

# *Conejo Valley Unified School District*

**Luis Lichtl**

Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services

**Sonia Wilson**

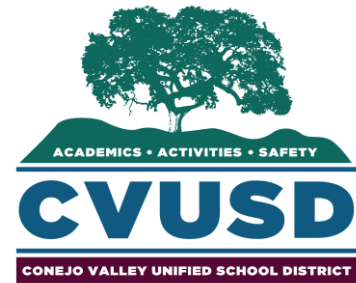
Director, Elementary Schools

**Kenny Loo**

Director, Middle Schools & Professional Learning

**Brian Mercer**

Director, High Schools & Assessment



TO: CVUSD Teachers Grades 6-12  
FROM: Instructional Services  
DATE: November 10, 2020  
RE: Memo - Racial Epithets or Slurs in Instructional Material

Over the last several years, CVUSD staff have been in conversations with members of our community with deep concerns about the use of the “n-word” and other racial epithets or slurs on our campuses and specifically related to reading assignments. The “n-word” in particular represents centuries of slavery, violence, and hate in our country. It causes deep harm when it is said, especially by those who may be in positions of authority or power.

*RESOLUTION #20/21-08: COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY IN CONEJO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT states:*

*WHEREAS, the Board acknowledges past and present racial injustices experienced by CVUSD students, families and staff, and stands firmly against all acts of individual and systemic racism and bias;*

We also understand that it is present in literature and content that may be used in English, Social Science and other classrooms, and in popular culture, music, and in our student’s conversations. Despite this, we owe it to the families and students that we serve to do better and to commit to creating an environment that is safe for all we serve.

As a District, we speak out against the use of the n-word, or any racial epithet or slur, whether it be in the classroom, cafeteria, or anywhere on a CVUSD campus or during any school or district sponsored event.

What does this mean for our staff:

- If a racial epithet or slur is present in an assigned reading, teachers will inform the class that the word will not be read aloud by either teacher or students. For example the “n-word” should be read as the “n-word” or the word may be skipped all together.
- If a racial epithet or slur is present in an assigned reading, we encourage teachers to use the opportunity to frontload the topic and discuss racism in the context of the subject matter. We are providing resources below to help you with this.
- If a racial epithet or slur is overheard in student discussions, inside or outside the classroom, all teachers have an obligation to intercede, to correct, to educate, and to report to administration for appropriate disciplinary action.
- If you need to correct a student for the use of a racial epithet or slur, do not repeat the word or phrase to the student while you confront them, or ask a nearby student if student A just used an inappropriate word or phrase by using that inappropriate word or phrase.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact your Department Chair, Principal, or Grade Span Director.

[Ted-Talk: The N-Word In The Classroom](#)  
[Of Mice and Men: Controversial Issues and Lesson Plan](#)  
[Using the N-Word in Literature](#)  
[Teaching the N-Word](#)  
[How to Teach “To Kill A Mockingbird”](#)