

NJISJ Exec Visits NBCS



On Thursday, the Executive Director of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, Ryan Haygood made good on a promise to the students earlier in the year. As Haygood received his 2017 Rainbow Award, he told the Chorus he intended to visit with them at the school. He wanted to share some of the major issues the Institute was addressing in New Jersey that could effect young men of color. The students were keenly interested in learning from this former All-American football star, attorney and intense social advocate.

Haygood's message was simple and direct, after 150 years in existence Jamesburg State Prison for juvenile boys should close!

"Not only is our current youth incarceration system plagued by unacceptable racial disparities, but it is also extraordinarily expensive (costing more than \$200,000 per year to incarcerate each child); it hinders our young people's development; and it does not advance public safety," stated Haygood. On June 28, the 150th Anniversary of the prison, NJISJ will hold a rally in front of the structure as a kickoff to its campaign to develop alternate juvenile justice strategies that would lead to community-based interventions aimed at helping our youth. The students asked many questions about this program and the young men who were incarcerated there.

The students also asked Haygood why and how he became a lawyer. "I had to make decisions all the time: to stay home and study while my friends played, to do research in the library which was hard for me," continued Haygood. "How many of you watched the NBA Finals last night?" Most of the students raised their hands. "Well LeBron James is a terrific and gifted athlete, 6' 9" and 270 lbs but he would be nothing if he did not spend thousands of hours in the gym practicing. It is the same for any profession. You must spend the time. Some say that to be successful in any career it takes a minimum of 10,000 hours of work. Pick your career, path stay with it, and work hard," concluded Haygood.

In thanking Mr. Haygood, Brian Delgato reflected on the program with, "we really appreciated the time you spent with us this morning. My classmates and I learned a great deal about you and the work of the Institute. Thanks!"

Ulysses Morris, the NBCS Academic Director summed it all up, "it was an outstanding experience for our students. They were moved by Mr. Haygood's comments and learned some very valuable lessons. We are all grateful that Mr. Haygood took the time to visit our school. We will support him in any way we can."

