

CURE's ALL- STAR EDUCATION PANEL BIOS- 9/27/21

Dr. Dawn Brooks DeCosta, EdD in Educational Leadership, Teachers College, Columbia University, M.S. in Fine Art Education, Queens College; B.S. in Education, St. John's University. Dawn began her service of teaching 27 years ago and has worked as a teacher for the NYC DOE teaching in Harlem, NYC for 16 years and has served as Principal of Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School (TMALS) for the past 10 years. Dawn's dissertation research is entitled, "Black Principal Perspectives on SEL and CRSL in Urban Schools: The Role of Beliefs, Values and Leadership Practices". Dawn has received numerous awards and recognitions for her work such as Teacher of the Year 1998, Heroes of Education Award 2002 for her work with students involving the 9/11 tragedy (highlighted in CNN's, "Through a Child's Eyes"), and Outstanding Educator 2002. She also co-authored a journal article for the Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools entitled, "An Unwavering Commitment To Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education & Social Emotional Learning," 2021. Dawn is married, has 4 children and three grandchildren.

Alprentice McCutchen holds a B.A in History and African-American Studies from Wesleyan University, a Masters in Teaching of Social Studies from Teachers College, Columbia University and an M.A in Islamic Studies from Middlesex University. Alprentice has spent a good portion of his 25-year professional career developing curricula, providing workshops that integrate Hip Hop, Socratic inquiry, debate, travel/study trips to Egypt, Senegal, the Gambia, Spain and Morocco, student action, performance based assessments, project based learning as well as critical writing as part of his work to help develop students who will contribute to the thinking world. Alprentice is currently a history teacher in New York at New Rochelle High School, an Assistant Imam of Masjid Sabur Inc. in the Bronx, NY as well as a Phd student at the CUNY Graduate Center in the Urban Education program. Most importantly, Alprentice is a husband and father of three children.

Dr. Rosa L. Rivera-McCutchen is an Associate Professor in the Graduate Leadership Programs at CUNY Lehman College. An educator for over twenty years, she began her career as a high school teacher in Bronx, NY, before earning her doctorate in Teaching and Learning at New York University. In her research, Dr. Rivera-McCutchen examines critical caring and effective urban school leadership, and the impact of community and school contexts on reform efforts. Buy her new book, *RADICAL CARE, Leading for Justice in Urban Schools.*

April Francis-Taylor is the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity at Eastern Suffolk BOCES. She is an advocate for equitable systems and a regional education leader with over 17 years of experience. She received her B.A., M.A., and Certificate of Advanced Studies in Education Leadership from Hofstra University. Francis-Taylor has served as a teacher, building and district administrator in the Long Island and Westchester regions. Additionally, due to her advocacy for equity, she has served on NYSED Culturally Responsive and Sustaining (CR-S) Framework stakeholder committee, NYSED Civic Readiness Task Force, the NYS Democracy Ready Coalition, and as Vice President of the New York State Council of the Social Studies. Ms. Francis-Taylor is the recipient of the Nassau BOCES “Education Partner” Award and the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS) “Program of Excellence Award.” She has been featured in various education publications, such as NCSS “Social Education” and McGraw-Hill “The Art of Teaching.”

Juontel White, Ph.D. is an executive strategist who supports nonprofit, corporate and philanthropic organizations to deepen their social impact. She provides clients with honest guidance on fueling race/gender equity through their work and fostering a diverse, inclusive culture on their teams. Juontel’s expertise includes leading strategy for racial equity focused programs and advocacy campaigns in a variety of sectors including education, housing, and civil rights. Juontel holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University and masters in Education Policy from Harvard University.

Natalie McCabe Zwerger (she/her/ella) is the Executive Director of Re-Center Race & Equity in Education, a non-profit organization in Hartford, CT. A long-time educator, attorney, and advocate, she has fought for equity, racial justice, and liberatory education. As a white Puerto Rican cis-hetero, non-disabled woman, she is driven by an ongoing interrogation of where folx are situated in both historical and contemporary oppressions. Her expertise includes elevating critical consciousness, dismantling systems of oppression in educational settings, and centering Black & Brown youth and youth from historically excluded identities in teaching and learning. She leads a team of practice leaders, consultants, and co-conspirators who work nationally to ensure systems operate against embedded racial injustice, white supremacy, and persistent inequity.