

draft #2

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON  
COLUMN FOR PUBLICATION JUNE 19, 1997  
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE**

Washington, D.C. is not a place that conjures up images of great public schools. For too long the education system in our nation's capital has been dogged by low expectations, lagging standards, crumbling buildings and wasted resources.

Yet despite these shortcomings, there are schools in Washington that are hidden jewels, offering important lessons about how public education can succeed even in the most difficult circumstances.

Two public schools I visited recently are cases in point.

At Banneker High School, all 82 members of the senior class have been accepted to college. Together, they've won hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships and grants. They have all studied Latin and completed year-long research papers on authors as varied as Samuel Becket and V.S. Naipaul. Every student volunteers in the community throughout four years of high school.

Founded in 1981, Banneker serves 400 high-achieving students of different economic backgrounds from neighborhoods throughout Washington. What they share is a dream of higher education.

When I delivered the commencement address at Banneker earlier this month, I saw just how motivated these students are. Some travel miles across the city just to attend the school. Some give up their Friday nights to work on homework assignments.

One young woman was particularly memorable: Both of her parents were drug abusers. Her mother died this winter and her father landed in jail. But even in the face of family traumas, the girl persevered in school. With the support of relatives who took her in, as well as friends and teachers, she graduated near the top of her class, won numerous scholarships and was admitted to some of the nation's finest universities. She will attend college on a full scholarship in the fall.

Skeptics may say that Banneker has succeeded simply because it has the luxury of being academically competitive, skimming the best students from other schools. It's true that admission is based on class rank, standardized tests, interviews and recommendations.

But it's also true that more students are yearning for the Banneker experience. Only 100 of 300 who apply to Banneker get in. With that kind of demand, there could be more schools like Banneker across the city and the country.

It's also worth remembering that a selective student body is only part of the story. At Banneker and other schools I have visited, success depends as much on teachers, administrators and parents setting high standards and high expectations. And it depends on the local community pitching in with support.

Many teachers at Banneker stay for hours after school to meet with students. The custodians and security staff pride themselves on maintaining a campus that is immaculate and safe. Parents willingly give their time as volunteers and tutors and help out during field trips and school activities.

Banneker offers a compelling portrait of how one community has come together on behalf of public education in a challenging urban setting. I saw another example when I visited Wilson Elementary School.

A little over a year ago, community organizations and church congregations from throughout the city recruited volunteers, raised money and garnered support from the private sector to expand after-school activities in the public schools. As a result, Wilson has been transformed into an after-school safe haven and learning center for children and families in the surrounding neighborhood.

On a recent visit I saw classrooms that used to sit empty and dark after school. Now they're filled with children extending their learning during non-school hours. One group of youngsters was busy playing chess under the supervision of a community volunteer who offered tips about strategy. Other students were writing plays and illustrating them. Some were working on photography projects. Still others were competing at sports.

I was also impressed to see parents coming to the school to hone their computer skills and study for their GEDs.

Although the program is only a few months old, it confirms the findings of a newly released Department of Education report which says that safe, organized after-school activities strengthen the links among home, school and the larger community. Most of all, these programs expand access to education and give children and their families a greater stake in their own futures.

As I have said many times, you can go into any neighborhood in America and find schools that work and schools that don't.

But every time I visit a school like those I've seen in Washington recently I ask myself: Why don't more schools learn from those that are succeeding? Why don't more communities copy the successes of Banneker High School or the after-school program at Wilson Elementary

School? Why don't we provide opportunities for all children who are willing to work hard to meet the rigors of a more challenging curriculum?

There are a lot of great ideas in our public education system that don't require new buildings, more equipment, or ~~even extra funding~~ *fancy technology.* They simply require the desire and commitment of parents, teachers, administrators and the surrounding community. And they require faith in our children's capacity to excel.

Instead of worrying about what's wrong with our schools, let's focus on what's right. Our public schools can succeed, even in places where we think they can't.

###

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✓ all accepted colleges

Abt 300 kids apply for  
140 slots

Why not open up more programs —  
create demand

Explicit -

It's acad. competitive —  
choose from and

Some might argue

Creating from schools —

Why not create

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Yet despite these shortcomings, there are schools in Washington that are hidden jewels, offering important lessons about how public education can succeed even in the most difficult circumstances.

<sup>(public)</sup>  
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When I delivered the commencement address at Banneker earlier this month, I <sup>saw</sup> ~~met~~ just how motivated these students are. Some students who travel by bus two hours every day just to attend the school. I <sup>saw</sup> ~~met~~ students whose parents have pushed them hard to excel, and students whose only support came from an aunt or

uncle or a teacher or church youth minister.

One young woman left a particularly strong impression on me: Both of her parents were drug abusers. Her mother died this winter and her father landed in jail. But even in the face of family traumas, the girl persevered in school. She graduated near the top of her class, won numerous scholarships and was admitted to some of the nation's finest universities, <sup>(expand?)</sup> ~~including~~ <sup>(and made</sup> ~~late.~~

To be sure, Banneker has enjoyed success because it has the luxury of being academically selective, recruiting highly motivated students based on class rank, standardized tests, interviews and recommendations. But that's not the only reason. And it's certainly not the most important one.

The secret at Banneker and every good school I have visited across the country is that students, teachers, administrators and parents set high standards and high expectations. And the surrounding community pitches in with support.

Many teachers at Banneker will stay for hours after school meeting with students. The custodians pride themselves on maintaining a campus that is immaculate and safe. Parents willingly give their time as volunteers, tutors and help ~~ing~~ out during field trips and school activities. <sup>Howard.</sup>

These conditions make Banneker a model of success, not only for schools across the city but across our nation.

I saw the same kind of commitment at Wilson Elementary School, another example of the good that can come when parents, administrators and local residents join forces on behalf of public education.

depressed  
communities

Schools can + should fill other roles too.

clarify

A little over ~~the~~<sup>10</sup> year ago, community organizations and church congregations from throughout the city committed themselves to expanding opportunities for D.C.'s children.

Known as the Washington Interfaith Network, they recruited volunteers, raised money and garnered support from the private sector. And today, Wilson has been transformed into an after-school safe haven and learning center for children and families in the surrounding neighborhood.

more national buzz now

Classrooms that once sat dark and empty are now filled with children reading aloud and parents preparing to take their GED. Community residents come to the school as mentors and tutors supervising activities that encourage children to use their energies and imaginations in positive ways.

The need for after school programs like the one I saw at Wilson cannot be overstated. Just this week, the Department of Education released a report which makes clear that children need safe, organized activities in non-school hours to continue their learning and avoid the temptations of the street.

Although more after-school programs exist today than 20 years ago, there are <sup>still</sup> not enough to fill demand, particularly given the number of parents who work full-time. Fewer than four percent of public school children attend after-school programs. Even fewer programs exist for older children who often are most at risk.

Here in Washington, citizens are at work to change all that.

As Banneker High School and Wilson Elementary School demonstrate, the difference between schools that perform well and poorly cannot always be measured in extra funding per student, sophisticated equipment, or modern facilities. Success is just as likely to come from a

over for a little while  
know now

Also intended to separate  
teach computer skills →

activities to keep kids  
safe + occupied

full range

photos, arts program,

walked  
and was  
displeased

son  
likes  
chess  
adults  
not

The  
told me  
chess  
has  
with  
play, internet

challenging curriculum, high expectations and, most of all, the time and commitment invested by all members of the community.

I hope more schools across the country will follow this lead.

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As I've said many times -  
you can go in any direction  
to find schools that  
work

Question is - why do we  
replicate those  
that work?

Why do we have a  
line

What stands in the way  
of adults borrowing ideas  
from these examples -

Sam Wacker - go from store to store  
asks what makes each store -

As to best ideas in public

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But it's also true that it's a school that works, and there could be more schools like it. Clearly there are enough hard-working, motivated students to fill more classrooms. The more Bannekers there are, the more demand there will be for challenging curricula and high expectations at other schools.

While a selective student body is part of Banneker's success, the school also benefits because everyone involved with it believes in the students' capacity to excel.

Many teachers at Banneker stay for hours after school to meet with students. The custodians and security staff pride themselves on maintaining a campus that is immaculate and safe. Parents willingly give their time as volunteers and tutors and help out during field trips and school activities.

This is but one example of how a community has come together on behalf of public education in a challenging urban setting. I saw another example when I visited Wilson Elementary School in Washington.

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challenging curriculum, high expectations and, most of all, the time and commitment invested by all members of the community.

I hope more schools across the country will follow this lead.

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Draft 2

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON  
COLUMN FOR RELEASE JUNE 11, 1997  
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE

For the last several months, I've been visiting the public schools in Washington, D.C., encouraging teachers, administrators, parents and students ~~in their efforts~~ to address the ~~shortcomings of their schools~~ <sup>shortcomings of our pub. educ. system.</sup> and make the changes they need to raise the ~~quality of education~~ <sup>standards + expectations</sup> in this city. Here in Washington and in communities across the country, I've tried to bring attention to schools and programs that work, ~~that can offer important lessons and inspiration for schools throughout the city and our nation.~~ <sup>Two schools stick out in my mind.</sup>

~~Both are~~ <sup>Both are</sup> This week, I'm giving ~~a commencement address~~ <sup>an address</sup> at a Washington, D.C. high school whose remarkable success can serve as a national model. All 82 members of the senior class have been accepted to college. Together, they've won hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships and grants. They've all studied Latin, completed year-long research papers on authors as varied as Samuel Beckett, V.S. Naipul, Daphne Du Maurier and Chinua Achebe, and volunteered in their communities throughout their four years of high school.

This is the Class of '97 at Benjamin Banneker Academic High School. Founded in 1981, Banneker is not an exclusive private school but a public school serving some 400 high-achieving students of all economic backgrounds from neighborhoods throughout the nation's capital. In a troubled school system whose failures have been well-documented, Banneker has thrived against the odds, preparing class after class of inner-city students not only for college but for success in adulthood.

I chose to speak at Banneker because I believe it is a powerful example of what wonderful things can happen when a school sets high standards and expectations for its students and an entire community pulls together to help its children fulfill them.

To be sure, one reason Banneker has enjoyed such success is because it has the luxury of being academically-selective, of choosing classes of highly-motivated students based on class rank, standardized tests, interviews and recommendations. But it is not the only reason. And it certainly is not the most important. Many of the same factors that have helped Banneker students excel can also make a difference in the lives of students all across Washington and the country.

Students, teachers and parents point to the high expectations and supportive atmosphere at Banneker as the primary reason for its success. Confidence in every student's ability to succeed is evident throughout the school -- from the "Achievers" banner in the auditorium to the college brochures in the guidance office. One student who was doing poorly during her first years at Banneker decided that she wasn't being challenged enough. She met with her guidance counselor who helped her sign up for honors and Advanced Placement classes the next year. And instead of dropping, her GPA rose.

"If you have high standards, demand the best, our children will rise to the occasion," says Principal Linette Adams, who, like other principals across the city, has had to struggle with food shortages in the cafeteria and the challenge of securing enough textbooks and supplies for her

students and teachers.

The high expectations and support come from all corners of the Banneker community: Teachers stay after school and into the evening to help students having trouble in class. Administrators track students' academic progress and literally call home to make sure that every absence is parent-sanctioned. Custodians and security guards keep the building safe and immaculate. Parents make their children accountable for their homework assignments and pitch-in during school field trips and activities. And all of them, along with volunteer tutors and mentors, help students through the challenges of school, adolescence and in some cases, poverty. (One quarter of all Banneker students come from families whose incomes make them eligible for free or reduced-price lunches).

Banneker has also benefited from partnerships with the larger community. The school has a close relationship with Howard University, just one-half block down the street. In addition to sharing facilities with the school, the University provides volunteer student tutors and helps Banneker maintain a computer lab. The National Science Foundation has provided funding and sent world-renowned scientists to speak to students about research and careers in science. And every spring, the school takes sophomores and juniors on college tours of the Southeast and New England, encouraging them to aim high and to begin planning for college early.

In my travels across the country, I've learned that in every single community, regardless of the wealth or health of its school system, one will find schools that work and schools that

don't. The difference between well and poorly-performing schools can't always be measured in extra funding per student, or in sophisticated facilities and equipment, but in a school's high academic standards, challenging curriculum, and most of all, in the extra time, attention and care invested by all members of the school community: Strong principals, committed teachers, involved parents, active community partners, and inspired, hard-working students striving to fulfill high expectations

They are the ingredients of Banneker's success. And the ingredients of any school's success.

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## Executive Summary

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Keeping schools open longer—before and after school, and during the summer—can turn schools into *Community Learning Centers*. By keeping school doors open during non-traditional school hours, the school provides students, parents, and the community with access to valuable educational resources. A Community Learning Center housed in the community school can be a safe after-school and summer haven for children, where learning takes place in a building removed from the violence, drugs, and lack of supervision of children that permeate some communities in America.

Community Learning Centers get us “back to basics,” back to active community involvement in raising and educating all of our children. The positive impact on children of re-establishing the ties among home, school, and community has been widely recognized. It is a cornerstone of President Clinton’s *America Reads Challenge* proposal which seeks to match reading partners with children having reading difficulties, in before- and after-school and summer programs. As the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching points out, collaboration between home and school is essential both to family functioning and to school success.

Schools as Community Learning Centers can be a critical resource to meet the growing need for children to have safe and productive activities during the hours outside of the school day. While the number of after-school child care programs has grown over the last 20 years, there are still not enough organized, extended learning opportunities. In 1995, there were 23.5 million school-age children with parents in the workforce, yet as recently as the 1993-94 school year, only 3.4 percent of children in public elementary and combined schools were enrolled in the 18,111 before- or after-school programs at public schools.

In too many cases, organized before and after school programs are simply not available to children in public schools. Of the 49,000 before and after school programs available in the U.S. in 1991, only about a third were housed in public schools, and seventy percent of all public elementary and combined schools did not have a before- or after-school program. Furthermore, although the need for programs serving older children is also substantial, only a tiny percentage of in-school and out-of-school care programs serve older children and youth. Less than 1 percent of 7th and 8th graders were in programs in 1991.

Our children’s need for opportunities for learning and enrichment in a safe and drug-free environment continues to grow, and working parents want more access to extended learning opportunities. A 1994 survey of parents found that 56 percent think that many parents leave their children alone too much after school. And principals have long seen a need for extended learning programs; in a 1989 survey, 84 percent of school principals agreed that there is a need for before- and after-school programs.

Today, more than ever before in our nation's history, education is the fault line between those who will prosper in the new economy and those who will not. Most of today's good jobs require more skills and training than a high school diploma affords. Preparation for college begins the day a child first steps foot in the schoolhouse—but not every child has access to all of the other resources that they need. Before and after school and summer programs help kids stay on the right track from the beginning, by providing reading tutoring to younger children, mentors to guide older children through the math and science courses—like Algebra and Geometry—that pave the way to college, as well as the opportunities in the arts, sports, and recreation and help from caring adults to guide kids to grow and develop into strong individuals.

Public schools are uniquely suited to meet these formidable challenges. Among the many reasons keeping public schools open as Community Learning Centers make sense are that:

- Research indicates the need for more opportunities for young people to learn and grow in a safe and drug-free environment.
- Public schools often provide a low-cost, accessible location to extend learning.
- Community Learning Centers are well positioned to help younger children meet the *America Reads Challenge*—that all children will read independently and well by the end of third grade.
- Community Learning Centers can provide the extra encouragement and support many children need to take and pass Algebra and Geometry in middle and junior high schools and succeed in Advanced Placement classes and the other challenging courses in high school necessary to prepare for college.
- Community Learning Centers can offer children and youth long-term mentoring opportunities to help them master basic skills while offering them enrichment activities that often have the potential to develop into life-long interests.
- Community Learning Centers allow all of the partners in a child's education to become involved and utilize their diverse talents and resources; for example, using science professionals as mentors for middle school students, who can both share their expertise in science, and serve as role models for the importance of education.
- Extending the hours that schools are open is a cost-effective means of giving students the opportunities they need to learn and develop in an enriching, safe and drug-free setting.

This guidebook outlines the steps needed to successfully convert a school into a community learning center and lists resources for further information and assistance. Included are concrete suggestions for how to:

**Estimate typical costs.** Costs for after-school and summer programs vary widely, based on the type of activities and services offered, the times that the program operates, whether transportation and materials are required, and the experience of the staff. However, programs have many options to meet costs including charging user fees; accessing a mix of local, state, and federal government funding; seeking competitive public or private grants; undertaking partnerships with youth and community organizations and private sector sponsors; and arranging with parents, community members, and National Service participants to volunteer time.

**Develop a Community Learning Center budget.** Figuring out a Community Learning Center's budget is critical for financing a program. It is useful to itemize a list of common expenses associated with establishing and operating a program and then the potential resources for financing the expenses; some items and services can be donated, while others may have no cost. A source-by-source accounting of funding is useful, too.

**Build consensus and partnership.** Extending learning time at a school through programs such as reading tutoring, homework centers, mentoring middle school students in math and science, or a drug-prevention program may require collaboration among diverse partners: not only parents and educators, but also community residents, service providers and public officials may need, and want, to be involved in the process. Programs should keep in mind the goal of drawing upon all of the community's available resources, while addressing the concerns of all who are affected as true partners.

**Conduct a community assessment of needs and resources.** A community assessment helps a partnership turn a shared vision for continuous learning and safety into strategies that use resources efficiently to address local conditions. Assessment information can come from interviews, surveys, focus groups, and community forums. All local stakeholders can contribute to the assessment process so that the resulting strategies address real concerns, and consider all possible resources. For example, is there a local college nearby which could provide work-study students or volunteers, or low-cost teaching assistants?

**Design an effective program.** Successful partnerships have concluded that every school and community must choose its own combination of opportunities to address local conditions and concerns. Nevertheless, effective programs address the following issues: establish vision and focus; address needs in an appropriate manner; coordinate efforts; and establish a system of accountability from the beginning.

**Consider logistical issues.** School governance, liability, and building maintenance issues are paramount to making a Community Learning Center work. Strong leadership, collaborative

decisionmaking, a clear understanding of management and organization procedures and policies such as liability, as well as managed, mutually acceptable arrangements for space are elements of successful programs.

**Obtain qualified staff.** Staff for after-school or summer learning can come from the school, a partner agency, or the community, but should have appropriate experience, realistic expectations, and a true interest in caring for children. Paid professionals and teachers can be supplemented with volunteers, parents, AmeriCorps participants, federal Work Study students and other volunteers from local colleges or universities, community members, senior citizens, and business representatives. Experts agree that while there are wide variations in staff salaries, hours, benefits, and qualifications, it has generally been true that where key staff are paid reasonably and given benefits and other financial incentives, quality staffing is the result.

**Evaluate a program's accomplishments.** Community Learning Center programs are by nature complex, and no matter how well designed, must learn from experience. Continuous monitoring of the progress of a program—in addition to a shared understanding of the program's goals—can help leaders and staff maintain their focus, improve effectiveness and accountability, ensure parent and participant satisfaction, and identify necessary changes. Continuous monitoring allows a program's director to assess whether its key features are working as intended, and helps the program to do better than before.

Keeping schools open after typical hours to become a Community Learning Center is a significant way to help meet the increasing needs of our nation's children in a caring environment. By uniting parents, principals, teachers, and community groups in partnership, communities can assess and meet real student needs such as addressing reading deficiencies and helping students learn math at internationally competitive levels, eliminate waste of resources by coordinating efforts, and gain the advantages of shared expertise and experience. Children, families, and the whole community will benefit as children learn and grow in a safe and friendly, enriching environment.

**“Increasingly, our schools are critical to bringing our communities together. We want them to serve the public not just during school hours but after hours: to function as vital community centers; places for recreation and learning, positive places where children can be when they can’t be at home and school is no longer going on; gathering places for young people and adults alike. Bringing our schools into the 21st century is a national challenge that deserves a national commitment.”**

**—William Jefferson Clinton  
President of the United States  
July 11, 1996**

Draft 1

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON  
COLUMN FOR RELEASE JUNE 11, 1997  
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE**

This week, I'm giving a commencement address to a special senior class in Washington, D.C. All 82 members have been accepted to college. Together, they've won hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships and grants. They've all studied Latin, completed year-long research papers on authors as varied as Samuel Beckett, V.S. Naipul, Chinua Achebe and Daphne Du Maurier, and volunteered in their communities throughout their four years of high school.

This is the Class of '97 at Benjamin Banneker Academic High School. Founded in 1981, Banneker is not an exclusive private school but a public school serving some 400 high-achieving students of all economic backgrounds from neighborhoods throughout the nation's capital. In a troubled public school system whose shortcomings and failures have been well-documented, Banneker has thrived against the odds, preparing class after class of inner-city students not only for college but for success in adulthood.

I chose to speak at Banneker this week because I believe that this public school can be a model for the nation. At a time when many Americans have lost faith in our public schools, Banneker High School is a powerful example of what wonderful things can happen when a school sets high standards and expectations for its students and an entire community pulls together to help its children fulfill them.

For the last several  
months,  
encouraging  
change  
schools  
work  
better  
visited  
around  
country  
so many  
conditions  
seem to  
be lacking.  
Why is it me

Can go to any  
common am -  
can find work & don't  
work  
Why don't we buy  
it to every school  
some center &

To be sure, one reason Banneker has enjoyed such success is because it has the luxury of being academically-selective, choosing classes of highly-motivated students based on class rank, standardized tests, interviews and recommendations. But it is not the only reason. And it certainly is not the most important. Many of the same factors that have helped Banneker students excel can also make a difference in the lives of students all across Washington and the country.

Students, teachers and parents point to the high expectations and supportive atmosphere at Banneker as the primary reason for its success. Confidence in every student's ability to succeed and go to college is evident throughout the school -- from the "Achievers" banner in the auditorium to the xxx brochures in the guidance office. One student who was doing poorly during her first years at Banneker decided that she wasn't being challenged enough. She met with her guidance counselor who helped her sign up for honors and Advanced Placement classes the next year. And instead of dropping, her GPA rose.

"If you have high standards, demand the best, our children will rise to the occasion," says Principal Linette Adams, who, like other principals across the city, has had to struggle with the challenge of securing enough textbooks and supplies for her students and teachers.

*food shortages  
in the  
cafeteria*

The high expectations and support come from all corners of the Banneker community: Teachers stay after school and into the evening to help students having trouble in class. Administrators track students' academic progress and literally call home to make sure that every

absence is parent-sanctioned. Custodians and security guards keep the building safe and immaculate. Parents make their children accountable for their homework assignments and pitch-in during school field trips and activities. And all of them, along with volunteer tutors and mentors from the community, help students through the challenges of school, adolescence and in some cases, poverty. (One quarter of all Banneker students come from families whose incomes make them eligible for free or reduced-price lunches).

Banneker has also benefited from partnerships with the larger community. The school has a close relationship with Howard University, just one-half block down the street. In addition to sharing its facilities with the school, the University provides volunteer student tutors and helps the school maintain a modern computer lab. The National Science Foundation has helped with funding and sent world-renowned scientists to speak to students about research and careers in science. And every spring, the school takes sophomores and juniors on college tours of the Southeast and New England, encouraging them to aim high and to begin planning for college early.

The taxpayers of Washington, D.C. do not spend any more money to educate Banneker students than it does on students at other schools. What has made the difference is the extra time, attention and care invested in education by all members of the Banneker community: Strong principals, committed teachers, involved parents, active community partners, and inspired, hard-working students striving to fulfill high expectations. They are the ingredients of Banneker's success. And the ingredients of any school's success.

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**COLUMN FOR RELEASE JUNE 11, 1997**  
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I am going <sup>close to speak</sup> to Banneker this week because I believe that <sup>it</sup> ~~this public school~~ can be an model for the ~~whole~~ nation. At a time when many Americans have ~~all but~~ lost faith in ~~our ability~~ to ~~reverse decades of neglect and substandard performance in our public schools~~, Banneker ~~High School~~ is a powerful example of what ~~wonderful things~~ can happen when a school sets high standards and expectations for its students and an entire community pulls together to help its children fulfill them.

To be sure, one reason Banneker has enjoyed such success is because it has the luxury of being academically-selective, choosing classes of highly-motivated students based on class rank, standardized tests, and recommendations. But it is not the only reason. And it certainly is not the most important. Many of the same factors that have helped Banneker students excel can also make a difference in the lives of students all across Washington and the country, ~~regardless of academic ability~~.

Students, teachers and parents <sup>all</sup> ~~like~~ point to the high expectations and supportive atmosphere at Banneker as the primary reason for its success. Confidence in every student's ability to succeed and go to college is evident throughout the school -- from the "Achievers" banner in the auditorium to the Ivy League brochures in the guidance office. One student who was doing poorly during her first years at Banneker decided that she wasn't being challenged enough. She met with her guidance counselor who helped her sign up for honors and Advanced Placement classes the next year. And instead of dropping, her GPA rose.

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absence is parent-sanctioned. Custodians and security guards keep the building safe and immaculate. Parents make their children accountable for their homework assignments and pitch-in during school field trips and activities. Volunteer tutors and mentors from the community help students through the challenges of school, adolescence and in some cases, poverty. (One quarter of all Banneker students come from families whose incomes make them eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.)

"The staff works and plans together. There are outstanding teachers and administrators at Banneker. They really know your children and are involved with them," says one parent. "Even the security guard knows your child."

Banneker has also benefited from partnerships with the <sup>larger</sup> greater community. The school has a close relationship with Howard University, just <sup>one</sup> block down the street. In addition to sharing its facilities with the school, the University provides volunteer student tutors and helps the school maintain a modern computer lab. The National Science Foundation has helped ~~the school~~ the school with funding and sent world-renowned scientists to speak to students about ~~their~~ <sup>the</sup> research and careers in science. And every spring, the school takes sophomores and juniors on college tours of the Southeast and New England, encouraging them <sup>to</sup> aim high and to begin planning for college early.

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Chinua Achebe  
Wole Soyinka (Nigeria)  
V.S. Naipaul  
Derek Walcott