

# The Chronicle

OF HACKENSACK AND SOUTH HACKENSACK

## EDUCATION

### Kafele discusses achievement gap

BY RAYMOND BALDINO  
Staff Writer

When Principal Baruti Kafele spoke at Hackensack High School Wednesday, he discussed how parents and teachers can improve their students' chances for success in school. The award-winning educator, who is the author of "A Black Parents Handbook to Educating Your Children (Outside the Classroom)," can speak from the successes he has had as a principal in East Orange, where he is credited with the dramatic turnaround of several urban schools.

"When you see this wide achievement gap [between white and minority students], you shouldn't draw the conclusion that it is because black and Latino children are inferior to white children. There is something wrong that we're not addressing," said Kafele.

In East Orange, Kafele was the principal of three middle schools, including the Patrick Healy Middle School and Sojourner Truth Middle School. During his tenure there, the Patrick Healy School was removed from the list of the top 50 most dangerous schools, and the Sojourner Truth Middle School became one of the highest

performing urban schools in New Jersey. Today, Kafele is the principal of Newark Tech High School in Newark.

He has also been named to the list of Who's Who Among America's Teachers six times, and was honored by the city of Dickinson, Texas, which proclaimed Feb. 8, 1998 "Baruti Kafele Day."

Kafele's philosophy toward education emphasizes personal responsibility – he has formulated separate lists of "50 I's" for teachers, parents, and students to follow in achieving success. The 50 I's are maxims that begin with "I," lists that describe how to approach learning effectively. They emphasize being organized, being involved, being positive, and not making excuses.

Race and socioeconomic status should not be used as excuses for failure in education, said Kafele, speaking on the phone, outside of Birmingham, Ala., where he traveled to pay homage to the civil rights movement.

"I don't care what the conditions are, [when you look at] some of the circumstances young people had to go through, compared to what young people are dealing with now. They're not dealing with overt racial oppression and segregation. There has to be an attitudinal adjustment. People have to look in the mirror and see potential in themselves," he said.

In order to bring about that change in attitude, Kafele emphasizes making instruction relevant to the learner. Five years after the passage of the Amistad Bill in New



STAFF PHOTO BY DARIUS AMOS

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## Bang-bang play

In the first meeting of the year between cross-city rivals Hackensack and Bergen Tech, pitching and defense ruled. Here, Tech catcher Marissa Wurms tags out Hackensack's Megan Cloidt during a play at home plate. Though the Comets failed to score on the play, they edged their counterparts 3-2 in their last at bat. See SPORTS page 12.



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