

SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM SUMMER 2012 PROJECT DIRECTORS MEETING

KEYNOTE

Biography of

Dr. Luis F. Cruz

Dr. Luis F. Cruz is currently the proud Principal of Baldwin Park High School, a school located in the Baldwin Park Unified School District approximately 20 miles east of Los Angeles. Several years ago, Dr. Cruz joined Dr. Anthony Muhammad's leadership and consulting company, New Frontier 21, as an educational consultant and has since been traveling around the country showcasing the work that is collectively transforming Baldwin Park High School into an organization closing the achievement gap and "saving student lives". As a result, Dr. Cruz has also gained notoriety as a passionate and motivating public speaker and educational consultant in the United States. His combination of enthusiasm, humor, practical application and sincere zest for student achievement has catapulted Dr. Cruz to become one of the most sought after "rising stars" in the profession.

Dr. Luis F. Cruz has been a teacher and administrator at the elementary, middle school and high school levels and has achieved notable recognition as a leader who vehemently strives to ensure organizations realize that all students can and must be successful in schools. In 2007, Dr. Cruz led a collective effort to secure a grant of \$250,000 for Baldwin Park High School from the California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP) for the purpose of effectively utilizing "*Courageous Leadership*" in an effort to promote a more equitable and effective organization. As a recipient of the Hispanic Border Leadership Institute's fellowship for Doctoral Studies (a fellowship focused on funding doctoral studies for those identified as leaders in the Latino community), Dr. Cruz graduated from the University of California at Riverside with a Ph.D in Institutional Leadership and Policy Studies in 2009.

Dr. Luis F. Cruz, a self-proclaimed lifetime student of leadership both in theory and practice, has achieved notable recognition as a leader throughout his professional life. As an undergraduate student at California State University, Fullerton in 1992, Dr. Cruz was recognized as a student leader by both his peers and a respected body of professors. In addition, the Sociology Department at Cal State Fullerton identified Dr. Cruz as an innovator and leader for having created the Sociology Student Association, a student organization focused on practicing Sociology outside of the classroom. Since becoming a public school educator, Dr. Cruz has been the recipient of awards such as the new teacher of the year, teacher of the year, administrator of the year and various other community leadership acknowledgements. Recently, Dr. Cruz and a committee of teacher leaders at Baldwin Park High School received California's prestigious Golden Bell Award from the California School Boards Association for significantly closing the achievement gap between the general student population and students learning English as a second language.

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A native from Los Angeles and oldest son of immigrant parents from South America, Dr. Cruz attributes his academic success to both his parents and teachers who despite all odds provided him with the necessary combination of will and skill to excel academically. In addition to earning his Doctoral Degree from the University of California at Riverside, Dr. Cruz earned an Associate in Arts Degree from Mount San Antonio Community College, a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from California State University, Fullerton, and a Master's Degree in Education from Claremont Graduate University.

Dr. Luis F. Cruz passionately believes that educators today are in the business of saving student lives! Keeping in mind that research makes clear that students who successfully graduate from high school and earn a college degree literally live longer than those students who do not, schools therefore must ensure all students learn! Dr. Cruz seeks to share with schools and educators throughout the United States the skill set and practices that he himself has implemented as an educational leader for the purpose of successfully ensuring all students learn. Dr. Cruz is thoroughly convinced that poverty, English as a second language and other excuses for why students do not learn must and can be overcome mainly because students and their families are depending on our schools to secure healthy and fulfilling lives for all students. Therefore, it is with a determined and optimistic demeanor that Dr. Luis F. Cruz looks forward to initiating a revolution that will transform all schools to institutions that deliver on their promise to ensure all students learn!

Dr. Luis F Cruz has traveled throughout the United States motivating and providing educators with the necessary knowledge to successfully ensure all students learn with presentation such as:

Successfully Embracing the need to Change: Why and How Schools Must Change to Ensure Optimal Learning for all Students.

How a Public School Administrator Helped Nurture a Collective Focus on Saving Lives: Implementing a Professional Learning Community in the Barrio!

Police Organizations Have SWAT Teams, Schools Have "The Task Force": How a Collective Effort by Adults can make a Positive Difference for all Students.

Embracing the Challenge of Empowering Latino Schools: How Schools are Beating the Odds and Ensuring Poor, English Learner Latino Students Learn.

Why Adults on a Campus Determine the Fate of Students: Understanding Dr. Anthony Muhammad's Recipe for Transforming a Schools Culture.

How a Professional Learning Community addresses the needs of English Learners.

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