

# 'You've got to stay focused and keep setting new goals'

Star H.S. athlete Edney speaks to Yonkers students

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**YONKERS** — First came the thrill of sinking a 60-foot buzzer-beating shot, followed just two weeks later by a heartbreaking state championship loss.

After the highs and lows of the past few weeks, New Rochelle basketball star Khalil Edney said Thursday that he's now excited to begin a "new chapter."

That means buckling down on homework, graduating from high school and athletic training at Dean College in Franklin, Mass.

"You've got to stay focused and keep setting new goals for yourself," he told students at the Andrus Orchard School on Thursday.

The 6-foot-4 senior spent the early afternoon shooting hoops and speaking with students about overcoming life's obstacles at the special-needs school where his father, Lewis, is a maintenance worker.

Children at Andrus grapple with emotional and behavioral problems and some come from homes in New York City and the Lower Hudson Valley where they were abused and neglected.



Khalil Edney, left, the New Rochelle High School senior made famous for his 60-foot buzzer-beating shot in the Section 1 basketball championship, spoke Thursday to teacher Fredrica Bryant and students at the Andrus Orchard School.

Edney said he, too, has faced obstacles early in life: His mother died of cancer in 2006, leaving his father to raise him and his three brothers on his own.

"I am grateful for the great dad I have, the great older brother I have, and the sports that I play," Edney said Thursday. "Sports has kept me focused, kept me grounded, and I'm just thankful."

He told students that athletics should not come at the expense of academics.

"In the words 'student-athlete,' 'student' comes first," he said. "If you don't do your work and don't go to class, you don't play."

Students were more in-



Khalil Edney with his father, Lewis, at the Yonkers school on Thursday. PHOTOS BY COLIN GUSTAFSON/THE JOURNAL NEWS

terested in his favorite music (hip-hop and R&B), his favorite athletes (Michael Vick, Vince Young and Dirk Nowitzki); and, of course, how he pulled off his now-famous game-winning shot against Mount Vernon earlier this month.

"It was just instinct," he said. "I was always told don't stop playing until the clock hits zero."

Alexandria Connally, assistant principal at Orchard School, described Edney as a role model.

"We train students not just academically, but also to be productive members of society," she said. "What I think he brings is a real-life experience on how to be young and still be a productive member of society."