

Dr. Jason Irizarry is a professor at the University of Connecticut. He studies the academic achievement of Latino students and other students of color. He is concerned about the lack of **representation** of these students at our universities. In other words, he worries that there aren't enough students of color (*definition/synonym*) who go to college. Dr. Irizarry has found that one reason for this is that many students of color do not take the **prerequisite** advanced courses that are needed to get into college (*definition/synonym*). To help solve this problem, he has been working with high school students to prepare them to take the **mandated** courses, such as algebra and biology (*example*). Dr. Irizarry also helps these students with college applications and provides opportunities for them to visit colleges.

Ms. Madeline Negrón is the principal at Windham Middle School in Windham, Connecticut. She has a similar **perspective** to Dr. Irizarry. Her viewpoint (*definition/synonym*) is that it is **critical** -- very important -- (*definition/synonym*) for all students to get a good education. She is an advocate for all of the students in her school and knows that a good education is essential in order to better their lives. Ms. Negrón was raised and educated in Windham, Connecticut herself. She sets an example for all of her students and often reminds them that they have to work hard in order to succeed. She tells them that if she could do it, so can they. Ms. Negrón has stayed in her community to help students like herself become educated and succeed as she has.

Both Dr. Irizarry and Ms. Negrón believe that the **function, or purpose** (*definition*), of school is to prepare students to carefully **analyze** what they see, hear, and read. For example, students should learn how to think carefully about what they read on the internet (*example and definition/synonym*). They also believe that students need to be given the opportunity to think for themselves (*general*) and to **interpret** new information in meaningful ways. They are both taking **constructive** steps to make sure that all students have equal opportunities in schools. Educating teachers, motivating students, and working with the community are some of the steps (*example*) they are taking to help improve schools for everyone.

What do you think? What have your school experiences been like? How have these experiences **affected, or impacted** (*definition/synonym*) you? What could schools do to help all students learn more?