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## School Superintendent Apologizes After White Students Pretended to Sell Black Classmates in Mock 'Slave Auction'

Brenton Blanchet : 4-4 minutes : 3/15/2022

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A [North Carolina](#) school district superintendent has issued an apology after parents learned that a mock "slave auction" involving white middle school students selling their Black classmates took place at a local school, the AP [reports](#).

The incident unfolded at the J.S. Waters School in Chatham County. Local parent [Ashley Palmer](#) first posted on Facebook that her son was "sold" by classmates, per [the News & Observer](#).

"His friend 'went for \$350' and another student was the Slavemaster because he 'knew how to handle them,'" the mother wrote. "We even have a video of students harmonizing the N word. Since when were children so blatantly racist? Why is this culture acceptable? [Chatham County](#) was made aware and is intervening but hug your babies especially the ones that are subject to racism by students and faculty. Parents teach your kids that this behavior isn't OK."

On Monday, [during a school board meeting](#) and after already issuing an apology over the situation, Superintendent Anthony Jackson apologized publicly and said that such actions by students "will not be tolerated in the school system."

"I want to do something that needs to be done here publicly. I want to offer an apology," Jackson said. "An apology to every single student who has ever felt unsafe while in our care, to every student who has ever felt demeaned, disrespected or marginalized because of their race, ethnicity, sex, gender, religion or disability."

Jackson then added that "moving forward it will be our intentional focus to ensure that this celebration includes everyone. Moving forward, my personal commitment to you, is that we will do better."

Local groups had pushed the school board to heighten penalties for those who partake in racist acts, and have requested that the students responsible apologize for their actions. Ronda Taylor Bullock, an anti-racism trainer, said in a Monday conference that the situation was "an act of white supremacy in broad daylight," and encouraged the district to react as necessary.

"How many students have to go to J.S. Waters with a similar story?" Bullock said. "How many more have to go through seared, branded like a slave by these horrible memories that we will not forget?"

Now, the district's policy will include accountability for racist incidents and more training around such incidents. Jackson asked for the board to "authorize us to look at our staffing needs to ensure that we have the tools and the staff to appropriately reach out to our community to support these community agencies."

"The reality is these acts of racism are not only happening here in Chatham County but across North Carolina and across the country," said parent Christy Wagner, whose son was "sold" in the mock "auction." "More should be done around addressing racism in schools, because no parent should have to stand here after hearing their son was sold in a slave trade at school."

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