

# school spotlight



## 100% RESPECT! Doesn't Everyone Deserve It?

The answer to this question given by both the students and staff of East Side Community H.S. in Manhattan (and by most any other level-headed person you might meet) is a resounding yes! That's why our response to a rise in disrespectful behavior towards students and staff during the fall of 2005 led us to do something that would put respectful behavior toward all members of the community on our school's front burner.

Led by Dean of Students, Matthew Guldin, and a group of student leaders throughout the school, the 100% RESPECT! Campaign was developed with an eye toward including everyone in the building in on the discussion about what exactly

respectful behavior looked like. Knowing that people respond more positively to rules/guidelines that they've had a say in creating and that students are very concerned with how they are treated by adults in our building, the RESPECT! Campaign engages everyone in the building in the process of defining what respectful behavior should look like student-to-student, student-to-teacher and teacher-to-students. These discussions take place in advisories (and staff meetings) and the best ideas of everyone are synthesized and presented by RESPECT! representatives from each advisory to their grade for discussion and approval.

"Knowing that the leaders have to listen to our

feedback in addition to us listening to them, makes us feel more respected from the jump," says 12th grade leader Ordaine Ellison. Of course, communication skills must be taught so that staff and teens/pre-teens learn to speak respectfully to each other when they are upset. We've also developed a mediation format called the "No-Excuses Mediation" which focuses on each individual taking responsibility for whatever they've done wrong in a situation and not blaming the other person for their actions.

Our first year's implementation yielded a 45% drop in suspensions and this past year we've added 2 new pieces to our program. The first is called Personalizing the Guidelines and requires each student to commit to working on changing 2 or 3 disrespectful behaviors taken from the 100% RESPECT! School-wide Guidelines. Teachers also participate and resolve to change their practice of teacher-to-student respect in 1 or 2 ways. Finally, we've just begun having school-wide assembly programs where we highlight behaviors that we'd like students to change and present options to them through skits, spoken word and panel discussions.

Having everyone on board has ensured our forward progress, helped students mature, reduced suspensions and opened a new pathway for professional development!

**Matthew Guldin** is the Dean of Students at East Side Community High School in New York City. If you would like more information and/or want the 100% RESPECT! Campaign to be implemented in your school or in your district, please contact: [matthewg@eschs.org](mailto:matthewg@eschs.org) or 347-678-8585.

# community highlight

The Leadership Program is a dynamic urban organization that enriches lives, emboldens confidence and expands options by building strong leaders in classrooms and communities.

We teach both students and adults how to view and express themselves building skill proficiency to improve their lives and environment: self-esteem and self-image, communication skills, teamwork and bonding, goal setting, personal and social responsibility and conflict resolution. Through this process we help create classroom and school environments that promote personal and social development, cultivate motivation and develop resiliency to reduce negative behaviors.

To find out more, please visit [www.theleadershipprogram.com](http://www.theleadershipprogram.com)



We do this by providing high quality programming for students and adults through:

- In-class enrichment
- After-school activities
- Parent workshops
- Professional development workshops
- Social work and mental health workshops
- Mentoring & peer mediation
- Conflict resolution & violence prevention workshops

Our youth programs are examined by valid, reliable, field-tested survey instruments, while workshop evaluations assess our adult programming.