

INTERVIEW

with

RONALD LEIGH

Principal

Currituck County High School

January 19, 1991

by Goldie F. Wells

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INTERVIEW WITH MR. RONALD LEIGH

By Goldie F. Wells

Goldie: I am in the home of Mr. Ronald Leigh in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. He is one of the 1989 principals. The date is January 19, 1991. Mr. Leigh, I would like for you to introduce yourself and say that you know that this is being recorded.

Mr. Leigh: My name is Ronald M. Leigh and I am aware that this conversation that Ms. Wells and I are engaged in is being taped.

Goldie: Mr. Leigh, you responded to my questionnaire and I really appreciate it. I am doing some research. I am interviewing Black principals that were high school principals in 1964, and ones who were high school principals in 1989. I'm trying to see if you perceive your roles the same way. I'm going all over the state and I'm so happy that you consented to see me on a Saturday night. I am going to ask you some questions and I want you to respond.

Goldie: I want you to tell me how you became a high school principal.

Mr. Leigh: I guess after 17 years of being an assistant principal at the school that I am based at--of going through probably about six principals during my tenure as assistant principal. I guess its sort of like fate. The Associate Superintendent who was in the county became the Superintendent and for many years we have worked very closely together and at the same time the principal who was at the high school became the Assistant Superintendent. The Superintendent asked me if I would take on the job as the principal and stated that I had put in my time and he had faith and trust in me that I could do it. A lot of the faculty members wanted to see me as principal and it was kind of ironic I guess I was a little scared at first because I did turn down the job three times. I guess with pressure from the Superintendent and several of the Board members I consented to take the job.

Goldie: So you became the principal of Currituck County High School.

Mr. Leigh: That is correct.

Goldie: Had you worked as a teacher?

Mr. Leigh: I worked two years as a teacher. I was a combination teacher and assistant principal when I first went to Currituck County in 1973. I was a teacher in the morning

and assistant principal in the afternoon for two years and then after those initial two years I became a full-time Assistant Principal.

Goldie: Would you tell me something about Currituck County High School. Something about the racial composition and the number of students and teachers?

Mr. Leigh: Sure. Right now it is probably about 85%-86% White and about 14% Black. We have a teaching faculty of 47. Out of 47 teachers two teachers are Black. So I guess many times when I tell people that I am the principal of Currituck County High School they are a little surprised because of the ratio makeup there but I've always been treated with respect and I've been treated very fairly. I get along well with all of my faculty members and students and probably because of my longevity there and really working in the community visiting many of the churches and many of the functions that go on in the county. I guess people know me and they feel comfortable with me no matter if it's Black or White. I often visit the White churches as well as the Black churches for community functions. It is a real good working relationship.

Goldie: I'm going to ask you something about how you deal with some of the responsibilities that you have there at the high school and then I want you just to address those. Would you tell me how you deal with supervision of personnel and selection of teachers?

Mr. Leigh: Selection of teachers usually in interview and we have an interview committee which is made up of two of the assistant superintendents and myself and always the department chair. We usually will interview at least twice before we make a decision. Usually most of our hiring is done during the summer and the team is always on alert during the summer because in character kindly the teacher turnover is pretty good because in our area we are located in between metropolitan Virginia and the Dare beaches. Many people will come there as a stepping stone to go to either one of the other systems so we do have quite a turnover. So usually most is done during the summer and we have a team always on standby to interview perspective teachers.

Goldie: And the supervision of your personnel and the evaluation of your personnel.

Mr. Leigh: The supervision basically is usually split between myself and the two assistant principals. Usually the tenure teachers--they are supervisors as far as duties and evaluations by the assistant principals. Usually I will only evaluate the non-tenure and the ICP people because we have to spend quite a bit more time with them and we have to make sure these people are up to quality before they reach tenure.

Goldie: Curriculum and instruction.

Mr. Leigh: Curriculum and instruction usually falls on my shoulder. I have been given sort of a release there. We promoted one of the senior English teachers on our faculty. She is now my curriculum coordinator and she works very closely with the department chair with curriculum improvements and curriculum changes that we need and so she takes on the biggest responsibility and she works closely with the other faculty members. They meet quite often to look at curriculum needs and changes and they will bring to me a recommendation. I will read and look over the recommendations very carefully and then we will all sit down and make a decision from there.

Goldie: Do you see yourself as an instructional leader?

Mr. Leigh: Yes, I have to be. There is no doubt about that. I have to be curriculum coordinator for one reason. I guess the principal and the curriculum coordinator have to be sort of a cheer leader, a lot of times motivating the faculty especially when you have a large percent of your faculty that have been teaching for 15 or more years. They're not that ready for change and that is the biggest responsibility motivating and getting the faculty accustomed to change and that is a hard job. And sometimes the veteran teachers are very envious of the new teachers many times because new teachers are very energetic and they are open to change and sometimes we have a little split in the faculty then. Here again I have to try to pull the two back together again and get everyone going in the same direction.

Goldie: How do you deal with the discipline?

Mr. Leigh: It is sort of a relief for me not to have to deal with discipline anymore after having dealt with it for 17 years because basically that was my responsibility. I am a very stanch disciplinarian even though I love the students and I try to spend a lot of time talking with students and being their friend but I try to help them understand that in order for us to provide a learning atmosphere for them we have to have discipline, we have to have respect for each other, respect for the teachers, and respect for the property. We lay out the rules and regulations at the beginning of the year usually when we bring all the students into an assembly and myself and the two assistant principals will talk to them. We try to get them to understand what we expect of them and we lay it on the line if they do not obey they know exactly what is going to happen and usually we do not deviate from that. Many times we start out tough and as the year goes on we can sometimes ease up on some of the restrictions that we have. We have for many years in Currituck County had a dropout problem. Our dropout rate goes up to approximately 8% at one time. Student attendance

was down so I have tried to institute some things that will motivate students to come to school and one thing that we instituted last year for those students who missed two less days during a semester with they would be exempt from their exams. Our attendance rate was at 97% this year. Also our absentee policy, I have tightened up on that. That also has brought the attendance rate up. There are only a few things that are excused such as illness and death in the immediate family or medical appointments. When they are medical appointments we make sure that the students bring a note from the doctor stating that they have the appointment and time that they arrive and leave the office. We got quite a bit of flax from some of the parents in the community but we withstood that and it has all paid off. I try to communicate with the parents. I guess sometimes when students get in high school sometimes parents have a tendency to have less association with the student and the school. We used to have a PTA at the high school but no longer have one because we could not find enough parents who were interested so it has been quite a bit of paper and stamps sending out letters and newsletters to parents. I want to make an effort to communicate with parents since they will not come to us we try to get the information out to them about rule changes and things that we want to do in the school so vandalism and things like that have subsided quite a bit. We're trying to instill some self-esteem in our students, since this is a rural, agricultural community many of our students come from lower income families so we try to do things with them to develop self-esteem and self-pride and take pride in themselves and their school. It has been a hard struggle but we can see some of the results of that.

Goldie: What about transportation?

Mr. Leigh: We have the buses. We probably at the high school have quite a few students who drive there even though it is a rural county and low income. You would not think so if you pulled up on our campus, as a matter of fact we are running out of parking space now. I would say probably about half of the students ride the bus and the other half drive vehicles. Usually at the beginning of the year I would say about 75% of our students will ride the buses but as the weeks go they will find transportation or ride with other students or many times the parents will sacrifice to buy them vehicles even though we can see a recession going on now that has not affected those students because the parking lots are still full. You name the car--they drive them--from Mercedes on down. Because of our location a lot of the parents are military families, a majority of the families work outside of the community usually in the Tidewater Virginia. There is a good percentage of the community that has a pretty good salary.

Goldie: So how far is the school from Norfolk?

Mr. Leigh: Probably about 40 miles or less. The high school is located about midway in the county. I think the longest bus route is probably about 36-40 miles one way.

Goldie: Is one of the assistant principals responsible for the buses?

Mr. Leigh: Yes, he also happens to be a football coach and in charge of the buses and probably about 97% of the discipline.

Goldie: Utilization of funds.

Mr. Leigh: Utilization of funds. I think Currituck County is very fortunate even though we are a small rural county, but I just really do not feel that we get our ample share of money from the state. The local county commissioners have been very good to the school system in Currituck County and we pretty much get what we want. We just installed an IBM computer at the high school last year which was probably about \$50,000 and one of the elementary schools also got the same thing in their lab. Our present high school is 15 years old now and we have so many programs that many small counties do not have because of local monies that is put in the school system.

Goldie: How do you go about when you get the allocation from the county giving this money out?

Mr. Leigh: Usually when I find out what my allocation is I will sit down with department chairs and I will ask each department to work up a budget as far as items that they need, maybe capital outlay, supplies, staff development, and my budget depends on that and if I get what I ask for usually I will have enough to go around. The bigger items usually we rotate from year to year. I think the science department got the biggest share of the money this year. Next year we are looking at giving it to the vocational department because we are starting a new program in the vocational department next year. I tried to give every department at \$1,000 besides the instructional supply money each year. And as the year goes on usually if there is money not used in one area then we try to switch line items to make sure that all of the needs are taken care of. So usually most of the departments are pretty happy and I allowed them many times to make the decision about who gets the largest share so they will know how it feels sometimes to divvy out the money and maybe one department may not get as much as the other so they usually work real well. They will sometimes get together and work it out and it is pretty much taken care of by the time it comes to me. They are very considerate of each other and they do a real good job.

Goldie: How many schools are there in your system?

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Mr. Leigh: There are six schools in the system. Four elementary schools, one junior high and senior high. Of course that makes it better having one high school.

Goldie: Cafeteria management.

Mr. Leigh: That has totally been taken out of the hands of the principal and I am glad of that. We have a central food service supervisor who takes care of the cafeteria and each school has a cafeteria manager and they report directly to the food service manager. But still the principal works very closely with the cafeteria manager and makes sure that they have things even though their budget is separate from ours. If there is anything that we can do we do, so that is one burden that has been taken off the principals in Currituck County.

Goldie: Buildings and grounds.

Mr. Leigh: Buildings and grounds--I have one assistant principal who usually takes care of that. The maintenance staff works directly under him. Any repairs that need to be done he usually makes daily inspections to make sure that everything is up to par. The custodians have the equipment and supplies that they need and they make sure that the lawn is well taken care of and I guess that is another area that we have been giving a reprieve. Last year the county contracted the lawn service to a private company so thank the Lord we don't have that to worry with. The company comes in once a week, does all the grass cutting and the trimming and that really takes a lot of pressure off of us because we have a lot of grass and a lot of open space that we have to keep clean.

Goldie: The community relationship to your school.

Mr. Leigh: The community relationship is not as good as I would like to see it. I would like to see more parent participation. Now community relationships in some other forms is very good the fact that we are the only high school in the county. The high school is sort of the flagship of the community and the building is used for every imaginable thing that you can think of by the people in the community. And we encourage that and we'll try and do other things to get people in the community to come in. We have night classes there. I work with several faculty members of the school and now in the afternoons the school is open for the "Over Fifty" group to come in and walk. Our hallway is sort of a circle and with the weather the way it is now they come in and we open all of the doors and they walk two miles in the halls. Because of that some of those people we have gotten to come in to be school volunteers so we feel the more people that we can get into the school and see what we are doing and just letting them know that we welcome them and we want them in

and we are not ashamed and we are happy to have them in the school. It helps a lot and I think we are seeing a gradual change there. My guest was so long many people in the community because it is a high school and some have been reluctant to come in during the day to see what we are doing and as I go around the community through the churches and other civic organizations I am constantly inviting people in the community to come in and see what we are doing. Come in other times other than football or basketball games or things like that and just feel free to walk around and to see what their tax dollars are doing and what we are doing to educate their children.

Goldie: How much administrative power or control do you think you have over your school site and your responsibilities?

Mr. Leigh: I would feel quite a bit I think because my superintendent and I have worked together for so long and we know each other. I have been pretty much left to run the school the way I feel and the direction that I am going. Many principals may seem to be going in the other direction that they do not have the autonomy that they want or they need. I am really pretty lucky but I do have a superintendent and a Board who have allowed me to as far as curriculum, discipline and other changes that need to take place in the school--have allowed me the control to do that with very little interference at all. So I really feel pretty lucky and sometimes I get a little scared because I do have that much authority. I guess sometimes I get a little worried because I have never really considered myself a boss and I have always tried to work with my faculty as though they were equal to me. I'm not one that really stands behind my teachers and look over their backs every five minutes. They know--I make it clear what I want out of them and they pretty much know that. I'm very soft-spoken and I very seldom get angry and I don't know if they know it or not that I know it but my nickname is "The Gentle Giant". When there is one that gets out of line and does not pull his or her share of responsibility or are not conforming with the rules and regulations, I do not hesitate pulling that person in and sitting down and talking with them and letting them know what I expect of them. I always try to do that in a professional manner and I do not get into those types of conversations with teachers in the hall or in their classrooms or in front of their students but I always try to handle it very professionally. I have not had any teachers to go to the superintendent on me because they felt that I was being unfair or anything like that but I think when I reprimand a teacher they deserve it and they know it. So far they accept that and they are willing to work hard. When I came in and we have to tighten up on the student discipline, we had to get a little tight on the teachers too because I guess over a period of time they had gotten a little lack also and

they were a little nervous at first. They were a little scared because they felt maybe I was on their backs trying to get their jobs but I tried to convey to them that is not what I was trying to do. If we are going to set high expectations for the students then we must set high expectations for ourselves also.

Goldie: How did the desegregation of schools affect your role as principal?

Mr. Leigh: I guess that was the thing that got me hired. It was at a time that schools had not been desegregated that long and at the time Napp was the high school in Currituck County, J.P. Napp High School, and they did not have a Black administrator and probably the Federal government told them that they had to get a Black administrator. As a matter of fact the superintendent told me that when he asked me in and I guess the fact that I had played professional football and with some injuries I had to come out of professional football and I guess because I was well-known in this area.

Goldie: What team were you playing for?

Mr. Leigh: The New England Patriots. I sent applications to all the surrounding areas and it was kind of ironic I got three calls on the same day to come for an interview so I decided for some obvious reason to take Currituck County and I went in and the superintendent was very straight forward and he made the statement that he was looking for a Black administrator because they were under pressure to get one but in getting a Black administrator he wanted someone who he felt that Black students could look up to and have a role model but he also wanted someone that could work with the White teachers and students and be fair to all students. He told me "I know you do not have the experience but if you are willing to give the time I'm willing to work with you. To me that was a challenge and I've always liked challenges and I guess that is why I accepted the position in Currituck. I haven't regretted it so far.

Goldie: When was your school desegregated?

Mr. Leigh: Napp desegregated in 1965.

Goldie: Do you find that there is any difference in the supervision of the Black teachers--you said that you had three? Two?

Mr. Leigh: Two. We have one part-time art teacher who works in the high school.

Goldie: Have you found any problems with those two?

Mr. Leigh: No, I have not. Not at all. The two that I do

have are very young. One is a non-tenure and she should receive tenure this year and the other one, she has probably been working about six years

Goldie: Do you enjoy your job and why?

Mr. Leigh: Well, if you had asked me that last year I would have said no but being the first year it was rough one but yes, I do enjoy the job. It's a very challenging job. It keeps you on the go all the time. It's stressful at times and you sometimes wonder whether or not that is really what you want to do for a long period of time. I guess I enjoy it even though there are times when you have to do things to students that you don't want to have to do but for the benefit of the school and there is a teaching factor. These are the tough things but the rewarding thing is seeing young people get an education and seeing teachers help one-on-one with those students that need that help. Teachers staying after school to work with those students who in other words might "fall through the cracks" and may not make it. It is rewarding when graduation night to have a young person or parent to come to you and hug you and to thank you for all the efforts that you put forth to get their child through school and to have a young person who has graduated from your school and is getting ready to graduate from college come to you and thank you because of your concern and your compassion and your wanting to see them get ahead. They'll say, "thank you for what you've done" or "I've learned a lot from you." Things like that can make all the tough times appreciated and to give you that little extra boost to go on and tackle the next year. When I took the job I told the superintendent I did not want the job for a long period of time but maybe three, four, or five years at the most but you know I look at it--this is my second year and I'm learning more as I go along and the years are coming and going so fast that probably by the time I say that I'm ready to get out it will be time to retire. So, yes, I'm enjoying it. It's a good experience and to go into the various communities and churches and student's homes and talk with them and the parents and to see parents in Norfolk or Virginia Beach or somewhere and you may not know them but they know you and they walk up to you and speak to you and shake your hand. So, it's a good feeling. It's almost sometimes, as the superintendent told me, "You're almost like a celebrity sometimes", and yes, sometimes you can be very much hated also.

Goldie: What do you consider the major problem of your principalship?

Mr. Leigh: My major problem and maybe it is not a problem but it is curriculum and keeping up with curriculum. The various programs that the state is mandating and especially for a small school with the programs that state is mandating.

Funding is a problem. Many times the state will fund it. They will only fund it for two or three years and then local funds have to take over. When they mandate programs that means new facilities which small schools many times cannot afford to add on facilities. It's a challenge and a struggle trying to keep up with the mandates. Finding the facilities, finding the funds to keep them going and probably the biggest problem is keeping the faculty motivated to the various changes of new programs. We are dealing with one right now. We just came through Senate Bill 2 last year and you can imagine a brand new principal having to deal with Senate Bill 2. That was a nightmare and now this year we are working on Tech Prep which we will hopefully get on board next year. We're hoping to add the business strand of Tech Prep and the year after next the Health Occupations and the year after that electronics. So many people are fearful of this because many people in the Vocational Department see Tech Prep as pushing them out of a job and the biggest headache that I am going through right now is trying to convince those people that we are not pushing them out of a job. But what we are going to have to do is redirect them and for many of them will mean additional training and so it is very fearful and especially when many of them have been teaching twenty or twenty-five years and they are looking at possibly being out of a job. I try to reassure them that is not what we are trying to do and trying to get teachers as well as students to see that we are in the technology age and that we in our schools need to change our curriculum to keep up with the changes in society. And we are spending quite a bit of money on staff development trying to motivate teachers and change attitudes. To me that is my biggest problem right now.

Goldie: What do you consider the most rewarding thing about your principalship?

Mr. Leigh: I guess the most rewarding thing is I've always worked with people and have always enjoyed working with people but I guess as the boss I many times have to sit down and talk with people more about indepth things--problems they may be having in the classroom or personal problems. I guess the most rewarding thing is that I get to know more about the people that I am working with and seeing them open up to me and become more comfortable around me and having confidence and trust in me that the things that we say to each other are kept between us and that they are willing to come to me and sit down and talk about the problems that they have. The most ironic thing is the weaknesses that they have been willing to say to the principal--this is one of my weaknesses. Can you help me with it or what can I do to make this better? It is very hard for a lot of people to admit their weaknesses and I convey to them that I have weaknesses also and I have to work constantly on my weaknesses to improve also. I try to let them know that it is not a sin to make a mistake. A lot of teachers are fearful of making mistakes and I let them know

that there is nothing wrong with making a mistake. We all make mistakes. We make mistakes and we pick up and we go on from there. We try to correct the mistakes and hopefully we won't make the same ones again. I guess it is an experience I did not think that I would ever have and it's just been a pleasure. So all the hard work and going to work at 6:00 in the morning and sometimes getting home at 6:00 or 7:00 in the evening and then at night when you stay there for basketball games or a dance and you get home at 1:00 in the mornings. I feel that is what I am there for, to help them. Even though I don't live in that community I have to do things to let the people know that I am still a part of them even though I sleep here I spend more time in Currituck than I do here. They appreciate it. I had a parent to call me today--he called me three times to thank me. A good kid, I mean an A student, got into some trouble and he called me and asked me if I would write a letter to the court and I did and I just happen to know that the judge is a nice person and I talked with the judge and she stated that because of my letter and talking to the judge that her son got off with a warning. She called me three times to let me know how things went and just thanked me for what I did and the fact that I didn't have to do it. I told her that is a part of my job. That is what I am there for. If someone had not have helped me when I was at that point I could be some place else rather than where I am now. The whole thing is just letting people in the community know that I am human. I sometimes think that people look at principals different. They look at them as being infallible, super human, insensitive many times but I go out of my way to let them know that principals feel for people and we make mistakes and we are just like everyone else and our children give us headaches also. I think when you let them know things like that you and the people in the community come closer and many times when students do get in trouble it is easier to talk with parents. One thing that I am confronted with now--a lot of the kids that I am dealing with I taught their parents. That makes it a lot easier because I can go to that kid and say, I know your mother and father and I can call them or I can ride down the road and talk with them. Little things like that keep them in line.

Goldie: I told you that I was interviewing principals from 1964, and 1989. Back in 1964, there were over 200 Black high school principals. I asked Raleigh to send me a list of 1989, and they sent me a list of 41 and of that 41 some of them are principals of alternative schools so that means that there are less than 41. If you knew of a young Black person male or female, that aspired to be a high school principal in the state of North Carolina, what kind of advice would you give them?

Mr. Leigh: You know, I 've had to give that advice probably three times. I have had three students that have gone on to college and my son is one of them, my oldest son who is a

senior in college this year. They have come to me and said I want to be like you. I asked them why do you want to be like me. They said, you're a high school principal, you're a Black high school principal which is a rarity. They have also said we want to be like you because everyone seems to like you. I said, well, give or take a few. They said you are respected. We see the respect that you get here at school and the respect you get from the community and people look up to you and some have even said the material things that you have. The thing that I have told the three students is that hard work is a large part, making the best grades that you possibly can in high school, doing well in college and I guess the number one thing is making sure that is what you want, not because you see that I am a Black principal and I'm pretty successful but you have to make sure that is what you want. The way you perceive the job may not really be the way it is. I tried to sit down with all of them and especially with my son. He has seen the frustrations that I have to go through many times when trying to institute a new program and it doesn't go quite right or you've had a bad day because some parents weren't satisfied with what you have done. But I have just told them and being honest with them many times being in the right place at the right time. I think for me probably one or two of the major things is being able to deal with people, being able to work with people no matter who they are or what color. Being able to deal with people honestly. I guess I'm at a loss of words but just being able to work with people and letting people know that you are willing to work hard. Always go that extra step. When I was a teacher or assistant principal there were things that needed to be done. The principal didn't necessarily tell me to do it but I saw that there were things that needed to be done and I guess I had enough initiative to do those things without being told. Many times I did extra things without pay or looking for a pat on the back. Just doing it because I wanted to do it and because I felt what I was doing was helping someone and I guess that is always the advice I have given people who wanted to be a principal.

Goldie: Do you think that a Black person has to have a so-called sponsor of the other culture?

Mr. Leigh: Oh, most definitely. No doubt about it. I've seen Black administrators lose out because they were not willing to associate with people of the opposite race as far as political functions, social functions. All of those are little things that give you a little nudge up the ladder. It doesn't matter to me whether you are Black or White I think that is a part of the game as many of us call it and then in a county with the population of the Blacks so few, when you associate with people of the opposite culture or when you go to functions like operas, musicals, that sometimes members of our race do not regularly attend, then sometimes we are ostracized by your own race and I tell that to my son and

most students who aspire to be Black administrators. These are times that you make up your mind that is what you want to do and do the things that you feel are going to get you where you want to go and I am very cautious when telling them that you don't step on people going up the ladder. You always treat people with respect and with dignity because you can be a principal or superintendent one day and you can be at the bottom once again so you have to be very careful and I don't think you have to lie, cheat, steal to get these things. I think it is just being honest with people and knowing what you want and willing to work hard to get those things and maybe willing to broaden your horizon as far as social functions and different things that you want to get involved in to get the right people to help you get ahead. That is a part of life.

Goldie: Well, we have come to the end of my interview guide and I want to thank you again for sharing. This has been quite interesting. I can see why your teachers would come to you and share with you. You have a manner about you and a bit of charisma--a mild manner, and the openness lends itself to sharing.

Mr. Leigh: Well, it does and I guess that has been the rewarding thing. In my school, we are small. We have a lot of people very religious community and I guess several years ago I guess I shocked most of them. The class of '86 asked me to give the baccalaureate speech and I guess I developed such a relationship with the students that they would not accept anyone to be the speaker other than myself. I was very nervous because I had never spoken to that type of group before but I did and it was very rewarding. I guess having a religious background and sort of looking toward being in the pulpit I guess I delivered a sermon and a lot of people were very shocked and surprised and happy to know of my religious background and my work in the church. That has helped tremendously because a lot of people feel truly someone that believes in God and a deacon in the church and who works very well in the church and commits a lot of time can't be all bad. I guess since then I've been around to quite a few of the churches and speaking--Black and White. I'm often invited--I'm speaking at a Youth Day Service next Sunday for one of the White churches in the county. I feel that has probably been my biggest PR as principal, being able to go into the community and the churches and talk with the parents and doing my speaking and let them know what type of person I am and what type of school that I want and we try to keep out the drug dealers. I want to create a school environment that is conducive to their child's learning because I want them to have the best education possible. They can relate very well with that. I get a very good response.