

TEACHERS UNDER FIRE FOR OFFENSIVE FACEBOOK DISCUSSION, COMPARE STUDENT TO ORANGUTAN



Parents have taken a strong stand against teachers from G.D. Rogers Garden Elementary School in Bradenton, FL. The teachers stand accused of indulging in insensitive and discriminatory discussion on Facebook. Lisa Wade followed a conversation between the teachers and when she realized that the child under discussion was her own, made it available to Bay News 9. "I send my child to school trusting them to teach him, not to talk about him." "I'm fairly convinced that one of my students may be the evolutionary link between orangutans and humans," one of the teacher's wrote, in the course of the discussion. One teacher, curiosity aroused asked, "Please tell me who you are talking about. This made me laugh out loud." The teacher replied by saying, "W.W. Does that help?" She said she was in a state of shock when they talked about her 8-year-old son in such a derogatory manner. "I'm disgusted with how they talked about my child," Wade said. "It hurts." Strangely, the school does not have a written policy regarding the use of social media by the teachers. In face-saving mode, the school has apologized and said that they hope to implement a social media policy next year. "First of all, that was very inappropriate and we certainly do not condone anything like that," said Margi Nanney of the Manatee County School District. "I think lessons come hard in this life and I think social media is one of the places where people can make mistakes and we hope this never occurs again," Nanney said. Wade, meanwhile, has hired the services of a lawyer, telling the station she wants "at least one person held accountable." A spate of similar, irresponsible and insensitive behavior on social media sites has led to the huge community outrage that this new incident has provoked. In 2011 a first grade teacher at Paterson School 21 in Paterson, N.J., faced suspension when she called her students as potential criminals of the future and compared her job to that of a "warden." Just a few weeks earlier in Central Bucks East High School an English teacher, who had been acclaimed for her quality teaching and referred to as a very capable teacher, blogged about her students and called them, among other things, "disengaged, lazy whiners." She lost her job. Even though she had to be reinstated because she had a "legal right to her job," the school fired her for poor performance. However, these comments were mild, when compared to these highly objectionable and much more offensive comments on the blog. "I hear the trash company is hiring" and "I called out sick a couple of days just to avoid your son." These comments evoked huge controversies within the outraged community. According to Board of Education President Theodore Best, Facebook comments are not enough to sack a teacher. However, if their comments lead to problems within the school or in the classroom, the school can initiate action.

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