



United Federation of Teachers  
A Union of Professionals

From UFT.org (<http://www.uft.org>)

## Move to the front of the class

Program starts high school students on road to becoming teachers

By Dorothy Callaci | Published May 12, 2011



*Photos by Miller Photography*

**Today the quintet heads for class in preparation for having classrooms of their own tomorrow.**



**Students in the Today's Students, Tomorrow's Teachers program at Bronx Academy of Health Careers (from left) Granville Springer, Shamar Bailey, Elijah Antoin, Isaiah Peay and Shaquille Mualimmak meet with mentors — guidance counselor Alani Barnabus (right) and Jessica Hilton-Reader, the regional program manager — to discuss their progress.**

Inspired by outstanding teachers, five young men — students at the Bronx Academy of Health Careers — have set their sights on becoming teachers themselves.

Tenth-grader Shaquille Mualimmak wants to follow in the footsteps of his 5th-grade history teacher, David Varenne from PS 3.

“He was so creative,” he said. “I remember so much because he incorporated real life experiences, including using toy soldiers to depict battles.”

Eleventh-grader Isaiah Peay hopes to inspire students to become scientists some day because of “Mr. Will,” his 5th- and 8th-grade science teacher at IS 174.

As handpicked members of Today's Students, Tomorrow's Teachers, a school-based mentoring program aimed at recruiting culturally diverse and economically challenged 9th-grade students who are interested in becoming teachers, the five boys at Bronx Academy are on their way to realizing their goals.



United Federation of Teachers  
A Union of Professionals

From UFT.org (<http://www.uft.org>)

Through four years of high school and four more in college, the program will encourage and support them by providing mentoring, tutoring, free SAT preparation and career counseling. In addition, the program will pay for half the participants' college tuition — “an eye-popper,” says Shaquille.

It's a sweet incentive for all the boys, with statistics that show the 13-year-old program is working. For students under the wing of Today's Students, Tomorrow's Teachers, the admission rate to college is 96 percent with a 70 percent graduation rate. The program has produced more than 110 graduates who are now teachers.

Today's Students, Tomorrow's Teachers currently mentors 500 students in Connecticut, Virginia and New York State. This year, 30 New York City students are enrolled in the program in three public schools and one charter school.

At Bronx Academy, guidance counselor Alani Barnabus mentors the five young men and gives whatever support and guidance is necessary to ensure they make the grade — a B+ average by their senior year. She meets with them regularly and oversees the required tutoring that they are expected to receive throughout the school year and over the summer.

College visits — to make concrete what the future promises — are another key component of the program. The Bronx group recently visited Pace University and Manhattanville College, two of the more than 20 colleges and universities partnering with the program.

Tenth-grader Shamar Bailey acknowledges that he's easily distracted but he's working on it because he is determined to get to college and eventually to the classroom to become a history teacher. As Jessica Hilton-Reader, a regional program manager and graduate of the program, reminds the students, “You have to stay focused.”

“We do what we have to when they need a push,” Barnabus said. She helps them become college-ready by making sure they all take more core credits than the state requires and by keeping them focused on their academic standing so they will be “a shoo-in” when it comes time to apply for college.

To get at the mystery of what makes a great teacher, each boy shadows a teacher. The five young men share their discoveries at regular group meetings and have plenty to say about what they will and won't incorporate into their own teaching techniques.

Elijah Antoin warned against “going too fast” while others counseled against letting kids get away with “stuff” or being “too friendly.” For Granville Springer, it's all about caring. “You have to go over to kids and make sure they're working, like Mr. Palazzo does. And talk to them at the end of the period.”



*Photo by Miller Photography*  
**Math teacher Jude Adeniji works out an algebraic problem with students, while student Isaiah focuses on teaching techniques**