

**Worthing HS students lead Bastian ES scholars on School to College Pipeline**

*Students from both campuses participate in five college tours*

*May 7, 2018*– College-bound students from Worthing High School are reaching back to the elementary students coming behind them to cultivate a college-bound culture throughout the entire Worthing feeder pattern.

“We want the older kids to mentor the young students so they understand credits, extracurriculars, volunteer work, and that you need to perform well on SATs,” said Worthing High School Principal Khalilah Campbell. “We also want our program to grow and for relationships to keep growing so students who will eventually attend Worthing will be focused on college before they even walk through our doors.”

A group of Worthing juniors and seniors spent part of the school year reading to students at Bastian Elementary School. And in April, students from both schools — 34 from Worthing and nearly 50 fifth-graders from Bastian — went on five-stop college tour. The students stopped at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Dillard University and Xavier University in New Orleans, and Clark Atlanta University and Morehouse College in Atlanta. Their trip concluded with a day at Disney World.

“The majority of our students rarely get to leave Sunnyside and the surrounding area,” Bastian Elementary School principal Everett Hare Sr. said. “The parents and families were in tears for this occasion, as they expressed so much appreciation to both schools. We were honored to serve in this capacity and look forward to this being an annual journey that grants an experience of a lifetime to our students in the South area of Houston.”

Worthing and Bastian plan to expand the mentoring relationship between the two schools, and include more schools within the Worthing feeder pattern.

“This is an avenue for our high school scholars to feel empowered as a light for younger scholars. When you feel like someone is looking up to you, there’s a tendency to work harder to do better because you know someone is depending on you to make it,” Campbell said.

Both principals say this “School-to-College Pipeline” idea is their way of combatting the so-called “School-to-Prison Pipeline.” The National Education Association defines the School-To-Prison Pipeline as the policies and practices that are directly and indirectly pushing students of color out of school and on a pathway to prison, including, but not limited to: harsh school discipline policies that overuse suspension and expulsion, increased policing and surveillance that create prison-like environments in schools, overreliance on referrals to law enforcement and the juvenile justice system.

“At Bastian, we focus on breaking the cycle because we know the pipeline starts in elementary school,” Hare said. “Establishing meaningful and lasting relationships between our students and the high schoolers ahead of them who are on the right track and who are willing to extend their hand to help with reading, keeping them focused on academics, reinforcing the importance making good choices means the world to our students’ outlook on their future.”

The schools are working to establish a more formalized mentoring partnership that involves more students — including middle school — leading up to the 2019 college tour.