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# Teachers, Why Are We Quicker to Call Parents About Kids' Behavior Than About Their Academic Performance?



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by Shawnta S. Barnes    

Recently, I came across a tweet that resonated with my beliefs:

<https://twitter.com/CocoCurls1517/status/1214887613536120833?s=20>

This is problematic. As an educator, I know behavior and academics are linked. Sometimes a student misbehaves because of academics. The student would rather misbehave and be asked to leave the room than stay in the room and struggle through an academic task. The behavior is actually work avoidance.

## Behavior Shouldn't Be The Only Reason Teachers Contact Parents

Behavior should not be the only reason a teacher contacts parents. Parents should be contacted about school events, opportunities to volunteer and academics, too. Parents and teachers must have a strong relationship. It is hard to build a strong relationship with teachers when all parents hear from the teacher is how bad their child is behaving.

I have identical twin boys. News flash: They are not perfect. They misbehave and have been in trouble. They have even fought each other. Twice. Each time, it was over a library book—don't

even get me started about that. There have been years when they were in separate classes and one of their teachers would constantly email or call my husband or me. We have even had our entire contact list called, which includes four grandparents and my aunt. Yet, [pullquote]when I reached out about academics, all I heard were crickets. That's unacceptable.[/pullquote]

A couple of years ago, at the National Association of Black Journalists conference in Detroit, I was a panelist for a session entitled, "The Importance of Educating Our Black Children." I spoke about this situation. I knew my son was in the wrong reading group, and the teacher continually ignored my requests to reassess my son and move him. After getting the principal involved, it was confirmed that I was right. Unfortunately, it was the end of the school year. I was fighting for my son to be moved to a higher literacy group since the beginning of the second semester. Instead, the teacher continually contacted me at least weekly about behavior with no mention of my academic concerns. Did she care about my child's academics?

Ultimately, parents send their children to school to learn. [pullquote]If teachers don't bother to keep parents in the loop about academics outside of parent-teacher conferences and at report card time, they are going to have a hard time gaining buy-in or respect when they call about behavior.[/pullquote]

Before teachers contact parents, they need to think about what their communication with parents has entailed. Has there been any positive communication? Has there been any communication about academics? If there is not a variety of communication, that is a problem, and it makes it hard for parents to trust and support the teacher.

[Photo by BrianAJackson, Canva-licensed.](#)

# Shawnta S. Barnes

Shawnta (Shawn-tay) S. Barnes, also known as Educator Barnes, is a married mother of identical twin boys. She navigates education from not only the educator's perspective but also the parent's perspective. She has been an educator for nearly two decades. Shawnta works with K-12 schools, universities, & education adjacent organizations through her education consulting business Blazing Brilliance. She is an adjunct college professor, supervises student teachers, Indy Kids Winning Editor-in-Chief, Brave Brothers Books Co-founder, & CEO, and Brazen Education Podcast host. She holds five education licenses: English/language arts 5-12, English to speakers of other languages P-12, library/media P-12, reading P-12, and school administration P-12, and she has held a job in every licensed area. Previously, she has served as a school administrator, English teacher, English learners teacher, literacy coach, and librarian. She won the 2019 Indiana Black Expo Excellence in Education Journalism Award. In 2023, she completed her doctorate in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education with a minor in Learning Sciences. She is an urban gardener in her spare time and writes about her harvest-to-table journey at [gardenershicole.com](https://www.gardenershicole.com). To learn more about Shawnta, visit [educatorbarnes.com](https://www.educatorbarnes.com).

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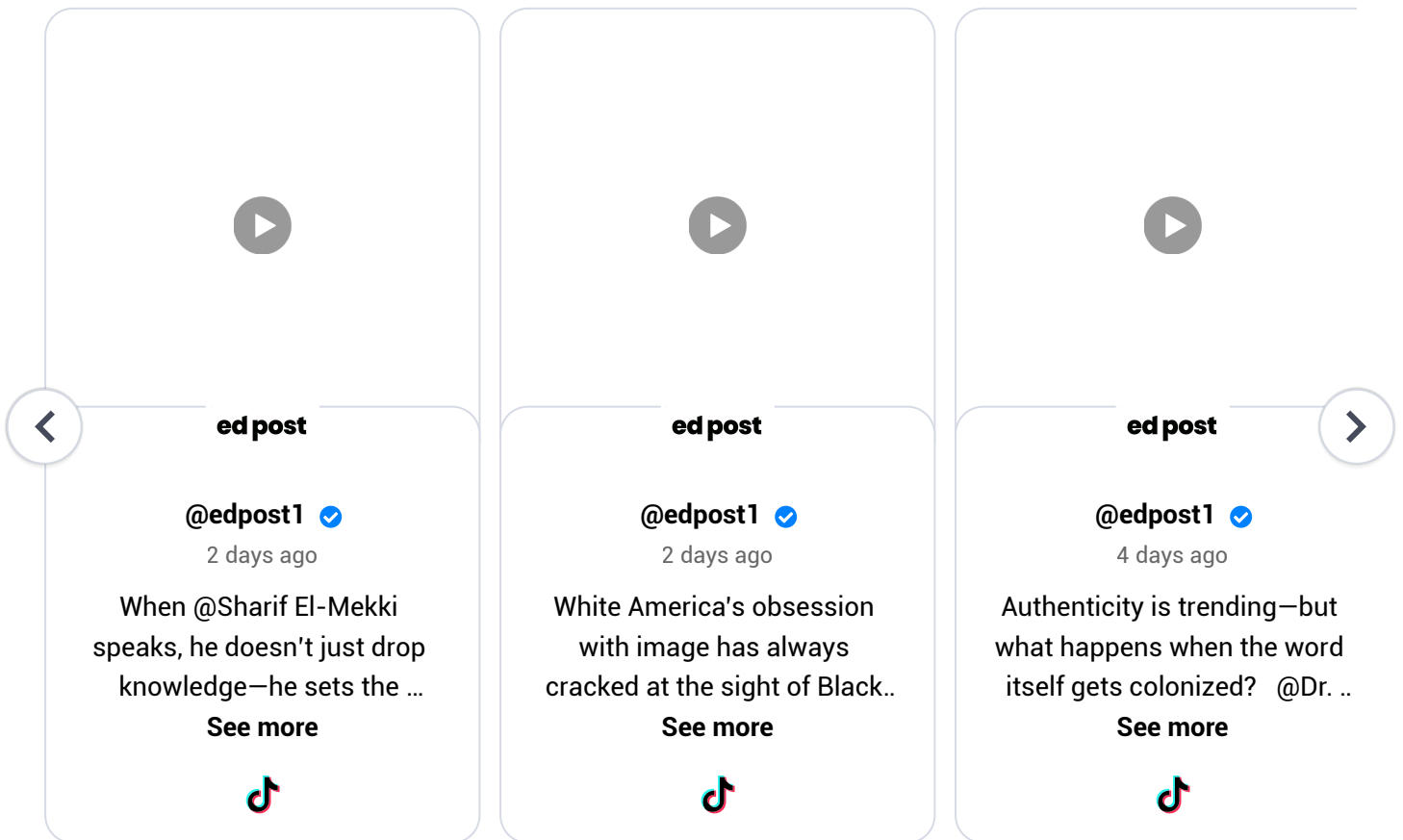


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