



Public Schools of Plainfield New Jersey

Office of Community Engagement Liaison

Gloria Montealegre, MPA
1200 Myrtle Avenue
Plainfield, NJ 07063
(908) 731-4333 Fax: (908) 731-4336

CIVIL RIGHTS ATTORNEY DR. AMIR WHITAKER AND FORMER PLAINFIELD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WILL BE THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT PLAINFIELD HIGH SCHOOLS' GRADUATION

June 21, 2020 – Dr. Amir Whitaker, Plainfield High School graduate and civil rights lawyer, founder of the Project KnuckleHead, a nonprofit organization for the empowerment of youth, will be the keynote speaker at Plainfield High School's graduation on Monday.

Dr. Whitaker who is often referred to as "Dr. KnuckleHead," will speak about his experience as a Plainfield High School student and the challenges he faced growing up for not listening to authority. His troubles led him to getting expelled from school and getting arrested at the age of 15. But this is not a story of failure, but of success.

Dr. Whitaker was able to turn his life around and went on to complete five college degrees. He received his doctorate in Educational Psychology from the University of Southern California, juris doctorate from the University of Miami, and his bachelor's degrees from Rutgers University.

Dr. Whitaker is currently a policy attorney with the ACLU of Southern California and researcher with the UCLA Civil Rights Project. He is the current board chair for the Arts for Incarcerated Youth Network in Los Angeles, a collaborative of 12 organizations providing arts programming to incarcerated youth. He has negotiated settlements and policy changes that have improved the lives of thousands of youth across the United States.

Dr. Whitaker is a former teacher and has held teaching certifications in Florida, California, and New Jersey.

Dr. Whitaker will be featured in the program during the streaming of PHS Virtual Graduation starting at 1:00 p.m. A link will be posted on the District website moments before the event.

For more information, please email gmontealegre@plainfield.k12.nj.us

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