

**JEA P. STREET  
COUNCILMAN, TENTH DISTRICT**



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**COUNCIL**  
November 4, 2009

Mr. Vincent Petroff, Interim Director  
State Office of Human Relations  
State Office Building  
820 N. French St.  
Wilmington, DE 19801

**Re: Christina School District**

Dear Mr. Petroff,

Please consider this as a formal complaint against the Christina School District for discriminating against minority children in its disciplinary practices.

On October 13, 2009, the District passed a new policy for the sole purpose of assuring that a six year old white student did not have to attend an alternative school for a violation of the District's Student Code of Conduct. This action was taken in response to the parents supported by their elected officials who protested the District's policy. On the other hand, during this school year alone, in my capacity as a student advocate at Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center, I have sent five different letters regarding four different minority students requesting specific action. On November 3, 2009, the District responded to three of my letters. The regrettable harsh fact is that the letters from the District were non-responsive to the concerns set forth in my letters. It is my view that this is indicative of systemic discrimination within the District and I am respectfully requesting that you review these individual cases and make a determination as to whether or not the District has engaged in discrimination. I am also requesting that your office **fully investigate the District's disciplinary practices** and make a determination as to whether or not the cases that have been brought to my attention are indicative of systemic discrimination within the District.

In the matter of R.C vs. Christina, on October 21, 2009, I sent a letter requesting that the student who has been in alternative school for a year be returned to school. On October 26, 2009, the student parents signed a letter at the school in a meeting that stated "this was written on behalf of Robert and my wife Tawana". In response, the District

demanded yet another letter from the parent and the student is still in alternative school.


In the matter of S.W vs. Christina, I sent a letter on October 27, 2009, asking that the student be returned to school. In that letter, I attached a copy of a Court Order from Common Pleas Court Chief Judge, Alex J. Smalls that stated “**may return to school provided no behavior problems develop**”. To date, the student has not returned to school.

In the matter of J.S vs. Christina, I sent a letter to the District on October 7, 2009 requesting a hearing. On November 3, 2009, the district sent a letter that was non-responsive to my request for a hearing.

In the matter of L.S vs. Christina, I sent letters to the District on September 29, 2009, and October 2, 2009, requesting reconsideration of the expulsion of this special needs student. On October 12, 2009, I filed a complaint with the Delaware Department of Education (DOE) regarding this matter. DOE suggested mediation with the University of Delaware as a possible resolution. The parent and I agreed to mediation, however, the District declined mediation.

The discrimination against minority children is crystal clear. A white student represented by his parents and their elected officials **was fairly and appropriately excluded** from consideration for alternative school on October 13, 2009, by an immediate change in District policy. However, minority children and their representatives are ignored by the District to the point where they are not given hearings, mediation or common courtesy. In that regard, the position of the District is crystal clear. **The District’s Student Code of Conduct and its alternative schools are for Black and Hispanic children only**. This discrimination and this conduct cries out for relief and I am requesting your intervention and assistance accordingly.

Sincerely,

  
Jea P. Street, Councilman  
New Castle County Council  
District Ten

Pc; State Human Relations Commission Members  
The Honorable Chief Judge Allen J. Smalles  
Dr. Marcia V. Lyles, Superintendent, Christina School District  
All Members Christina Board of Education  
The Honorable James M. Baker, Mayor, City of Wilmington  
All Members of Wilmington City Council  
Dr. Lillian Lowery, Secretary of Education  
All Members of Delaware State Board of Education  
Parents of R.C, S.W, J.S and L.S