

# Letter to the editor: Administrators lack training to address racism in Maine schools

---

[pressherald.com/2019/09/06/letter-to-the-editor-administrators-lack-training-to-address-racism-in-maine-schools/](https://www.pressherald.com/2019/09/06/letter-to-the-editor-administrators-lack-training-to-address-racism-in-maine-schools/)

September 6,  
2019

Widespread racism in the education system is a serious issue, and the Press Herald Editorial Board was right to take a position Monday ("Our View: All schools have a duty to confront racism"). An important question to ask is, however, is "How are we preparing school administrators to address racism?"

Take the Kennebunk schools, for example, which have had their own racism crisis this year: The senior administrator, then-Superintendent Kathryn Hawes, has a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Southern Maine. But despite all her education, Hawes failed to recognize the racial nature of incidents unfolding in the district. Her leadership failed to (in the Editorial Board's words) "provide a safe and inclusive atmosphere," something every student should enjoy.

But that failure does not rest solely on Hawes' shoulders. USM must also bear responsibility. Hawes holds multiple degrees from the institution. She missed the racial nature of incidents in the district because she was never trained to recognize them.

Hawes has since joined USM as a professor, where she will teach in the very same program that failed to prepare her to understand how racism exhibits in schools. This is how structural racism perpetuates itself. USM trains countless teachers and school administrators, with a program that lacks careful consideration of race and racism. That leaves Maine schools with teachers, principals and superintendents unsure what to do in critical moments.

Educational reform starts at every level. And USM is in as deep a need of reform as any Maine high school.

**Erik Eisele**

*Westbrook*

---

Invalid username/password.

Success. Please wait for the page to reload. If the page does not reload within 5 seconds, please refresh the page.

Enter your email and password to access comments.