

The N word in Acalanes

“This word is the most inflammatory, shocking and historic word in the English Language.”

-Dr. Neal Lester

- **There is confusion around the word - who “gets” to use it?**
 - Is it okay among friends? NO
 - Is it ok to use if no person of color hears you? NO
 - Is it ok if I change the middle of the word, the ending, or any part of it...is it then ok to say? NO
 - Is it ok to use if your black friend seems ok with it? NO
 - What if your black friend gave you permission? NO
 - Can I use it if I am Latinx? NO
 - Can I use it if I’m singing a song with it in the lyrics? NO
 - Can I read it out loud in literature/historical documents? NO
- **There is pain around this word:**
 - At Diversity Committee meetings, and at Equity Summits, students of color consistently report being offended by non-black students using it casually in our schools.
 - When it is read out loud in class, black students report feeling offended and uncomfortable - even if a teacher has talked to them in advance. They are often the only one or one of two black students in a class.
 - African American parents have pulled students out of class or opted out of certain texts because their children feel uncomfortable with use of the word. Students disengage from curriculum and report feeling not able to respond honestly about how they feel about a text when this happens.
 - Students and teachers report not knowing how to deal with hearing it in casual conversation.
- **What are we going to do?**
 - As a school, all adults will respond with consistency when they hear it and address it - eg, “For 400 years that word has been used to dehumanize and oppress a people. We don’t use that word out loud at _____”. “I don’t care what ending you put on that word. It’s offensive and not allowed here.”
 - We consistently enforce to ALL students that the N-word has no place in an academic setting.
 - We treat it in literature or historical documents with consistency - we say “n-word,” we don’t read or say the word out loud.
 - Our classrooms are places where students know well in advance how it will be treated in class when it shows up in literature, media, documents, music, etc.