

Parents Winners of the Hispanic Heritage School Improvement Shearing of Ideas
Congratulations and thank you so much for your contribution.

Natasha Rivera-LaButhie giving excellent ideas for Whitney Improvement.

Dear Teachers and Staff,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to voice some suggestions on how to improve the school. Let me begin by introducing myself. My name is Natasha Rivera-LaButhie, I am the mother of Hailey and Liana Rivera-LaButhie. We are a fairly large family as this includes my husband (their father) Hector, their younger siblings Angel and Catalina-Noelle and currently my mother their grandmother Carmen Bermudez, living in the same household. Not including their Grandmother Maria, aunt Anna, great aunt Yvette, great grandmother and host of uncles not living with us. This is the first time in my life at 37 years old that I have my mother living with us. She has chosen to sell her home and buy an RV so to show my appreciation to her for all of her parenting and dedication that allowed me to be the woman I am today I opened my doors to her. It has honestly been a pleasure to have her company and wisdom in our home. It has been an honor to still have her with us considering how many family members and friends we have lost in the last year to COVID-19.

With this being said, my background in the community comes from leadership and community service. I sit on the Board of Directors for The Diaper Bank of Connecticut, a nonprofit program that is very near and dear to our family. If you Google images you will find information not only about me but about your students Hailey and Liana. We have been their spokespeople for over 10 years. I was a part of opening the first mental health facility within a grocery store in the nation as I feel mental health is something many people including children suffer from on a daily basis, many mostly in silence. I wanted to change that dynamic and brought that to Stop and Shop on Whalley Avenue in New Haven CT. It was a labor of love much like the birth of the twins who were originally triplets! Yes, they were once triplets. I wanted to be an example to not only my children but to my community in general that need help sometimes and getting help should not be stigmatized in any way. I have worked with NHPS- BOE, The Commissioner of the State of CT, The Commissioner of DCF, The Director of Housing Authority, The Legislation of our state and The Community Foundation of Greater New Haven. I sat as a consortium co-chair for New Haven Healthy Start and continue to assist and support all of these service providers. My reach is broad and that is what I am proposing for the school.

I want to see broadening of horizons for all of the wonderful students attending the school. There are so many nonprofit organizations that can offer assistance to families that we may not know are in need. I feel that most community services are under-utilized. My point is I would like to see some community organizations invited to allow families access to these programs our city has to offer. I understand that COVID is a concern, but we can still have an event with covid considerations on the school property for

parents and families to attend. I want to make sure that families have services and supports that can help them at home as the school is already taking care of the children. Even if an event on a large scale may not be approved being able to have flyers or information and schedule voluntary zoom meetings can be arranged. When we look at concerns on the television we see a need for food, diapers, internet access, clothing, employment and I feel Eli Whitney can be a liaison for that by simply providing the information.

Additionally, I want to see more parent involvement. My daughter Hailey is on the Volleyball team and what an amazing team it is! I have never really been into sports but wow the team is amazing!! We need more parent involvement. Perhaps having the media and production students record the games especially those that are not home games would be not only enriching to the production students but with a private link, a way for working families to watch and support their children in the sport. Perhaps finding a way for parents to volunteer on the various afterschool program teams could also be not only helpful to the school but a way for parents to be involved and see first-hand what their children are doing. I work for the Yale Cancer Center Clinical Trials office and with having other children I miss games to be home with them but would love the opportunity to watch a game on my downtime at home.

I would love to be able to buy Eli Whitney apparel to support the school, there's an opportunity here for children to have a drawing contest and have a t-shirt made with funds going directly to the program they are representing. The fact that the school is open and sharing in our various cultures is beautiful. Let's expand on that idea! We can do an international foods potluck dinner. Bring a dish from your Native Country or that represents one of your cultures. We are a family that is extremely rich in culture as we are Taino and Cherokee Native American, (Puerto Rican), African American, and Filipino. We live in the United States, let's expand on this idea of unity amongst one another and share in the culture and ideas of all just as you are doing with Black and Hispanic heritage months. While I understand this is a technical school, let's not forget where we all came from, what has worked in the past. Things like building a diorama of their island or state with all of its greatest features. Create a display in the school created by the students of items found in their Native countries or states. Have them do presentations on them. There is so much time spent on simple essays that get read to such a small audience often times, simply the instructor, that are brilliant that the rest of the school never gets to hear! Let's expand on that, let's open-up zoom presentations for all to watch and hear.

We live in the era of technology, and you have the means let's make it our job as a school to show the state and the nation what Eli Whitney is about and what it has to offer.... If funding is an issue, you can do a payment for access on zoom. The family or person pays and gets access to the link to watch. There are a myriad of ways to accomplish this, without an extreme expense and yes, by all means I'm also offering my strengths and abilities to make it work! I'm a lead by example type of parent and if that means I need to come in and make the connections between organizations and the school I'm all for it. I'm prepared to bring the community to the school if its open to it.

What I see today is violence and illness being spread on social media, news and across the globe. Let's change that status quo into something other schools can expand on. Nothing is impossible if you have a team big or small willing to do the work. I push my children beyond their limits on a daily basis, why? If I

want to change what I see it has to start at home. If I don't push them in the right direction, someone will most certainly push them into the wrong direction. It starts with us the people setting their foundations! I can name teachers in elementary school that left a lasting impact on my life. Middle school, high school and even in college. I want us to be that for these students. I want them to be truly interested in what they are doing. I want it to become more than just schoolwork, I want their school teachings to become hobbies, those hobbies to become careers! I have a homebased business. For those unaware I created a business for Hailey as well. She had an interest I expanded on her idea we now have a boutique in Valencia Florida. Was it hard work? Yes, it took almost two years, but we made it. What she has learned is priceless. I feel that these suggestions will help us keep these kids busy after school. After school is such a critical time, especially now. These kids are in the streets, stealing cars, fighting, they are discussing juvenile justice changes. As leaders in their future and foundation we need to step up and do more. This idea of teaching a person to fish never gets old! I can bet if we taught young men mechanics they would be changing breaks for legitimate cash on their down time as opposed to stealing cars. Teach these young ladies to make a clothing line or cosmetology they will be invested in making money charging friends for manicures and not in the streets chasing ideals and dreams that are reality. Teach these children how to create a business and see them fully invest in themselves, we will see a decrease in crime and an increase in graduation rates. I have seen myself complain about children not knowing how to change breaks, change a tire, balance a check book or how to keep good credit but where are the actual hands-on experiences? Where is the parental involvement? How are you involving parents and guardians and holding them accountable to help you the staff and teachers? I realize that this is more of a dialogue than an essay ,but my point is, we can do more. Let's bring the resources to the family and see where it goes. This isn't just about holding the school accountable to the community its about holding the community the school is in accountable for its residents and students! We can offer them the world of course, but if we don't invite them to participate, we can't expect a positive outcome.

Please do feel free to reach out any time and let me know what I can do to be more involved. How can I help fund-raise. How can I bring resources? What can I do to be an asset to the school just as my twins are? I guess my question to Eli Whitney what are the needs? What are unmet requests? I put this on Eli Whitney, you have someone stepping up to ask you the same question you are asking me.... What can I do to help improve Eli Whitney?

Respectfully,

Natasha Rivera-LaButhie

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Alumni Gabriel Falu share his story and gives some ideas for improvement.

Good morning,

I like to start by sharing a little bit of history on my part. I am the young father of Gabriela Falu. Born in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, and a proud American. I came to the states in the year 1998. In the year 2002, my mother signed me in to Eli Whitney. In her mind, I was living life a little too quick. My life as a student was not the best, I had to take the only shop that had opening at that time, and that was Machine Tech. I started working pretty early in life to take care of a family of three. I left home at the age of 14 yrs. old. But even with all these extreme conditions I never left school. I remember my teacher Mrs. Perez, what a tough guy! But what a great teacher. Little did he know he prepared me for life. I thank him for never giving me an easy pass. Teachers like him are few and far between, but I really appreciated his strong will. I remember when I finally was close to graduating and did not have the money to pay for my class dues. I figured making sure that my kid had a plate of food and a roof over his head was much more important than to go celebrate with my classmates. But not him. He told me that he will pay for the fees so that I can make the graduation in my cap and gown. He explained to me that just getting the diploma was my greatest accomplishment but that walking on the stage with my classmates will put the cherry in the top of the cake. This would be the one thing that launched my life ahead in the right way. He was right. For that single reason I insisted that my daughter when to Eli Whitney because I knew that she, like me, would benefit from the great advantage of not only having a diploma but also a certification on her desired shop.

I personally think that Eli Whitney is a great school and that not much is needed to increase the already great experience that my daughter is having. But I still would like to share some suggestions to

the school that I not only think would help the students, but also the teachers. This idea would also be a great lead to follow by other schools and education programs.

In today's time we are faced with the overwhelming era of technology. Everything that we do is some how connected to the internet in some shape or form. The new way of social life is thru a computer or a phone. People no longer talk face to face or even socialize in a form that can take away the technology. Now, I'm not against technology. I think that we would never have made it as far as we have without the internet. However, with that being said, we need to remember that we are human and that we need each other to be able to keep evolving.

I propose that each kid in your classrooms write an essay about a complete stranger in the school. This can be done after a brief interview of one another. This will help each student meet new people that maybe otherwise would have never occurred. Questions like where are their ancestors from? Do they have a different culture that they follow? Who is their close family member? Where is the rest of their family located? How often they see them? The selection of the individual must be random and not from some one that they already know. The essay could count as a grade or extra points towards their lowest grade. This essay should be mandatory and have the choice of being anonymous to other students, but not to the teacher. The assignment should be typed, and spell checking should be strictly enforced. This assignment should be done thru the entire school grade (9th 10th 11th and 12th). And maybe done at least 2 to 4 times per month. This will depend on the teacher's available time to read this extra material.

The idea came to me after I notice how my kids spend so much time texting each other and when they have to speak someone, they are so shy and don't speak loudly or at all. This results in the total opposite from what the new culture tells you. Now in days people have thousands of friends on

Facebook, and not one in real life. When they do have a friend in real life, they spend their time texting and when face with the opportunity to talk face to face they are at a loss for words.

I think that integrating these essays will also help students with their typing/writing abilities. This is a very useful tool that will serve them the key to a successful college experience and even more important, adulthood. Being able to associate with others without the use of a phone or internet will improve their communication skills.

Thank you for taking the time to read my essay on this idea that, in my own opinion, could help our students that will be the future of this world. I hope that my idea will be shared with others and maybe one day even implemented in this school and others across the state. Maybe country.

How To Improve Eli Whitney



By Madeline Rodriguez

When I sit and think to myself as a parent, “What can I share to make this school a better place?” I don't think of better computers, or better comfortable chairs to sit in for 6+ hours a day. My main concern is for a better school environment and for the best for our children's future. The one thing that keeps playing in my head is how hard it's been for our youth these last 2 ½ years with covid and this pandemic. How extremely hard it is for them to try and play catch up in academic work and keep a good grade average with all the changes they have faced. How hard it was to miss their friends and crave that physical contact, for many children going to school and socializing was their only outlet. Learning math, science, history, languages, and their chosen shops are cool and all and very much needed to succeed, but without a strong Mental health and support system things can go downhill for them and fast.

- I suggest the school teach our children that mental health is important to talk about. It's important for them as individuals and as they continue to grow into adulthood to find help or support when needed.
- I suggest for All employees of the school, not just social workers and therapists, have the training to better educate them of how crucial good mental health for our children is. For them all to learn how to better help these students succeed and most importantly not feel alone. With those training to learn what to look for as red flags in our children's behaviors, and strategies to help them.
- I suggest having a class or seminar once a month to reinforce positive behaviors and decision-making. Teach them that physical and mental health go hand in hand for their own successful future. Help them build healthy ways to cope with stressful situations especially while living during these uncertain and difficult times.

I truly believe if the school helps build and help all students have a better understanding of mental health, you are giving these students **ALL** the necessary tools to face any challenge in their lives while creating and building stronger **LEADERS** for our future.

Sincerely,
Mrs.Rodriguez

Jesenia Correa talk about innovative ways of teaching. (Spanish Essay)

Yo pienso que la tecnología debe de estar al servicio de la educación y ser un instrumento fundamental para mejorar su calidad. No se ha tenido claro que la educación es el motor fundamental para salir de la pobreza, pero que está muy relacionado con aspectos económicos, sociales y culturales. Hay muchos maestros que se enojan al explicarle a un alumno que el español es su segundo idioma. Esa o ese profesor tiene que sentirse bien orgulloso de enseñarle ese idioma para el bienestar y futuro de ese estudiante, que algún día llegará a ser alguien bien reconocible en este mundo. Yo siento que con esta pandemia muchos maestros no quieren dedicarles el tiempo extra para ayudar a los alumnos que tienen dificultad, debido a las tantas cosas que han pasado en este último año, los alumnos se sienten solos sin interés de estudiar están aburridos. Deben de hacer más actividades o hacer que el estudiar sea más divertido para que ellos se motiven a aprender; como, por ejemplo: actividades de ejercicios al aire libre en Estudios Sociales. También con las matemáticas hay millones de maneras enseñarla y hacerla divertida, porque se trabaja con números. Y todo en esta vida tiene que ver con números, absolutamente todo. Y así al estudiante se le hará divertido el estudio y se enfocarán diariamente en eso. Mi hija Doralis Contreras no sabe español ella tomó español en Hamden High pero todo fue cuando empezó la pandemia y la maestra no le enseñó casi nada nunca tenía tiempo para explicarle, ella daba la tarea y se desconectaba pero en mi casa tratamos de hablar más español y ella ve películas en inglés con subtítulo en español o viceversa; pero la educación es algo muy importante en la vida!! Y todo tenemos que trabajar juntos para que sea todo un éxito. Esto es todo lo que pienso yo, ya que tengo 6 niños de la edad de 14-4 y debo de hacer el aprendizaje divertido para que se motiven y aprendan sin dificultad. Esto es todo lo que tengo en mente. Espero que sirva de algo suerte ..

Improvements in the school By Sandra Carrillo **(Spanish) you can use the translator feature to translate the message. Thanks.**

Buenos días Mi nombre es Sandra Carrillo y soy Madre de Emerson Medina de 10th

En mi opinión para mejorar la Escuela es volver a hacerla competitiva académicamente y en deportes, que los jóvenes se sienten orgullosos de ser Buos de Eli Whitney.

Mi primo se graduó en el 99 y le dio muchos premios en soccer a la escuela y me cuenta que iban a otros estados o escuelas a competir en deportes y shops.

Es importante sacar a los jóvenes de su zona de confort (video juegos y celular) mostrarles la importancia de ser activos y competitivos , motivarlos con premios o buenas notas por su colaboración y motivación sin perder de vista la disciplina y las normas de la escuela

Mi hijo por ejemplo desde que entró a Eli tiene el sueño de crear un club de ajedrez y juegos de mesa pero aunque lo ha comentado a un maestro no le han dado respuesta.

Creo sería bueno hacer un encuesta por salón a cada niño y ver en qué disciplina les gustaría participar (claro hay que darles opciones ya que por el desinterés que presentan hay que ayudarles a descubrir sus talentos)

Tener un tiempo a la semana para desarrollo personal ya que muchos jóvenes están pasando momentos difíciles con su familia o simplemente tienen etapas de depresión o no se sienten aceptados por sí mismos.

Mi hijo adora la escuela, incluso yo intenté mudarme este verano pero me insistió mucho en que le permita graduarse de Eli Whitney, y el me comenta que algunos de sus compañeros muestran desinterés por el sistema repetitivo de las clases o la poca interacción con los maestros.

Para entender a los niños y jóvenes hay que ser como uno de ellos hay que ponerse su camisa y sus zapatos !!!!

Espero mi opinión le sea de ayuda

Feliz dia

Sandra

Clemente Hernandez wrote about improvement in school

Hola mi nombre es Clemente Hernández y mi hija actualmente estudia el décimo grado

Realmente es un poco complicado en dar ideas a una institución como Eli Whitney,

Ya que es una escuela en mi entendimiento algo sólido en educación,

Mi primera idea es:

- Invitar a los padres de los estudiantes a

un estar más relacionados con la

educación de nuestros hijo y darnos ideas

De lo que está pasando, porque

muchas veces no sabemos que están

estudiando, recibir ideas de cómo

animar a nuestros hijos para que cada

día ellos se levanten con ganas de ir

a la escuela.

- Recibir información de cómo ayudar a

nuestros hijos sociológicamente

Para platicar con ellos acerca de esta

Pandemia,

- Finalmente nos gustaría conocer más

Los maestros y conocer más la

Institución, para que nosotros tengamos

Algo de idea para animar a nuestros hijos

De siempre estudiar cada día.

conocer programas de estudio

Que puedan ayudar a nuestros

estudiantes,

Muchas gracias

Clemente Hernández

Elida Rivera giving idea about Heritage Celebrations.

Good Morning

A good Idea on how to Improve the school for Hispanic Heritage celebration would be to bring the culture in the school, maybe have the kids bring an item to school that resembles where they come from, talk about experiences they have lived if they have visited the country. Or maybe a field trip to a city where all these hispanics mix up like NYC.

Thank you all the parents participating, send us your ideas Eli Whitney

is your school and if we do better, you do it as well.