

**All-America Cities (AAC) Promising Practices Webinar:
Promoting Equity in Education through Community Partnerships**

September 30, 2020

Webinar highlighted two 2020 All-America Cities that are enhancing equity in schools by collaborating with their community.

Panelists:

- **Rosemary Rivera** - Co-Executive Director of Citizen Action of New York and the Public Policy & Education Fund
- **Eva M. Zygmunt** - Professor of Early Childhood, Youth, and Family Studies at Ball State University

2021 All-America City Awards Theme:

Building Equitable and Resilient Communities

- Important Dates:
 - September 2020-May 2021: Promising Practices Webinar Series
 - December 1, 2020: Letter of Intent to Apply Due
 - February 10, 2021: Application Due
 - March 2021: Finalists Announced
 - March-June 2021: Competition Preparation
 - June 4-6, 2021: All America City Awards Virtual Commencement
 - Continuing with virtual to ensure all participants can attend

2020 All-America City Highlights:

Muncie, Indiana

Schools Within the Context of Communities Program

Whitely Neighborhood

Whitely Neighborhood and Schools Within the Context of Communities program is a multi-disciplinary, immersive program that prepares socially-just, equity-focused teachers by providing them with unique opportunities to understand the complex contexts in which children are growing and learning.

City Background: Muncie, Indiana (Middletown, USA)

- Post-industrial City
- 12,000 jobs lost in the past decade
- 32% poverty rate
- 18% at 50% poverty

Location of Focus: Whiteley Neighborhood

- Intentionally omitted from Middletown Studies

- Historically African American
- Population- 2,530
- 98% free and reduced lunch
- Strongly mobilized
- Heavily faith-based

Critical Issues Faced

- Increasingly diverse populations of children
- Teachers underprepared for diversity
- The cultural gap between teachers and students
- “Achievement gap”
- Limitations of traditional teacher education
- 98% attendance of students but 30% only passing courses
 - Find what is causing this disconnect

Program Components

- Teacher Education
 - Immersive, community-engaged teacher education places candidates in the community for a full semester of integrated coursework.
- Schools
 - Elementary, early childhood, after school enrichment programs, provide practicum experiences for candidates.
- CBO’S (Community Based Organizations)
 - Community-based organizations provide learning spaces where the context of the community can be experienced.
- Mentors
 - Neighborhood mentors serve as cultural ambassadors to the community, inviting candidates to church, family gatherings, and other community events.
- Coursework Focused
 - Teaching in the Elementary/Early Childhood Classroom
 - Literacy Education
 - Motivation/ Assessment
 - Educational Foundations
 - Teaching Social Studies
- Candidate Experience
 - Classroom practicum
 - Afterschool practicum
 - Interdisciplinary, Integrated Learning
 - Community Learning

- Pedagogy
 - Community Learning
 - Experiences with community members and mentors allow contextual cognizance to unfold.
 - Critical Service Learning
 - Service alongside members of the community helps deconstruct racism, classism, power, and privilege.
 - Integrated Curriculum
 - Topics are explored thematically across content areas.
- “Mentor As Colleagues” Program
 - The wisdom and expertise of neighborhood mentors is privileged in the development of curriculum for neighborhood children.
 - Impact on the community, teacher candidates, and P-5 student learning,

Critical Service-Learning Development – Activities by Year

- 2009: Fundraising for the community center and collection of community-identified need.
- 2010: Received Coretta Scott King Book Donation Grant to create “Muncie P3” Program and developed curriculum for Saturday School.
- 2011: Development of 1st grade after school curriculum and grant for a shared community/school wellness park.
- 2012: “Books Like Me” Literacy Event and Dream Unit.
- 2013: Historic Shaffer Chapel, Books Like Me Website, and Multicultural Book Fair.
- 2014: Creation of Shaffer Chapel Museum and Civil Rights Unit.
- 2015: Free Little Library, Digital Oral History, XSTREAM.
- 2016: Civil rights unit after school, inclusion of diverse books, and a food pantry.
- 2017: Scholastic Diverse Book Fair and Advocacy Project.
- 2018: Classroom library audit/redesign.

Impact on P-5 Student Learning

- IREAD Examination 2013-2019
 - After 18-unit interdisciplinary, administered students met or surpassed the average.

“The Alliance For Community-Engaged Teacher Preparation”: Summer Institute on Community-Engaged Teacher Preparation

- Was scheduled for May 20-22, 2020
 - To feature Keynote Speaker Bettina Love & Willsha Scaife

- Canceled due to COVID-19; rescheduled for 2021

Rochester, New York

Community Task Force on School Climate

Interdisciplinary Action at Rochester City School District

The Community Task Force on School Climate (CTF) was formed to develop recommendations to improve school climate in Rochester. CTF eventually created and passed a new code, resulting in a substantial drop in school suspensions.

Jawaan Daniel's Story: Inspiration behind CTF

- Suspended from school and sent home
- Shortly after, was victim to a drive-by shooting in front of his school
- Provoked a reflection of schools' policy of suspension on student's life outcomes

Breaking the School-To-Prison-Pipeline

- Connection between excessive suspension/punishment by the school and prison outcomes for students.
 - Students suspended are seven times more likely to go to prison.

Rochester City School District Approach

- In 2012-2013, one out of ten students were suspended for "other disruptive incidents" and "non-violent offenses."
- District passed a new code of conduct.
- Reforming faculty
 - Discovered a mutual significant number of absences for both student AND faculty.
 - A disconnect of race, white teachers despite majority black and brown students.
 - Exchanging tools of punishment such as suspension with learning mechanisms.
- Help Zones
 - Instead of suspension, faculty sends students to "help zones" staffed by professionals to figure out what stems their behavior.
- Restructuring From a Dominator Model → Partnership Model
 - Dominator Model
 - Power Over
 - Dynamics:
 - Limited participation
 - Decisions made by a few people
 - A quick turn around

- Partnership Model
 - Dynamics:
 - Collaborative process: including all voices and multiple perspectives
 - Full participation wanted and ask: whose voice is not at the table of change?
 - Shared mission
 - A longer process, takes more time to actualize
 - Skill building