GRADES 6–12 / CIVICS, SOCIAL STUDIES & LITERACY

William Raheem Smallwood

Mentorship, Sankofa, and Youth Civic Voice

First and Last Name _____ Date _____

CENTRAL QUESTION

HOW DOES MENTORSHIP HELP YOUNG PEOPLE FIND AND USE THEIR CIVIC VOICE?

Objective

Analyze five sources of Smallwood's work in and around Paterson. Compare the roles adults and young people played, trace the smoke shop ordinance, and evaluate what the records show about impact.

Demonstration of Learning

Complete 15 selected response questions and use Sources D and E and at least one of Sources A–C in a RACE response. Explain one evidence limit and name a record that could address it.

Standards

NJSLS Social Studies 6.3.8.CivicsPD.3
NJSLS ELA RI.CR.6.1 and W.AW.6.1
Common Core RH.6–8.1, RH.6–8.6, and WHST.6–8.1

New Jersey Amistad connection

Study African American civic agency in local New Jersey history through mentorship, public deliberation, and youth participation.

Career background

Smallwood is a licensed social worker and a graduate of Paterson's John F. Kennedy High School and Ramapo College. He spent 35 years in school based youth services and has more than 40 years in civic activism focused on inner city youth. Retired from the State of New Jersey, he continues his advocacy through Sankofa Leadership Academy, his 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and works closely with Montclair State University's Project COPE.

Sources A–E are paraphrased. Cite by letter.

DAY 1 / SOURCE A

Mentorship before a public decision

Do Now

What should a person consider before taking a public position on an issue?

Read and annotate

Paterson Public Schools, The Paterson Post, October 30, 2020, pp. 5–6 • Classroom paraphrase

1. In fall 2020, Eastside High School football players in Paterson faced a decision about what to do during the national anthem before a game against Passaic. Head Coach James Magazine invited William Raheem Smallwood, whom the district newsletter identified as a local social worker, to speak at the team’s final practice before the opener.

2. Smallwood encouraged players to think through the position they were considering and understand why they held it. He discussed racial injustice and drew attention to the achievements of Eastside alumni. The invitation gave students a chance to consider the meaning of their actions before deciding how to respond publicly.

3. The district newsletter describes the preparation and reports that several players found the talk inspiring. Those accounts show how some students responded at the time. The article does not follow the players over time or measure how much the talk shaped any one student’s decision.

Reading focus

Underline the action taken. Mark any place where the source describes a goal, a reaction, or a result. Label which kind of evidence it provides.