

A group of diverse young children sitting in a classroom, looking attentively with their hands raised. The background shows a bookshelf with various books and posters.

Defining | US

UNTIL NOW IT'S BEEN A QUIET MOVEMENT

“All the ills of society play out in our schools.”

Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz, Associate Professor of English Education
Teachers College, Columbia University

THE FACE OF AMERICA HAS CHANGED

- OVER 50,000,000 STUDENTS ATTEND AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.
- OVER 27,000,000 BLACK AND BROWN STUDENTS ARE NOW THE MAJORITY, PARTICULARLY IN LARGE URBAN CITIES.
- IN RURAL COMMUNITIES, WHITE STUDENTS ARE THE MAJORITY BY AS MUCH AS 75%.

READ WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE DEFINING US DOCUMENTARY

THIS WAS A POWERFUL FILM. I WAS CAPTIVATED BY THE STORIES THAT THE INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE SHARED ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH EDUCATION, FAMILY, CONNECTIONS, ETC. IT EMPHASIZED THE IDEA OF THE *DANGERS OF A SINGLE STORY*.

THE FILM ALSO MADE ME REFLECT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL. THERE IS A HUGE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOLS TO NOT ONLY PROVIDE EFFECTIVE EDUCATION FOR ALL, BUT TO PROVIDE A SAFE AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENT FOR ITS STUDENTS.

I'VE WATCHED THE FILM TWICE AND AM LEFT WITH SO MANY EMOTIONS — POWERFUL, THOUGHT-PROVOKING, HEARTBREAKING, HOPEFUL. MY ONE WISH, THAT EVERY PERSON COULD WATCH THIS FILM AND HEAR THE STORIES. I BELIEVE LIVES AND TIMES WOULD CHANGE. PHENOMENAL!



THE FILM

Students of color are marginalized, dismissed, and plagued by negative stereotypes; and most recently find themselves at the crossroads of a critical debate that threatens to silence conversations about race among students and teachers in our nation's schools. The political stories get plenty of screen time, but the personal stories of those impacted are rarely heard.

Defining US is a non-partisan documentary that puts a face to the educators and students who are creating the impact and living through the fallout of a country struggling with change. It is about the importance of delivering on the promise of education to liberate marginalized Black and Brown children from reinforced narratives by encouraging them to share their personal stories and discuss the issues that shape their identity.

THE PARTICIPANTS

New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE), Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the nation's two largest school systems along with Atlanta Public Schools and Guilford County School District in Greensboro, NC worked with *Defining US* producers along with other districts across the country to share their experiences through emotional and compelling storytelling. Leaders in equity, diversity, and inclusion from UCLA, NYU, Columbia University, and Yale University also lent their voices and expertise to the conversation.

THE PRODUCERS

CWK Network, Inc., owns the nation's largest evidence-based, non-fiction video library on improving social and emotional learning, equity, mental health, and character development. The company's current network of clients reaches over 4 million students and 20 million households. New York City Department of Education is CWK's largest client, where CWK provides customized SEL, Equity, and Mental Health resources through a digital portal for all 1,800 NYCDOE schools.



"Academic outcomes tie directly to social outcomes. For example, 3rd grade reading scores are used to project how many prisons are going to be built. When schools do well, we graduate more kids, improve the economic workforce. Real estate values go up. Crime rates go down. Schools are at the center of every community and to a large degree shape the future development of all children."

Alison Yoshimoto-Towery, Director of Operations, Los Angeles Unified School District Schools Watching the film is only the first step.

What will you do to keep the conversation going?

THE JOURNEY BEGINS HERE

Whether you're a teacher, administrator, a student's guardian, or someone working with student organizations and you need more information, our educational resources offer support as you continue the journey to drive change.

CWK NETWORK

CWK owns the nation's largest, non-fiction, proprietary video and text library on social, emotional, mental health, and equity issues. CWK is an Effective Producer of Programs on the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse and resides on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP). Defining US and its mission is supported by content-rich digital platforms that include evidence-based resources for communities and connect a network of educators who are taking the lead.

- ✓ Become a member of our Do Something Community and join meetings facilitated by leading voices in education, new short films with lesson plans, and adult learning resources shared each month.
- ✓ Screen the film for your community of educators and families and follow it up with a presentation from a featured speaker
- ✓ Private label documentary short films designed to reach and teach your community, addressing your specific needs
- ✓ Access our mental health library of videos and text learning experiences covering topics including Mental Health Awareness & Advocacy, Suicide Intervention, and Trauma and ACE Study.
- ✓ Sign-up for CWK-TV, which delivers more than 300 engaging videos, evidence-based curricula, parent engagement programs, professional development resources and communications tools for PreK-12 students.
- ✓ DIY Movie Making Kit allows your team of administrators and students to participate in the creative filmmaking process and document your own story

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

Take the movement beyond the classroom and into the boardroom. Defining US also provides robust opportunities for corporate partners. CWK is one of only a few educational content companies with the expertise, credibility, and trust to distribute corporate-sponsored educational resources through proprietary educational platforms. Contact us to learn more about corporate sponsorships.

CHOOSE WHERE YOU WILL BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY

"The film made me reflect on the importance of teachers and school. There is a huge responsibility for schools to not only provide effective education for all, but to provide a safe and nurturing environment for its students. I hope that those who watch this film realize that situations don't have to happen to them for it to matter to them."

Contact us to help begin your journey.

[SEE RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND FAMILIES HERE](#)

CWK TV

America's premier streaming service on social emotional learning, equity, and mental health delivers more than 300 videos, 400 evidence-based lessons, parent engagement programs, professional development resources, and communications tools for educators and youth.

Defining US Private Screenings and Events

Schedule a private screening. Enhance the experience with in-person discussion from our panel of experts.

Do Something Membership

One-year Membership includes unlimited access to the film, monthly meetings facilitated by leading voices in education, new short films with lesson plans, and adult learning resources shared each month.

Defining US Local

Create your own short films designed to reach and teach your community through privately labeled documentaries.

Mental Health Awareness & Advocacy

Our on-demand learning management system educates adults to be aware of mental health issues, details the warning signs and provides information to seek support.

DIY Movie Making Kit

With our DIY Movie Making Kit, administrators and students can participate in creative filmmaking projects and document their own defining stories.



WHAT WILL YOU DO NEXT?

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR DEFINING US RESOURCES HERE

Contact us to learn more about what you can do

CWK Network
Connectwithkids.com
helpdesk@cwknetwork.com

DEFININGUS.ORG