



Coraopolis
NAACP
Branch #26AB-B

PRESS RELEASE

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The Coraopolis NAACP is alarmed by and deeply concerned about the recent and ongoing conduct of Sewickley Academy in apparently renouncing its prior, board-approved commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice in its strategic plan. Yet more concerning, conduct includes sudden termination of three well-qualified and well-experienced African-American professionals, as well as other personnel and reorganization decisions that undercut its commitment to diversity, and which prompted two African-American board members to resign, appears to come on the heels of an anonymous letter characterizing the Academy's commitment to diversity, and its diverse students, as "political" and "radical," no doubt motivated by the ongoing manufactured panic concerning the teaching of critical race theory in schools. Somehow more concerning still, the anonymous letter writers appear to have misappropriated students' private information, including their residential addresses, in issuing their letter.

Nearly seventy years ago, the NAACP fought to establish diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice in education as basic American values, litigating and prevailing in *Brown versus Board of Education*. The case ended racial segregation in public schools. Consistent with its current overall mission to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all citizens, achieve equality of rights, eliminate race prejudice among the citizens of the United States, and remove all barriers of racial discrimination through democratic processes. Its mission recognizes that education is critical not just to present students but also toward the shared progress of our society.

Values recognized in *Brown* are crucial to our Republic and its commitment to equal justice under law and have more to do with the Constitution than critical race theory. Therefore, the anonymous letter writers should reflect on whether their efforts are politically radical or reactionary products of cynical political theatrics. Indeed, their anonymity and misuse of students' private identifying information represents an echo of the conduct of groups more proximate to *Brown*, who fought desegregation at every turn, including by violence and both overt and subtle threats thereof.

Sewickley Academy would do well to consider whether it is willing to sacrifice its staff, its commitment to diversity, and, most importantly, its students' ability to navigate a world in order to satiate the fears of an anonymous contingent. Our children, our region, and our Republic deserve better than abrupt, regressive decisions.

In the short term, we call on Sewickley Academy to begin proceeding with respect to this problem with complete candor, transparency, and cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including the Concerned Parents of Sewickley, ourselves, and the Academy's accrediting body, the National Association of Independent Schools. In the long term, we believe that the

Academy's only just course of action is to reconsider and reverse its gravely ill-advised course of conduct, publicly reaffirm its prior, board-approved commitment to diversity, equality, inclusion, and social justice as it stood before these unfortunate decisions, and denounce the anonymous letter writers' efforts and conversion of sensitive information as antiquated, misguided, and contrary to the best interests of the Academy, its students, and our community.