"Together, Unequal"

Racism and Inequity in the South Orange Maplewood School District

By Carson Cummins

December 9th, 2020

TOGETHER, UNEQUAL

RUTGERS
Institute for Women's Leadership

The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to *practice* leadership *through* action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women's Leadership's website at http://iwl.rutgers.edu.

01 The Problem

South Orange-Maplewood, New Jersey

Fig. 1: Map of NJ (Wikimedia)

- My Hometown

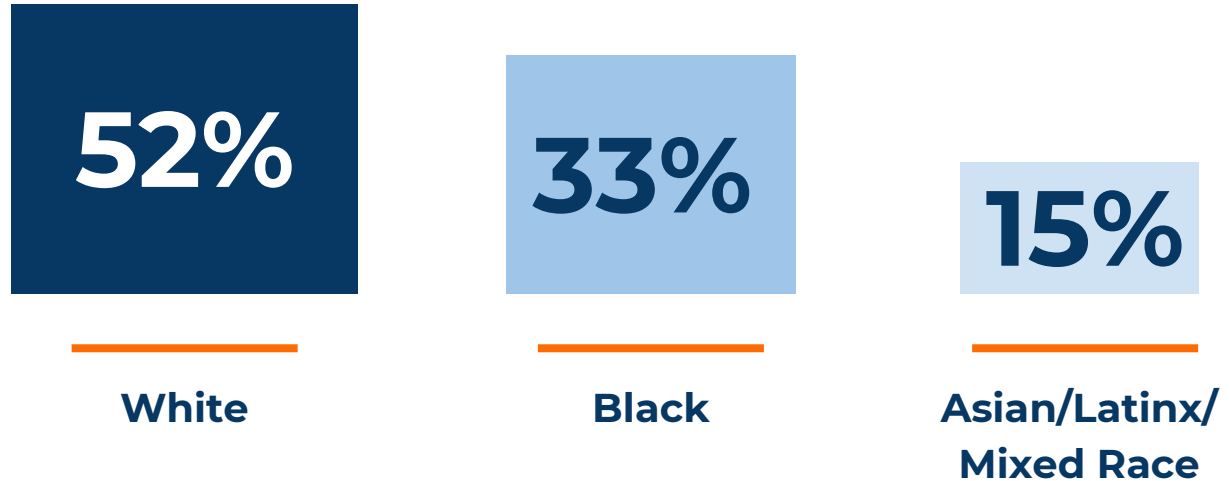- Essex County

- SOMA or MAPSO

- Liberal/ Progressive

- Diverse

A Suburb Believed in Liberal Ideals. Then Came a New Busing Plan.

A school district confronts its segregated school system.

The Reality

5.3x

Times more likely Black students are to be suspended than white students

64%

Percentage of AP students who are white

3

Number of grades, on average, Black students are behind white students academically

SOMSD Racial Demographics

02

The Project

Better understand the problem

Why are our schools so inequitable?

Inspire other activists

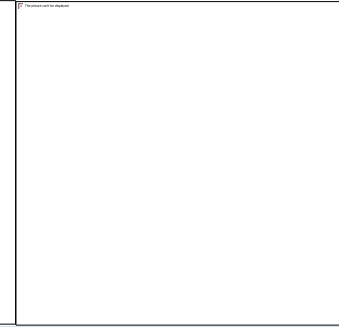**You** can fix your schools, too.
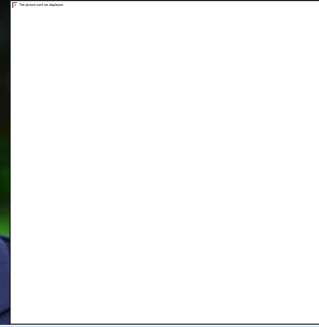
**Develop podcasting/
journalistic skills**

How can I prepare for a
career in audio journalism?

Objectives

Project Timeline

	APR. DEC.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEP.	OCT.	NOV.

Prep

April - June

Connect

May - July

Interview

July - October

Edit

October - December

Figure 2: Courtesy of Sri Taylor

Figures 3, 4, and 5: Courtesy of James Davis III, Steve Latz, and Avery Julien

3/4 Interviewees were Men...

MID-PROJECT CRISIS

Fixing Mistakes

01 Interview Rhea Beck

Rhea is the founder of **PARES**, Parents in Partnership for Respect and Equity in SOMA Schools.
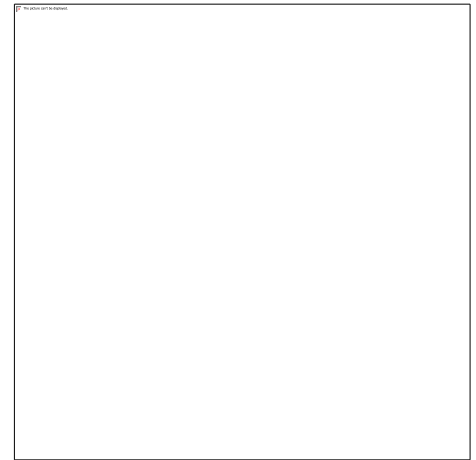

Figure 6: Courtesy of Rhea Beck

02 Research and Highlight Women's Leadership in Podcast

Alinskian Leadership?

Feminist, Women-Centered Leadership?

Source: Stall and Stoecker

TOGETHER, UNEQUAL

Figure 7: Logo Design by David Dizdari

- **5 people** interviewed
- **10+ hours** of audio
- **1 published episode**, 3 forthcoming
- Fostered **community connections**

The Final Product

Skills I developed:

recording   editing   interviewing   narration   writing   communication
creativity   critical thinking   marketing   tech proficiency

Looking Ahead

In My Work:

- More Episodes
- Radio Stations
- Activist's Toolkit Printout
- Accessibility

For Future Scholars:

- Adapt to their hometown/ school system
- Highlight another type of inequity
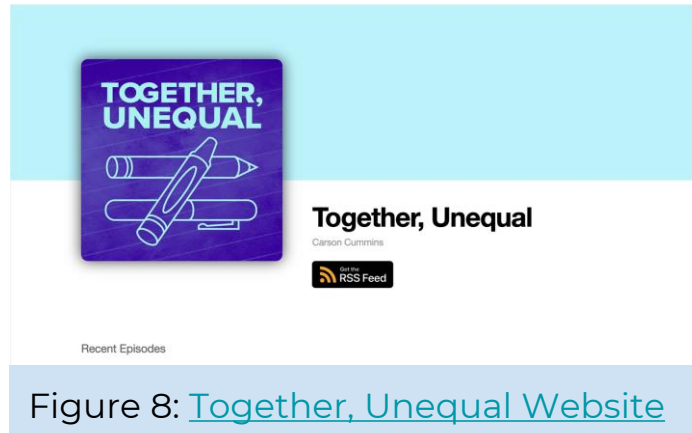- Use as a general reference for podcasts on other subjects

Figure 8: Together, Unequal Website

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Thanks!

Stay tuned for more episodes!

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