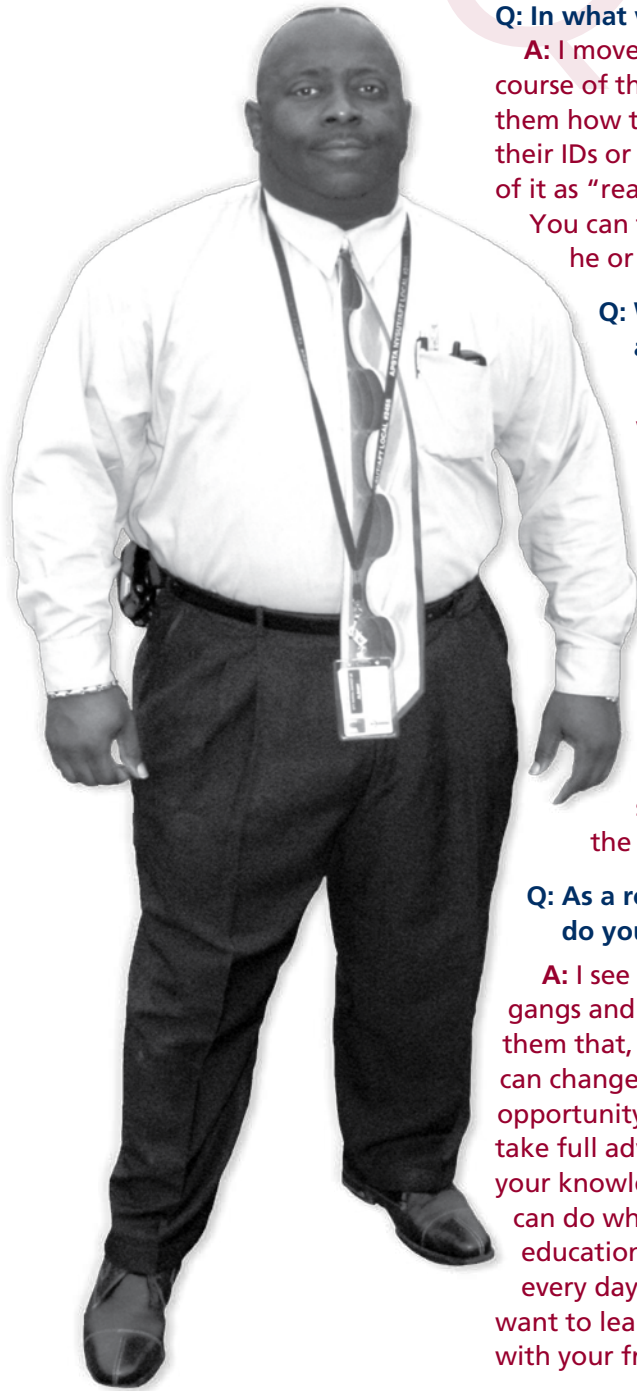


# Leading the way

## Meet Issac Cancer '82

Hall monitor, Albany High School



Issac Cancer graduated from Albany High School in 1982. After working for Amtrak for many years, he came to work with the City School District of Albany at the former Sunshine School, a special education transitional program, in 2001. He worked there until moving to Albany High in 2006. He currently is a hall monitor, ensuring the safety of the staff, the students and the building. He also is a mentor and role model, building relationships that help lead to student success.

**Q: In what ways do you interact with students?**

**A:** I move throughout the building in the course of the day, greeting students, asking them how their day is, making sure they have their IDs or seeing if they need direction. I think of it as “reading” them when they come in.

You can tell a lot about a student by the way he or she walks in the building.

**Q: What do you like best about your job?**

**A:** Establishing good relationships with the students and trying to be a positive role model in their lives. A couple of years ago students used to say to me “Ah, you’re just a hall monitor.” But several students changed their mind by the end of the year. One of them told me, “You know, I wouldn’t mind working for the school district. I wouldn’t mind being a hall monitor and being a positive force in students’ lives during their time at the high school.”

**Q: As a role model, what kinds of advice do you give to students?**

**A:** I see students dealing with peer pressure, gangs and difficult home lives, and I try to tell them that, as tough as your situation is, you can change it and make it better. You have the opportunity to get an education, and you should take full advantage of it. Nobody can ever take your knowledge away from you. But only you can do what needs to be done to get that education. And that entails coming to school every day prepared, with the mindset that you want to learn and not hang out on the street with your friends.

**Q: What is your goal each day?**

**A:** My goal is to speak to at least one student I didn’t speak to the day before, possibly learn a new student’s name and have them see me and maybe get comfort from knowing, well, OK, Mr. Cancer is in the school. Mr. Cancer works here. He cares that I came to school today and he spoke to me. If he cares about me getting an education, maybe I should care about me getting an education.