

E.L. HAYNES

BE KIND | WORK HARD | GET SMART

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SPRING 2014 ISSUE

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The State of Haynes Address

On Wednesday, March 5, Founder and Head of School Jennie Niles addressed a crowd of 100 supporters, families, and community partners to present a snapshot of E.L. Haynes' first ten years – from our humble beginnings above a CVS drugstore serving 139 students in grades PK-2 to three gleaming facilities serving more than 1,000 students in grades PK-11.

E.L. Haynes was the vision of 40 education leaders and parents who came together to write the charter for what would become E.L. Haynes Public Charter School. Early challenges and accomplishments included hiring outstanding teachers for every student, securing funds for our unique program, and identifying space that would accommodate the needs of our growing school.

"Over time, and with our work and dedication to students, E.L. Haynes' reputation grew," reflects Niles. She continues, "We won prestigious awards, but more importantly, our students thrived and parents were happy."

In 2008, we opened our 46,000-square-foot building on Georgia Avenue. In 2010, we renovated the former Clark Elementary School. And in 2013, we opened the doors of our 33,000-square-foot addition for E.L. Haynes High School. We worked hard to support our expanding program, increasing the annual fund year after year and raising \$11 million for programs, capital, and special projects between 2009 and 2012.

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Our first All School Meeting in 2004
and our High School lobby in 2013.

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Today, we have an award-winning program with technology-enhanced classrooms, a laptop for every high school student, widely respected special education and ELL programs, support services for every student, a robust athletics program, a 90% approval rate among parents and students, enriching service learning and travel opportunities, and one of the strongest teaching teams in Washington, DC. Our programs, including Capital Teaching Residency, SchoolForce, and Learn Zillion, have impacted thousands of students, teachers, and schools locally and nationally.

Now in our tenth year, we have new challenges to tackle. For example, E.L. Haynes' shift from DC's former standards to the new, more rigorous common core standards requires new techniques and teacher support. As E.L. Haynes grows next year to our full complement of 1,200 students in grades PK-12, we must continue to strengthen, honor, and embrace our diverse school community.

E.L. Haynes remains steadfast in our vision of impacting education reform. Niles concludes: "Washington, DC, and the country are short on models of high-performing, non-selective public schools. We must be a proof point for what is possible for all students in public schools."

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E.L. Haynes and Mary's Center Launch New Community School Partnership

Curtis Nash begins his day at 6:30 a.m., ringing the doorbell of a student who has been having trouble getting to school on time. "Mr. Nash is here," a mother calls to her teenager, "Wake up, it's time for school." By 6:45, Nash and his young friend are on their way to another friend's house. When they arrive to school, on time, the group has grown to five students, whom Nash calls, "The Fabulous Five."

Having spent eight years in urban education, most recently on the south side of Chicago as a clinical social worker, Nash is no stranger to the myriad of reasons students miss school. "The key is finding ways to keep them engaged and accountable," he says. Schools can't do it alone. Parents can't do it alone. Nash explains, "We need to enlist our communities – the barber shop, the CVS, the corner store – in a partnership to support our kids."

This focus on community engagement, known as the



The Mary's Center Dental Cruiser makes regular "house calls" to both E.L. Haynes campuses.

Community School Model, is transforming urban education across the country. Nash joined the E.L. Haynes Wellness Team this fall, thanks to funding from OSSE's Community Schools Incentive Initiative, to establish a Community School partnership with E.L. Haynes' neighborhood ally, Mary's Center.

Founded in 1988, Mary's Center is a Federally Qualified Health Center that provides comprehensive health care,

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family literacy, and social services to the entire DC metropolitan region, including individuals from over 110 countries. Tania Hindert, Senior Director of Program Services at Mary's Center, explains that the partnership between E.L. Haynes and Mary's Center has evolved over several years. Funding from OSSE has allowed both organizations to deepen our services to families.

As part of this initiative, Mary's Center hired Carmelita Naves to coordinate wrap-around services for E.L. Haynes families – ranging from comprehensive health and dental treatment to positive parenting workshops. Naves, a clinical social worker and former Family Engagement Coordinator at E.L. Haynes, is working hard to develop a rapport with families.

“Establishing trust is critical,” Naves reflects, continuing, “Many families need help, but few feel comfortable asking for it.” For instance, some of our students do not receive regular health or dental care. Since October, Naves has referred more than 100 families to Mary's Center for treatment and the Mary's Center Dental Bus now makes regular visits to E.L. Haynes' two campuses. To help parents view E.L. Haynes as a trusted resource, Naves also organizes parenting workshops and programs.

Nash and Naves believe that such community engagement efforts will build stronger families, schools, and neighborhoods. But this comprehensive approach takes time, Naves cautions, noting that she is working with the Coalition for Community Schools, a national organization, to advocate for the continuation and expansion of this initiative. “We are just scratching the surface,” says Naves. “There is still so much to do.”

Creating a New Language for Problem Solving

It is 11:00 a.m. and a warmly-lit room on the third floor of E.L. Haynes High School is filled with a quiet intensity. Two students are struggling to put their thoughts to paper. A frustrated student arrives seeking a quiet space to calm down. This unique space, appropriately named the Problem Solving Center, represents a cultural shift in the way that schools respond to students' misbehavior - from policies of Zero Tolerance to those of Restorative Justice.

Restorative Justice (RJ) is an approach to discipline that has been gaining momentum in recent years across the country, and has evolved at E.L. Haynes through years of work preparing students for success in school and in life. Rather than focusing on punitive discipline as a reaction to a student's poor behavioral choice, the RJ model stresses personal responsibility, respect for self and others, dialogue, consensus, trust, safety, and problem solving.

“Our mission is to prepare our students for success, including when our students make mistakes, even big mistakes. We do that by supporting them and keeping them close – giving them tools to improve their lives and their communities – not by pushing them away when they need us most,” says Founder and Head of School Jennie Niles. Indeed, E.L. Haynes has made RJ an institutional priority.

High School Assistant Principal Daniel Malec joined E.L. Haynes after studying social and restorative justice in graduate school and working for eight years in violence prevention and health promotion, most recently at the Latin American Youth Center. He has noticed positive changes in student behavior at E.L. Haynes, but adds that a culture shift takes time. “RJ is much more demanding than the traditional approach, and requires a new set of skills, a new language,” explains Malec.

Back in the Problem Solving Center, the frustrated student spends a few moments journaling about what is on his mind. He and Malec process these thoughts together and brainstorm a few strategies for maintaining calm and focus. The student then returns to class, ready to learn.



Artistic expression is a powerful tool in teaching students how to communicate their feelings.

Join us! Enlightening Evenings @ E.L. Haynes

You are an integral part of the Haynes community. Let us thank you with this free, fun, and engaging evening series. At an Enlightening Evening, you will:

- ▶ Enrich and inspire yourself while learning from one of our exceptional teachers;
- ▶ Mingle with dedicated individuals, supporters, and E.L. Haynes leadership; and
- ▶ Enjoy tasty bites while exploring our beautiful campuses.

E.L. Haynes launched our Enlightening Evening series with **Care to Hover Anyone? A Physics Lesson** on Wednesday, April 2. Attendees learned about the physics of motion and experienced physics firsthand aboard a school-made hovercraft.



From Selfie to Self Portrait: An Art Lesson

Wednesday, April 30th – 6:00-8:00 p.m. at E.L. Haynes Middle School

Discover your inner artist and travel through time. In this class you will recreate a picture from your smartphone or wallet into a real drawing using classic techniques. You will then convert your picture into a piece of jewelry to take home using an age-old crafting process.

Behind the Diaper Change: A Math Lesson

Wednesday, May 21st – 6:00-8:00 p.m. at E.L. Haynes Middle School

Settle a debate between two new parents: Cloth or disposable diapers? Explore how different visual representations (i.e. tables, equations, and graphs) can assist us in making sense of which is “better.” Get ready for laughs like you’ve never had before in math class.

To register for an Enlightening Evening, email Yasmine Taylor-Hart at yhart@elhaynes.org.

My Life, My E.L. Haynes

- ▶ **My name is** Reynaldo Paniagua.
- ▶ **This morning for breakfast** I had decaf coffee and a plain biscuit with jelly.
- ▶ **A perfect day is** when I accomplish my goals.
- ▶ **The book that inspires me the most is** *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.
- ▶ **I dream of having lunch with** Ms. Niles.
- ▶ **My greatest impact will be** my contribution to E.L. Haynes.

