

# David Banks

PRINCIPAL AND FOUNDER

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David Banks, principal and founder of Eagle Academy in New York, has been featured in *Time Magazine* and *Newsweek* for his achievements in the education of young people. Before Eagle Academy, Banks founded and served as principal for 7 years at the Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice.

When asked about his passion, Banks says that it is about helping young people with their goals and dreams. "Helping young men, in particular, is my passion," Banks says. "Adults have to figure out better ways to help young people become successful." Banks hopes that Eagle Academy will be a model for others across the country.

Eagle Academy is an all-boys high school that focuses on mentoring by making sure all students have mentors. The mentors are accomplished leaders within the NY community. David Banks has been principal for 10 years. He feels pride and a sense of contribution when young people come back to Eagle Academy to share what they have done in their lives. He sees the impact of his work on students daily – he sees their lives transform.

In his personal life, David feels proud to have been blessed with a family of his own and a mother and father who were involved and nurturing. He shares, "The same standards my parents had for me are what I apply to my own children. I am consistent in all arenas."

Banks has worked with young people most of his life in some form. One year, while on vacation in the Dominican Republic, he reflects; "God's voice spoke to me and told me to work in education with young people so I went back to school for a Master's Degree in Education Administration and Supervision".

Banks attributes his success to the mentors he has had throughout his life. His father, he says had the greatest influence on him. His father always stressed, "Do the best



you can". Banks recalls that his parents said going to college was non-negotiable for him.

Banks has also had several other mentors who provided him with various insights – "different windows into a particular venue." Banks commented that through his mentors he was able to see things from different perspectives.

He particularly remembers experiences with a mentor who was a friend of his family, Bill Lockett. During visits to Banks' home during his teenage years Lockett would challenge Banks' thinking. "Mr. Bill Lockett would always make me think deeper." Because of that experience, Banks now probes his own children and the youth he works with. He sees an intrinsic value in developing the mental capacity of youth, especially their critical thinking skills.

David Banks wants everyone to know that Eagle Academy is not just another school. Rather, it is a national movement to save our boys. There are plans underway to establish four more Eagle Academy's in New York and it is already serving as a prototype that is being modeled in several other cities across the nation. **UIM**