

NAACP Leader: Lenient Discipline is Hurting Black Students

In recent years, there's been a trend to reduce school suspensions of minority students, particularly those of African-American descent. According to [Pacific Education Group](#), a consulting firm hired by many schools across the country, many of the discipline problems which result in suspensions are the fault of teachers who exhibit their "white privilege" in the classroom.

That view was challenged several years ago by Aaron Benner, a black male teacher in the St. Paul Public School district. Benner's outspoken views on the subject [landed him](#) a spot on national news networks, and allegedly in the crosshairs of school district officials. The treatment Benner received at the hand of his school district recently caused him to [file a lawsuit](#) against them for their retaliatory and discriminatory practices.

The interesting thing about this lawsuit, however, is the backing that Benner is receiving. According to the [Star Tribune](#), Joel Franklin, a leader of the local chapter of the NAACP is in full support of Benner's lawsuit and – interestingly enough – his views on school discipline:

"Benner's view – shared by Franklin – is that the push to reduce racial imbalance in suspensions fails to help kids who might benefit from discipline.

In his view, the best alternative to suspensions is to send unruly students to a room staffed by a licensed teacher. ...

The teachers' contract calls for the hiring of more counselors and testing of a discipline approach that stresses

relationship-building. Not good enough, said Benner, who contends the teachers union failed him when he was investigated.”

In essence, it would appear that both Benner and Franklin recognize that today's hyper-politically correct society has caused minority students to be ignored or coddled by the system. This mindset gives lip-service to racial equality, but as Benner and Franklin imply, only serves to further oppress minority students.

After all, can we seriously expect students [who have been allowed](#) to give into angry outbursts, disrupt classes, and be disrespectful to teachers to grow into mature, responsible adults sought out by employers?

Perhaps, in the long run, the most effective and efficient way to bring about the racial equality everyone desires comes not through teaching students to blame their problems on others, but through teaching them to accept responsibility for their actions.

Image Credit: Steven Depolo bit.ly/1ryPA8o