of WUNC’s “The State of Things,” will moderate the panel discussion, which will take an in-depth look at how racism impacts area public schools. In Wake County, according to recent data by Legal Aid of N.C., students of color, low-income students, English language learners and students with disabilities are disproportionately disciplined, suspended and expelled from public schools¹. For example, black students receive 69.2 percent of long-term suspensions and 96.9 percent of expulsions.

According to YWCA Executive Director Folami Bandele, public school policies that are rooted in historic legacies of racism are creating student achievement gaps, broken school communities, and an alarming school-to-prison pipeline. YWCA programs such as Study Circles on Race and Ethnicity serve as tools for parents, teachers and principals to face these issues together and create new solutions.

“Education is intertwined with other social and economic justice issues because they share the same systemic roots with racism and classism,” said Bandele. “We can and must do better for the futures of our youth, and we will continue to forge conversations in our community challenging these divides.”

Parents, teachers, principals and area citizens are invited to join the conversation this Thursday from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., at Martin Street Baptist Church, located at 1001 E. Martin St. in Raleigh.

The panel discussion will be moderated by Frank Stasio and features:

- Rukiya Dillahunt, former assistant principal in the Wake County Public School System and parent advocate.
- Mark Anthony Neal, Duke scholar-activist.
- Scott Secor, Study Circle volunteer and anti-racism and youth advocate.
- Chris Scott, Study Circle volunteer and principal at Fuller Elementary School.
- Special drum performance by The Magic of African Rhythm.
- Light refreshments, English to Spanish translation, and childcare for those who RSVP is provided.

“We invite all residents to take part in these conversations to help create solutions so that all students receive a quality public education,” Bandele said.

The YWCA is the world’s largest women’s membership movement, founded in 1858 to provide opportunities for women’s growth, leadership and power. Through dialogue, action and advocacy, the YWCA brings together diverse groups of concerned citizens to address disparities in our community that still exist in health, education, youth development, racial justice and women’s empowerment. Established locally in 1901, the YWCA provides programs that span the region to make life-changing differences for thousands of area families. www.ywcatriangle.org.

¹ Suspensions and Expulsions in Wake County Public Schools (2009-2010), http://www.legalaidnc.org/public/ACS/IssueBrief_Mar-11_WCPSSsusp-expul_09-10.pdf