Rites of Passage use African and African American history and culture as a vehicle to assist students in strengthening their reading and writing, as well as social skills. Students have been studying the accomplishments of heroes in our community. One of the heroes is Congressman Keith Ellison.

WE WIN Institute, Inc. is dedicated to the academic and social success of all children. This is the second year that WE WIN has conducted Rites of Passage classes at Olson Middle School.

The following are excerpts from essays written by two students in Rites of Passage at Olson Middle School.

Congressman Keith Ellison
By Re'Shauna Felix-Twiet.

Keith Ellison was born August 4, 1963, in Detroit, Michigan. He received his law degree from the University of Michigan. Mr. Ellison is a member of the Democratic Party. He is married to Kim Ellison and they have four children.

Mr. Ellison led efforts to protect Minnesota children from dangerous pesticides and chemicals. He also worked to get voting rights for ex-offenders and to increase the state's minimum wage. He made history by becoming the first person of the Muslim faith in America to serve in the United States.

He promotes peace and prosperity for working families and promotes civil and human rights. Keith Ellison cares about people and their families. He cares about what happens in the world.

Representative Ellison's accomplishments are important because he tries to make the world a better place. He made history as the first African American from Minnesota to serve in the United States Congress.

Keith Ellison's story has inspired me. His words are inspiring. I am inspired how he worked to give back the vote to ex-offenders. He is great because he makes changes in our lives so that we can all live better.

Keith Ellison
By Jakisha Smith

Keith Ellison is a great man. He is making a difference for Minnesotans everyday. He helps protects children from danger.

Congressmen Ellison serves on the Financial Services Committee which oversees the nation's housing and financial services sector. He is also on the Judiciary Committee which oversees the country's legal system. They work on such issues as civil and human rights, immigration and election laws.

Keith Ellison has lived in north Minneapolis for the last 20 years. I live in north Minneapolis, too. He inspires me to be the best student I can be.