My daughter, who became a mother in October, asked for books on raising black boys. I went to the local Barnes and Noble looking for and asking for books on raising black boys. There were no books to be found on the shelves. I Googled “raising African American boys” and a list of books appeared on the Amazon website. One title intrigued me: The Warrior Method: A Parents’ Guide to Rearing Healthy Black Boys by Dr. Raymond A. Winbush. I purchased the hook for my daughter and with her permission I read it before she did.

My work as a school change coach and as an NSRF National Facilitator is in school districts across the country, in high school classrooms mostly in urban areas, and with educators, mostly white. I hear a lot of moaning about black boys and their lack of motivation; I hear stories of their “gang involvement.” I hear about and observe the black boys being disciplined and referred to as “unruly.” Most of the classroom management problems brought to my attention involve getting black boys interested in education. I notice black boys and black girls with their heads down on desks when I pass classrooms. Too often I observe a lot of adult educators controlling, disciplining and I hear a lot of adult educators refer to the medication used or needed to “subdue” black boys. Seldom do I hear a request about ways to empower, or pull out the young black boy, except when I am in the company of black men of all ages who do not question the innate abilities of black boys.

Most of the black boys and young black boys living in urban areas want to know how to “man up.” to use a street term. Young black men listening to media-promoted hip-hop and most young boys who are involved with gangs learn a variety of ways to “man up.” Many of the ways proposed by street gangs and media-sponsored hip-hop to “man up” are violent, misogynistic, homophobic, and dehumanizing. Dr. Winbush offers many practical and African centered ways to raise black boys from infancy to adulthood. He offers a “warrior method” to black parents and to educators both black and white.

Dr. Winbush recounts the story of Sengbeh Pieh, renamed “Joseph Cinque” by his captors, who stole him and forced him to travel on the Amistad vessel. The story of Sengbeh is further developed in the story of Samuel Hinpa Pieh, the greatgrand- son of Sengbeh Pieh. Dr. Winbush differentiates among three prevalent styles of black parenting. He identifies these styles as black parents who opt to use “white parenting,” “gray parenting,” and “black parenting.”

There are many other black parents who do not use the luxury of paying for a philosophical alignment; we cannot say to our school board that although there is a range of $25-$75 per member, we want to pay $75 per coach because we believe in the mission of the NSRF. As we are a public institution, our budget is developed in conjunction with the school board and a finance committee, and is then voted on by the town. A system which charges by the coach would lead to some pressure to have fewer coaches, whereas a flat fee to several national organizations is an acceptable line item in our budget.

Souhegan High School accepts its responsibility to serve as active members of NSRF. To that end we are in support of paying an institutional membership fee for our school.

Steven Strull: Souhegan High School and many of its teachers and administrators have been active members in NSRF since its inception. There is great value in having Souhegan continue its tradition of using CFGs as the foundation of its professional development program, both for the school and the national organization, and the unintended consequence of limiting that participation based on NSRF’s conversion to a dues-paying membership organization has to be considered.

In both written and verbal communication, Peggy and Principal Scott Prescott have made commendable efforts for the consideration of a school-based membership option. After careful consideration, I decided to accept Souhegan’s proposal to allow institutional membership that covers all of Souhegan’s staff as members of NSRF. I made this decision as an exception to our current structure and I realize the dilemma I may have put NSRF in. However, Souhegan made a compelling argument, and they were the only school to ask for such consideration. While some Centers of Activity and a few school districts have inquired about institutional membership, I have asked those folks to understand the institutional membership framework and consider moving forward in the coming year as we consider standards and guidelines for Centers of Activity. I also asked Souhegan to limit this institutional membership to teachers and staff of Souhegan and that, if, as a Center of Activity, Souhegan offers NSRF seminar experiences to people outside the staff that they follow the individual membership structure and build membership fees into those participants’ cost structures.

The Warrior Method: A Parents’ Guide to Rearing Healthy Black Boys
Book Review by Camilla Greene, Pennsylvania

Director’s Report
(continued from page 1)
Connections: the Journal of the National School Reform Faculty

Contents

Winter Meeting Wrap-up
Sarah Childers, Indiana 3

Protocols in Practice: Triple Chalk Talk
Rolesia Holman, North Carolina 4

NSRF’s Living History:
An Interview with Camilla Greene
Mary Hastings, Maine 5

Center of Activity Report: Pennsylvania
Debbie Bambino, Pennsylvania 6

Still Separate and Unequal: Segregation and the Future of Urban School Reform
Book Review by Susan Schooler, Indiana 7

The Warrior Method: A Parents’ Guide to Rearing Healthy Black Boys
Book Review by Camilla Greene, Pennsylvania 8

Research Forum Report
Ross Peterson-Veatch, Indiana 9

Invite, Include, Inspire
Scott Hutchinson, Indiana 9

Students at the Center: Sunday Morning
Zoe W., California 10

CFGs in Shanghai
Julie Lindsay, China 12

Connections is a journal of the National School Reform Faculty, a division of Harmony Education Center. Published three times per year, it provides a forum for CFG Coaches and other reflective educators to share their practice.

Editorial Board: Debbie Bambino, Sarah Childers, Camilla Greene and Greg Peters
If you have any feedback or are interested in contributing to Connections, contact us at 812.330.2702 or dbambino@earthlink.net.

Visit www.harmonye.org for news, updates, protocols and event info!

Protocols in Practice

(continued from page 18)

was the question “What is equity?” I had to ask in our debrief—how is it that “equity” is placed at the end, remotely hanging away from the other questions, as an afterthought? Is it coincidence, or is it symbolic of how equity itself is usually attended to? After the other definitions were unpacked, equity was tacked on to the tail end of our days or added as a secondary or lesser component of our agendas. It is the topic we think we should discuss, but because we feel less competent addressing it, because of the messiness, difficulty, and lack of confidence that we sometimes feel when holding space for this volatile dialogue, it goes at the very end, sometimes in the hope that time will not allow us to get to it.

That needed to change, and so I changed it. Taking a strategic and more proactive approach, sometimes I will place it as the middle question, and at other times I reserve changing its location until later in the week to emphasize or punctuate the importance of equity as the missing puzzle piece that can move us from “too much schooling, too little education” (See Too Much Schooling, Too Little Education: A Paradox of Black Life in White Societies by Mwalimu J. Shujaa) to what is required to meet the needs of each student in order to improve academic achievement.

Therefore, the sequence of questioning toward the end of the seminar (and hopefully, participants arrive at this conclusion themselves) becomes: if we operate from the premise that schools are designed to “school” students (see The Historic Timeline of Public Education: www.arc.com), and if we truly embrace equity, then it is our responsibility and hopefully our passion to create the conditions and circumstances in our educational environments to give each student what he/she needs by providing the essential and crucial inputs…ie equity in human, capital and financial resources needed to reach them well, empower them and liberate them so that they can achieve at high levels. If we choose to, we can truly educate them and enable them to make positive contributions to our local, national and global communities. In Teaching to Transgress, bell hooks says that education is the practice of freedom. How else can we become a truly democratic society?

Rolesia Holman can be contacted at roholmancess@aol.com

Susan Schooler may be contacted at sschoole@mccsc.edu

The Warrior Method

(continued from page 8)

parenting raises black boys the same way white boys are raised. Gray parenting challenges institutions regarding the treatment of black boys. Black parenting sees systems as inherently out of touch with black boys’ life goals. There are many useful and many far-too-familiar statistics on black boys throughout the book. The statistic that was new to me is that the only age at which a black male statistically outperforms a white male is after age 85. If a black male lives to be 85, he will statistically outlive his white counterpart.

Dr. Winbush challenges any adult wanting to nourish and successfully engage black boys to know and practice the 4 C’s: Consciousness, Commitment, Cooperation, and Community. The book includes an annotated bibliography of books for black boys grades 1-6 and 7-12. I recommend The Warrior Method to anyone, whether he or she be a parent, grandparent, educator or concerned citizen, who wants to read a thoughtful guide to developing the fullest capacity of each black boy.

Camilla Greene can be contacted at camillagreene@att.net

Still Separate and Unequal

(continued from page 7)

me more convinced than ever that this is critical work for us to do. Second, after arguing so strongly that integrated schools are essential, Gold offers very little about how we should get there. He discusses a few possibilities, then asserts that “an approach that can succeed … is small-scale voluntary integration of schools in working- and middle-class suburbs near cities.” I wish I thought that were realistic, but I don’t. So for me, the mandate of this book is to pick up where Gold leaves off. He’s stated the problem well, but offers no easy answers. Where we go from there is up to us.

In This Issue
Debbie Bambino, Pennsylvania

Please contact Debbie Bambino at dbambino@earthlink.net with your feedback, ideas for future articles, and/or your interest in writing for Connections.