

# Mayor-Elect Quickly Responds to Racial Fighting In Schools

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Mayor-elect Antonio Villaraigosa met with Jefferson High School students May 27 to field their concerns and obtain the root cause of a pocket of campus fights that broke out between Black and Latino students the day before.

The incident marks the third fight in just over a month at Jefferson, drawing police in riot gear, with pepper spray and batons to stop the violence.

"There's going to be a zero tolerance for this kind of racial violence and there will be very serious consequences for the people involved because we have to get control of the situation ... we've got to provide a safe passage, because it's not just about what's happening here at the school, it's how they get to their home," Villaraigosa stated.

Selected to be the city's first Latino mayor in over a century, he personally spoke to teachers and Black and Latino students in five classrooms; then, flanked by a host of city officials, educators, community leaders and clergy, he emerged from Jefferson High and told reporters that the students proclaimed that the tension was racially motivated. Jefferson administrators have denied that was the case.

According to some students, a fight broke out between two Latinos, and ignited a chaotic series of battles between the ethnicities.



Valerie Goodloe/Sentinel Photo

Mayor-elect Antonio Villaraigosa (left) was joined by Minister Tony Muhammed; Del Huff, senior deputy for Supervisor Yvonne Braithwaite Burke and Councilman Bernard Parks as they met, Friday, with Jefferson High School teachers and students in hopes of easing racial tensions. On Tuesday, Villaraigosa addressed LAUSD board members and criticized Jefferson HS administrators for their lack of supervision.

And despite race-based fighting at other L.A. and Riverside County schools, including the recent fatal stabbing of a 15-year-old Black student in Corona by three Latino youth, school administrators continue to characterize the warring as personal, isolated incidents. But

{See SCHOOLS, Page A-12}