

Brockton school officials deny claims of racial bias in discipline

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By [Katheleen Conti](#) | GLOBE STAFF APRIL 05, 2015

After a November altercation between two Brockton High School students led to a suspension and criminal charges for one of them, some students and parents say that minorities at the high school are disciplined more harshly and suspended more often than their white classmates.

The allegations have frustrated school and district officials, who contend the allegations and attention they've received have overshadowed gains in academics and disciplinary improvements in a district that is about 80 percent minority.

Superintendent Kathleen A. Smith said the department is taking the allegations seriously. Smith recently agreed to meet with the president of the Brockton area branch of the NAACP and a New Jersey-based consultant specializing in school race relations, who requested the meeting after reading news media reports about the allegations.

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For her part, however, Smith said instead of hiring a consultant, she plans to move forward with a plan she unveiled before the start of the school year to create an advocacy group of members of several immigrant and minority community organizations to better engage and communicate with parents.

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