

Date: April 30, 2017

To: Mister Phillips, WCCUSD School Board Trustee

From: Gloria Scoggins, President of the BlackBoard of West Contra Costa

No Suspensions without Interventions

The **BlackBoard of West Contra Costa**, a grassroots community based organization believes that there is the need for an educational and community focus on African American students. We have reviewed data on African American student academic performance, graduation rates, suspension and expulsion rates in comparison to other ethnic groups within the school district and county. The data is discouraging, pathetic, and alarming. What we need now is a comprehensive strategy to address these issues. Therefore, at this time we cannot support your "Ban It". Rather, we believe that "there should be **no suspensions without interventions** and that the district and communities must jointly resolve this problem".

As members of this community we believe community advocacy has power and is vital in securing an appropriate education for African American students in public schools. African American students continue to fall below national norms on student achievement and performance measures. Low graduation rates coupled with high dropout rates and the high rate of school suspension are critical concerns that must be addressed locally and nationally by all stakeholders. We have found over the years that interventions for many types of suspensions or expulsions have not been in place or addressed systemically to support teachers. Therefore, it is our belief that when a school cannot demonstrate that they have used or provided other means of corrective actions; such as, an SST plan, behavior support plan or necessary mental health services, then the student should return to school with the proper interventions/support plan.

We need to work collaboratively to create a journey to success so that every student emerges from each classroom on a path of expanded opportunities in a culture of trust and respect, achievement, and successful interventions. The disproportionate number of African American parents who for various reasons has disengaged from participating in school events/activities, the quality of education and the culture of some schools serving African American students needs to be critically assessed, along with systemic intervention plans that are proven successful strategies and support systems for the academic and social-emotional needs for all students.

The BlackBoard believes to ignore the plight of our children is to deny a place for students now and in the next generations. We further believe that there is a need in WCCUSD to empower the school communities to be involved in every aspect of creating new policies, procedures, interventions, and accountability and the implementation strategies that promote and ensure that there are **no suspensions without interventions**.