

Abigail

Mr.Mike

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Why Did the Learning Community Start?

In Central Falls there are a lot of Latinos and African Americans. They can get an education but, the problem was that most schools that they went to didn't give them a good education because of their color or where they came from. For example, in 2006, only 22% of Latino immigrants passed high school but 83% of whites got their bachelor's degree or higher. Ms. Meg and Ms. Sarah wanted to change that. They wanted to create a school that would give a free education to children with the same quality that wealthy people would pay a lot of money for in a private schools. Tatiana Pina wrote in The Providence Journal that they wanted to open up a charter school for the community of Central Falls and provide an education to the Latino culture. The school first started in 2004, in a YMCA on Roosevelt Ave. in Central Falls, Rhode Island.

Ms. Connolly and Ms. Luciano were working in an agency called Family Services of Rhode Island. They weren't happy with the way other teachers they worked with were teaching Hispanic kids. Ms. Luciano noticed kids graduating from high school when they were 19 or 20 instead of graduating with the rest of their class.

Below is an example of a graph that shows an important reason why The Learning Community started.

Education Levels 2006-2010

BACHELOR DEGREE OR HIGHER	ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE	SOME COLLEGE	HIGH SCHOOL GRAD	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
WHITES-36%	WHITES-9%	WHITES-19%	WHITES-27%	WHITES-9%
BLACK-20%	BLACK-10%	BLACK-20%	BLACK-31%	BLACK-19%
LATINO US-BORN-15%	LATINO U.S-BORN-6%	LATINO U.S-BORN-19%	LATINO U.S-BORN-29%	LATINO U.S-BORN-30%
LATINO IMMIGRANTS-11%	LATINO IMMIGRANTS-4%	LATINO IMMIGRANTS-13%	LATINO IMMIGRANTS-28%	LATINO IMMIGRANTS-44%
ASIAN U.S-BORN-56%	ASIAN U.S-BORN-3%	ASIAN U.S-BORN-14%	ASIAN U.S-BORN-19%	ASIAN U.S-BORN-8%
ASIAN IMMIGRANTS-46%	ASIAN IMMIGRANTS-4%	ASIAN IMMIGRANTS-8%	ASIAN IMMIGRANTS-20%	ASIAN IMMIGRANTS-22%

In 2001 Ms. Meg and Ms. Sarah sent an application to the Board of Education of Rhode Island. They waited three years until they finally got an answer in June saying that they could open the school in September. They only had three months to find a building and enroll 100 students learning in The Learning Community.

So they had to enroll 100 students but the only way they could do it was if they all separated around Central Falls and asked random kids and random parents about how they were liking the school that their child was in or if their child was ready to apply to a different school.

One of the parents was Claudia, a parent of an old LC student when the school first started. She notice that in her job she was being judged by other people who worked with her and

the same was happening to her daughter at school. She wanted a school that would treat her daughter like she's no different than the other students at the school. That's when she found the Learning Community. She loved it. They treated her daughter well and let her have a voice as well as her daughter.

With their first 100 students they started in an old crowded classroom in the YMCA. They had to pack up their things when they finished at the end of the day. Ms. Meg and Ms. Sarah weren't happy with it so they decided to go look for a bigger building.

The first thing that made their minds go wow was when they walked into the very building where the Learning Community stands today. But, when they first walked in it was very, very old and dusty and there was leftover wheelchairs and beds. Everything was just a mess. But, with the help of the Central Falls community they got it all fixed up and ready for the more than 500 people who get educated inside today.

One of the main reason the Learning Community started was for kids to have a voice. The reason why we now have a cafeteria and safe playground is because the school actually listened to what the first Learning Community students had to say. They also have safe doors and safe drills because the school listened to was the parents had to say.

That's why I think the Learning Community started, because it did not only run on the way a normal school does. It ran on the voices of the parents and children. The Learning Community actually listened. This is why the Learning Community started.