

# Resegregation of North Carolina Schools Leads to Massive Protests

By Boyce Watkins, PhD on Mar 25th 2010  
1:41PM

The school board in Wake County, which holds the capital city of North Carolina, agreed on Tuesday to turn back a busing policy designed to achieve diversity. The decision was approved by the board in a 5 to 4 vote and led to a tremendous amount of controversy. The rule allows students to attend schools closer to home and leads to what some critics consider to be the resegregation of the school system.

The gathering led to students chanting and protesting outside the meeting. Three men were arrested and charged with trespassing and resisting officers. One of the men were released, while two others remained in jail on Tuesday night.

“Hey, hey. Ho, ho. Resegregation has got to go,” an arrested man chanted as officers placed him in the back of a squad car.

State NAACP Chief **William Barber** accused the new school board of having “racist attitudes,” after hearing the chairman of the board referring to his critics as “animals out of the cages.”

“It’s morally wrong. It’s legally wrong. It’s economically wrong,” Barber said. “Your press to go backward will only serve to intensify our moral, political and legal fight to go forward. We will never go back.”

Suburban parents have always felt busing to be a tremendous inconvenience. These parents, many of whom are white and middle class, argue that their children should be able to attend schools in their own neighborhoods. Suburban parents worked to get the new school board in place, leading to the change in the law.

Bill Randall, a black conservative running for Congress, stated that the diversity program was not a serious problem.

“Let this school board do what they were



YouTube

elected to do,” Randall said.

The situation in North Carolina is disturbing for a number of reasons. First, the idea that the chairman would refer to his critics, many of whom are black, brown and poor as “animals” is reflective of the kind of racism that exists in the South. This is similar to the recent incident in South Carolina (down the road), where many conservatives are appalled that black lawmakers are asking for just one seat on the 16-seat board of trustees at The University of South Carolina. Some in the South, particularly conservatives, maintain a perception of black people as being less than human, less than capable and less than deserving of true equality when it comes to power and opportunity.

On the issue of school desegregation, we must realize that desegregation was necessary mainly because the schools that were attended by black children were so inadequately funded. If there were equality of funding for all schools across America, I would be the first in line to advocate for children to be allowed to attend schools that are closer to home. The problem is, though, that dramatic differentials in opportunity, between inner-city and subur-

ban schools, continue to make quality public education, for the most part, something that is only available or affordable to white America.

So, rather than being angry at the parents who want their kids to have a chance to attend better schools, suburban parents should look at the school boards and government officials who continue to keep educational resources away from children in urban America. Until we learn how to achieve true equality, we are always going to be faced with a fight.

*Dr. Boyce Watkins is the founder of the Your Black World Coalition and the author of the new book, “Black American Money.” To have Dr. Boyce commentary delivered to your email, please click here.*