

What do you think is unique about the Weequahic alumni of the 1950s-1960s? Y

(Leadership & Student Engagement)

If you could sum up 3-4 character traits school leaders need to possess while operating in low performing and/or violent schools what would they be? Why?

Principal Stone held a strong affinity to the Newark community. He grew up there, and continued to engage with community members. In the film we see him visiting families at their homes, greeting local police officers on the beat, etc. In so many respects he was a drill sergeant, security guard, law enforcement, mentor, father figure, caring alum. Is all that necessary to have an impact in challenging schools?

What about the teacher or school leader who doesn't possess these qualities? How should they navigate through schools with similar challenges to Weequahic?

(Extra Curricular Activities & Conflict Resolution)

In the film Principal Stone mentions the need for extra curricular activities to help capture the motivated spirits that often lay dormant in students.

There's this notion that if we wake up these spirits within our youth, motivation can be transcended to other areas. Can you speak a bit about the use of the extra curricular activities, in particular the arts in promoting social, emotional, and academic excellence in youth?

How best should a young teacher go about securing extracurricular activities, if the school she is in does not have many resources (My story about a local school and a gym)?

Conflict-resolution training sessions were used heavily under Stones tenure. And we know such training correlates with easing violence in schools. Are there other extra curricular activities that have proven successful for combating school violence or building self esteem and youth leadership?

(Identity & Culture)

Identity is a common thread that runs throughout this film. Gang identity, family identity, school identity. You have written that 'our culture is an intrinsic part of who we are and how we identify ourselves. It molds our experiences and how we interpret those defining moments in our lives'. How has culture, in particular contemporary urban culture influenced Rayvon and Sharif in the film (gang members and

students at Weequahic)?

The anthologist in the film attributes the academic success that many of the Jewish students had during 1930's-1960's to their being children of immigrants, children of the Holocaust, and children of parents who lived through the depression. She states that this experience made them driven to succeed. What about today's black and brown recent immigrant students who have arrived on our shores for economic and/ or political reasons. Should like experiences, garner like results?

Just this month, the Texas Board of Education approved a social studies curriculum that in the words of the New York Times 'places a more conservative stamp on history and economic textbooks'. For example, efforts by Hispanic Texas board members to include more

Latino figures as role models for the state's large Hispanic population were defeated. What is the significant of this decision, and is this a trend that could be sweeping the country?

It is enough that school curriculums feature culturally relevant material? Or is there another component of school reform that is a complementary necessity for culturally relevant material to have an impact?

(Neighborhood and Historical Context)

Alumni in the film mentioned that growing up in Weequahic was like Camelot – where everyone got along with one another. Another elder in the film cites Weequahic as being a Jewish enclave during the 1930-1960s, where sentiments of giving back to the community were a standard, and done often. Do we see this sense of giving

back and civic engagement across other communities at that time?

Weequahic's ethnic history and early European influence is no different from many urban areas in the northeast that experienced white flight during the 60s and 70s. Can you tell us more about the effects of white flight on urban schools?

In the film a retired English teacher comments that during the 1940s and 1950s 'the children were bright, their parents were bright, and the parents saw to it that everything they did was for the good of the children'. What can parents of children in low performing and often troubled schools do to support their child's education today?

Open To Entire Panel

In many respects, Weequahic High had a perfect

storm for reform. It had a school alum as Principal, caring alumni who helped to bring resources to the school, faculty and staff receptive to reform, and a political community climate thirsty for change. What can you say to schools and school leaders who do not have that kind of support for reform?

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