

# Leadership Academy

# *Leadership Conference*

## July 7 & 8, 2022

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Welcome to the Leadership Conference, the culminating experience for the Leadership Academy 2021 cohort. This year the conference will be held in Bowman Hall on MCLA's campus in North Adams, and remote access is available for each session.

**Dr. Vernee Butterfield**, will close the conference with her presentation *Courageous Conversations About Race* on Friday, July 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Street Center Auditorium.

Conference sessions run on **Thursday July 7<sup>th</sup>** from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. **and Friday July 8<sup>th</sup>** from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. and are presented by members of the Leadership Academy 2021 cohort on topics ranging from leading inclusive, anti-racist schools to implementing instructional programs that enhance success for all. Sessions are organized according to the four standards established by MA DESE's *Professional Standards for Administrator Leadership* (PSAL):

- Instructional Leadership
- Management and Operations
- Family and Community Engagement
- Professional Culture

In this conference program you'll find:

1. Session schedule and links (pp. 1-4)
2. Session descriptions (pp. 6-15), and
3. Presenter Bios (pp. 16-23)

Thank you to the Leadership Academy 2021 cohort for their engagement, tenacity, and professionalism during this unique and often challenging year.

Thank you to all educators.  
Thank you to all students.

Marianne R. Young  
Leadership Academy Director



MCLA

**Thursday**

**July 7**

**9:00 – 9:30 Opening Session**

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82277905214>

Meeting ID: 822 7790 5214

Time	Bowman Hall Room 201	Bowman Hall Room 202	Bowman Hall Room 204	Bowman Hall Room 205
9:45 – 10:45	<p>Your LGBTQ+ Community: We're Coming Out, and We Want You to Know. <i>James Haertel</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/pbs-tvtu-gff">https://meet.google.com/pbs-tvtu-gff</a></p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>Cultivate Genius through Staff Development <i>Christy Ferri</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/ehs-oaao-xyg">https://meet.google.com/ehs-oaao-xyg</a></p> <p>Strand: Professional Culture</p>	<p>Careers, Community, Connections: Sparking Interest and Igniting Opportunities <i>Laura Braid</i> <i>Michelle Dossier</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="#">Zoom link for meeting</a></p> <p>Strand: Family &amp; Community Engagement</p>	<p>Take a Breath: Emotional Regulation and Mindfulness in Elementary Schools <i>Travis Poirot</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://mgrhs-org.zoom.us/j/83911197747">https://mgrhs-org.zoom.us/j/83911197747</a></p> <p>Strand: Management &amp; Operations</p>
11:00– 12:00	<p>The New York State Seal of Civic Readiness: Fostering Increased Student Civic Participation and Engagement <i>Sean Kelly</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://lhric-org.zoom.us/j/91810413604">https://lhric-org.zoom.us/j/91810413604</a> Meeting ID: 918 1041 3604</p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>You're Doing Data Wrong: Building Anti-Racist Practices Using Tools of Street Data and Empathy Interviews <i>Rebecca Ballantine</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="#">zoom link for meeting</a> Meeting ID: 930 2353 7658 Passcode: 135439</p> <p>Strand: Professional Culture</p>	<p>The Value of Mentoring <i>Christian Clarke</i> <i>Rachel Ribis</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://zoom.us/j/82890409925?pwd=bERxb0pqT2Q2V3FORFBKTUV2NnBUZz09">https://zoom.us/j/82890409925?pwd=bERxb0pqT2Q2V3FORFBKTUV2NnBUZz09</a></p> <p>Strand: Family and Community Engagement</p>	<p>Hiring and Retaining Teachers in Uncertain Times <i>Kristen Strothmann</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://E2CCB-GST.zoom.us/j/4085610911?pwd=bXFRMGJYRXJQc3ZHdDg2VS9uUXh2QT09">https://E2CCB-GST.zoom.us/j/4085610911?pwd=bXFRMGJYRXJQc3ZHdDg2VS9uUXh2QT09</a></p> <p>Strand: Management &amp; Operations</p>
12:00 – 1:00	<p><b>Lunch</b> <b>Campus Center</b></p>			

<p><b>1:00 – 2:00</b></p>	<p>Connecting School Building Leaders to RtI and Special Education <i>Stephanie Marcinko</i> <i>Shannon Toomey</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://nccsk12-org.zoom.us/j/94978878734?pwd=NldMUUx3Qk9qQ2l0T3NmL3Q2cXJidz09">https://nccsk12-org.zoom.us/j/94978878734?pwd=NldMUUx3Qk9qQ2l0T3NmL3Q2cXJidz09</a> Meeting ID: 949 7887 8734 Passcode: 209300</p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>Women in Administration: Leadership Strategies and Communication Skills for Bridging the Glass Cliff <i>Nichole Huskie</i> <i>Catherine Casey</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/nwu-keme-wvt">https://meet.google.com/nwu-keme-wvt</a></p> <p>Strand: Professional Culture</p>	<p>Addressing School Discipline: The Current Problem with School Suspensions and Providing Effective Strategies <i>Ryan Fedele</i> <i>Jonathan Cruz</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/xte-vrgd-jrn">https://meet.google.com/xte-vrgd-jrn</a></p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>Character Education’s Place in MTSS - A Focus on Middle School Students <i>Jennifer Yerkes</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/doo-yshv-ijj">https://meet.google.com/doo-yshv-ijj</a></p> <p>Strand: Management &amp; Operations</p>
<p><b>2:15 – 3:15</b></p>	<p>The Power of Positive Relationships <i>Mark Millington</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/svy-jgtr-evf">https://meet.google.com/svy-jgtr-evf</a></p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>Culturize Your School! <i>Jennifer Mousseau</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/ksd-psvi-qpn">https://meet.google.com/ksd-psvi-qpn</a></p> <p>Strand: Professional Culture</p>	<p>Parent &amp; Community Engagement from Scratch: A Recipe <i>Kargsia McDuffie</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/xmf-zppn-dxu?hs=122&amp;authuser=0">https://meet.google.com/xmf-zppn-dxu?hs=122&amp;authuser=0</a></p> <p>Strand: Family and Community Engagement</p>	<p>Strategic Planning - Make Positive Changes with Collaborative Efforts of Stakeholders <i>Christine Davis</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://E2CCB-GST.zoom.us/j/99946964606?pwd=K2ZSQnljd0k0STArcXgxWmh1T3hRZz09">https://E2CCB-GST.zoom.us/j/99946964606?pwd=K2ZSQnljd0k0STArcXgxWmh1T3hRZz09</a></p> <p>Strand: Management &amp; Operations</p>
<p><b>3:30 – 4:30</b></p>	<p>Creating Equitable and Inclusive Learning Environments <i>Alexandria Renton</i> <i>Christina Zontini</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/byh-spai-pqw">https://meet.google.com/byh-spai-pqw</a></p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>Empowering School Culture: Supporting educators’ and students’ mental health. <i>Sarah White</i> <i>Jessica Muscanelli</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://us05web.zoom.us/j/87419306716?pwd=Zm9NRm5qallMMUFJenNDYnlpekRuQT09">https://us05web.zoom.us/j/87419306716?pwd=Zm9NRm5qallMMUFJenNDYnlpekRuQT09</a> Passcode: swjm22</p> <p>Strand: Strand: Professional Culture</p>	<p>Failing to Show Up: The root cause of Chronic Absenteeism and what school leaders can do about it <i>Patricia Pipitone</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="#">Zoom Link</a> ID: 81099919901 Passcode: ziZynD</p> <p>Strand: Family and Community Engagement</p>	<p>Planning the Pathway: From Kindergarten to Careers <i>Rebecca K. LaForest</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://cohoes-org.zoom.us/j/97654649237?pwd=cy9TM1MORWRoL1FiQktGR1VJSHRgdz09">https://cohoes-org.zoom.us/j/97654649237?pwd=cy9TM1MORWRoL1FiQktGR1VJSHRgdz09</a> Meeting ID: 976 5464 9237 Passcode: 231542</p> <p>Strand: Family and Community Engagement</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Friday July 8 9:00 – 9:30 Opening Session</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Link: <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82277905214">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82277905214</a> Meeting ID: 822 7790 5214</p>				
Time	Bowman Hall Room 201	Bowman Hall Room 202	Bowman Hall Room 204	Bowman Hall Room 205
9:45–10:45	<p>Promoting Student Success through Intentional Planning and Curriculum Development <i>Jacqueline Ziemek</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://zoom.us/j/92998074582?pwd=QnR5RTJsZk8yMmpTcms3Ymd2S24rQT09">https://zoom.us/j/92998074582?pwd=QnR5RTJsZk8yMmpTcms3Ymd2S24rQT09</a></p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>Restorative Justice - The First Year <i>Stacey Muscato</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/xuc-xzqx-qmf">https://meet.google.com/xuc-xzqx-qmf</a></p> <p>Strand: Professional Culture</p>	<p>Creating a Positive Environment for ELL Students and Families in Your Building <i>Hunter Andrews Joseph Pillitteri</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://wallkillcsd-k12-ny-us.zoom.us/j/3014559057">https://wallkillcsd-k12-ny-us.zoom.us/j/3014559057</a></p> <p>Strand: Family and Community Engagement</p>	<p>The Role of Administrators in Creating a Positive School Climate Book of Reference: <u><a href="#">If You Don't Feed the Teachers, They Will Eat the Students</a></u> (Connors)</p> <p><i>Kara Likar</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/ztn-bwzr-usz">https://meet.google.com/ztn-bwzr-usz</a></p> <p>Strand: Management &amp; Operations</p>
11:00–12:00	<p>Student-Led Learning and Community: Lessons from an EL/Outward Bound &amp; Consortium High School <i>Lauren Moffett</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/ize-capi-aqd">meet.google.com/ize-capi-aqd</a></p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>Learning Together: The Role of Learning Walks in Collaborative Professional Development <i>Justine Olszewski</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://zoom.us/j/97937639566?pwd=OW43KzBrME1veWNjMFVXd2VtN0pQUT09">https://zoom.us/j/97937639566?pwd=OW43KzBrME1veWNjMFVXd2VtN0pQUT09</a> Meeting ID: 979 3763 9566 Passcode: 9q3sJa</p> <p>Strand: Professional Culture</p>	<p>Goldilocks Schools: Structuring Educational Communities to Enhance Teaching and Learning <i>Carrie Patch Knudsen</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/knj-crzg-vgx">https://meet.google.com/knj-crzg-vgx</a></p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>Tracking Success: Models for Token Economies and Data Collection for Special Education Population <i>Ellie Rizzo Jake Pinkston</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="#">Session Link Here</a></p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>
12:00 – 1:00	<p><b>Lunch Campus Center</b></p>			

<p><b>1:00 – 2:00</b></p>	<p>What's Good for ELLs Is Good for All Students <i>Mary Sandoval</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/gkn-grus-dhy">https://meet.google.com/gkn-grus-dhy</a></p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>Transformational Leadership: Achieving Success <i>Jonathan Parker</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/hsy-dcyg-fbi">https://meet.google.com/hsy-dcyg-fbi</a></p> <p>Strand: Professional Culture</p>	<p>Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't <i>Nathaniel Reals</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://albany.zoom.us/j/95316222615?pwd=ekYzSTRINUt2MURZUIN3N0tmNXRNdz09">https://albany.zoom.us/j/95316222615?pwd=ekYzSTRINUt2MURZUIN3N0tmNXRNdz09</a></p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>Bringing Restorative Practices to your School <i>Nathan Ellis</i> <i>Jeff Augustine</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/jtirizj-xiu">https://meet.google.com/jtirizj-xiu</a></p> <p>Strand: Professional Culture</p>
<p><b>2:15 – 3:15</b></p>	<p>Restorative Practices: An alternative to traditional discipline. <i>Mandy D'Andrea</i> <i>Caryn Simone</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/psr-viut-gfu">https://meet.google.com/psr-viut-gfu</a></p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>The Power of Purpose – Leadership is More than Checking a Box <i>Lisa Wilber</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://meet.google.com/oen-vhag-dfa">https://meet.google.com/oen-vhag-dfa</a></p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>Navigating Difficult Conversations <i>Joshua Clark</i></p> <p>Link: <a href="https://cpsge-org.zoom.us/my/mrclark243">https://cpsge-org.zoom.us/my/mrclark243</a></p> <p>Strand: Professional Culture</p>	<p>Working Smart with MTSS- Best Design to Assess, Progress and Help Students Achieve Academic and Social-Emotional Success! <i>Jennifer Goire-Peralta</i></p> <p>Link: Zoom ID: 512 297 1260 Password: Counselor</p> <p>Strand: Instructional Leadership</p>



**Schedule**

**Thursday July 7**

9:45 \_\_\_\_\_

11:00 \_\_\_\_\_

1:00 \_\_\_\_\_

2:15 \_\_\_\_\_

3:30 \_\_\_\_\_

**Friday July 8**

9:45 \_\_\_\_\_

11:00 \_\_\_\_\_

1:00 \_\_\_\_\_

2:15 \_\_\_\_\_

**Friday July 8**  
**Closing Session**  
**7:00 p.m.**

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**MCLA**

MCLA Leadership Academy Leadership Conference 2022	
Time	Session
Thursday July 7  9:00 – 9:30	<p><b>Marianne Young</b> Leadership Academy Director A consideration to start the day: <b>Why School Leadership?</b></p>
Thursday 9:45 – 10:45	<p><b>Your LGBTQ+ Community: We're Coming Out, and We Want You to Know.</b> <b>James Haertel</b> Looking for resources for your school community about supporting and accepting your LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff? Sashay this way! We will discuss important terms, starting/supporting a Gender/Sexuality Alliance, discussion of pronouns, PD opportunities, resources for all stakeholders, and most importantly keeping this vulnerable population safe. Participants will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Score themselves on LGBTQ+ knowledge before and after the presentation</li> <li>• Gather resources to start or enhance a Gender/Sexuality Alliance</li> <li>• Learn how to discuss the LGBTQ+ community across all age levels</li> <li>• Discuss how to support the LGBTQ+ community across all school stakeholders</li> <li>• Gather resources for Professional Development aimed at supporting the LGBTQ+ population</li> </ul> <p><b>Cultivate Genius through Staff Development</b> <b>Christy Ferri</b> The professional culture of a school community influences the experiences of our students. According to the Professional Standards for Administrators, "Cultural Proficiency: Ensures that policies and practices enable staff members and students to contribute to and interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment in which students' background, identities, strengths, and challenges are respected." In this session, attendees will look closely at how diversity intersects with the learning environment through reflective activities, such as the Identity Iceberg, courageous conversations model, and a self-assessment checklist. Attendees will gain confidence in enabling staff members to prioritize anti-bias concepts in their everyday practice.</p> <p><b>Careers, Community, Connections: Sparking Interest and Igniting Opportunities</b> <b>Laura Braid</b> <b>Michelle Dossier</b> Do you have an interest in <i>Bridging Students to their Postsecondary Path</i>, but are not sure about how to get started? Would you like to host a career event at your school? Our goal is to actively engage and lead participants toward an opportunity to expose students to emerging careers and those that are in high demand. We will inspire you to reach out to community members who are willing to come to this event and visit with your students. Student-community engagement is a valuable avenue to help support students and their post-secondary decisions. (PSAL 3: Family &amp; Community Engagement) We will present two designs for facilitating career events and will encourage open discussion to obtain ideas for expansion. In this session, attendees will acquire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A plan to implement/host a Career Events in the Secondary School</li> <li>• Tools &amp; Materials – (Student Applications, Communication resources for all stakeholders, etc.) to start a Careers Event in their home district</li> <li>• Time to create an individualized "Action Plan" outline planning document</li> </ul> <p>This presentation highlights a practical method for promoting effective partnerships that support growth of students and the mission of the school and district.</p>

	<p><b>Take a Breath: Emotional Regulation and Mindfulness in Elementary Schools</b>  <b>Travis Poirot</b>  Emotional Regulation and Mindfulness are two things that are talked about often in schools, especially after COVID, but what are we doing to address these needs? As educators, we are seeing more and more students come into our buildings without basic knowledge of emotions and strategies to use to regulate themselves. Lack of these skills lead to increased behavior referrals, suspensions, and inability to effectively access the curriculum in the classroom.</p>
<p><b>Thursday</b>  <b>11:00 – 12:00</b></p>	<p><b>The New York State Seal of Civic Readiness: Fostering Increased Student Civic Participation and Engagement</b>  <b>Sean Kelly</b>  The New York State Seal of Civic Readiness is a multi-faceted process that can have positive implications for a K-12 school district. The process, which is modeled after the NYS Seal of Biliteracy, promotes civic participation and student engagement through a menu of activities and benchmarks throughout students' middle school and high school experiences. The program tracks students' academic and service-based learning activities components and seeks to foster increased student awareness of modern day local and national issues. The session will focus on how school district and building leaders can begin to build a foundation for integrating the program in their own districts and schools. Attendees will gain a better understanding of how to apply for the Seal, form a Seal of Civic Readiness Committee, design appropriate projects and rubrics within the curriculum, advertise and promote the Seal, and track and monitor student progress. In addition, attendees will also learn about the benefits of the Seal of Civic Readiness initiative serving as an approved New York State 4+1 Pathway for students can earn credit towards their diploma.</p> <p><b>You're Doing Data Wrong: Building Anti-Racist Practices Using Tools of Street Data and Empathy Interviews</b>  <b>Rebecca Ballantine</b>  In this workshop, participants will engage with the critique of modern data collection systems presented by Safir and Dugan in their book <i>Street Data: A Next-Generation Model for Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation</i>. Contrary to typical school data sorted by demographic details, "Street Data is asset based, building on the tenets of culturally responsive education by helping educators look for what's right in our students, schools, and communities instead of seeking what's wrong. Street data embodies both an ethos and a change methodology that will transform how we analyze, diagnose, and assess everything from student learning to district improvement to policy" (Safir &amp; Dugan). Attendees will review case studies of three ways an urban public K-8 school used empathy interviews to transform their practice and culture: (1) to change instructional practices for students with IEPs; (2) to address racist practices in parent engagement activities; and (3) to address instructional planning among teachers. Participants will leave the workshop with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an understanding of the limitations of the traditional forms of data</li> <li>• Ideas and resources for collecting street data in their own schools</li> <li>• practice with at least one form of street data collection --empathy interviews</li> </ul> <p><b>The Value of Mentoring</b>  <b>Christian Clarke</b>  <b>Rachel Ribis</b>  <i>"The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image but giving them the opportunity to create themselves."</i> – Steven Spielberg, Film Director, Producer, and Screenwriter.  Mentorship is also an excellent way to help strengthen community relationships, from helping students improve their academic performance and social-emotional learning. Mentorship can also help beginning teachers gain their footing in those first, rocky years of the profession. During this session, we will discuss the various forms of mentorship and</p>

share strategies for piloting and implementing successful, research-based mentorship programs in your schools.

**Hiring and Retaining Teachers in Uncertain Times**  
**Kristen Strothmann**

In the wake of a global pandemic, increasing demands, and growing safety concerns, many schools are facing significant teacher and staff shortages. A recent National Education Association survey showed that an alarming 55% of teachers polled are thinking about or planning to leave the profession. To avoid further fallout, school administrators need effective hiring practices to bring great teachers into their schools and the leadership skills to keep and grow their new educators. During this session, participants will look closely at teacher shortage trends in the education field and reflect on their own experiences. Participants will leave with simple and applicable tips for the interview process, hiring candidates who support your school’s mission and vision, and impactful leadership moves to create a culture that results in positive student outcomes and a happy and fulfilled staff.

**12:00 – 1:00:**  
**Lunch**  
**Campus Center**

**Thursday**  
**1:00 – 2:00**

**Connecting School Building Leaders to RtI and Special Education**  
**Stephanie Marcinko**  
**Shannon Toomey**

Attendees will gain a comprehensive understanding of the multiple aspects of Response to Intervention and its importance in supporting all learners within the school setting. The presentation will provide in depth explanations of each component of Response to Intervention. Attendees will learn how to effectively utilize assessments and analyze data to support struggling students. Attendees will understand how RtI and special education are interrelated and the process by which students receive RtI services and may eventually be referred to the Committee on Special Education. School leaders will clearly understand their role in developing and implementing an effective RtI model and process.

**Women in Administration: Leadership Strategies and Communication Skills for Bridging the Glass Cliff**  
**Catherine Casey**  
**Nichole Huskie**

Women are a powerful force in education, representing more than 75% of all classroom teachers. Despite this percentage, 52% of principals and less than 25% of superintendents in the United States are female. What accounts for this disparity? Join us for an empowering discussion of the barriers and challenges that women face in educational leadership, develop strategies to communicate effectively and learn how female administrator’s mentorship of aspiring leaders can change the narrative of education inequity.

Attendees will:

- Explore gender biases and inequities within educational leadership
- Learn about effective communication strategies for female leaders
- Develop tools for managing successful mentor relationships
- Understanding personal strengths and communication styles to authentically demonstrate your value.
- Building skills to advocate for oneself and others through assertive communication techniques.
- Developing and practicing professional communication strategies that can be used in various workplace situations, increasing confidence in daily interactions with colleagues and managers.

**Addressing School Discipline: The Current Problem with School Suspensions and Providing Effective Strategies**  
**Jonathan Cruz**  
**Ryan Fedele**

	<p>This session will talk about the current problems that arise with modern day suspensions. We will discuss the negative impact it has on the school and on the student. We will provide simple and effective strategies that teachers and administrators can use to provide students with a chance of success. Our goal is to simply inform educators about the importance of ensuring students receive a proper education while at the same time reducing the recidivism rate of students getting suspended.</p> <p><b>Character Education’s Place in MTSS - A Focus on Middle School Students</b>  <b>Jennifer Yerkes</b>  Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is not just another educational initiative. The concept aims to organize and best utilize the supports and practices that occur within your school. The goal of MTSS is to highlight and plan for the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic supports needed by students and establish a framework to ensure everyone receives equitable, robust, and predictable levels of support ranging from Tier I to Tier III interventions. Many resources suggest a blend of PBIS and RTI to help ensure your program’s vastness and fidelity, but how do you ensure PBIS does not turn into merely an incentive system that is not data-driven or responsive and one that lacks a teaching component? In this session, participants will review the components of one character education program’s approach to PBIS and how that supports tiered interventions within the MTSS framework. Upon the conclusion of the program, attendees will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define and articulate examples of tiered interventions within an MTSS framework (focus on social, emotional, and behavioral components)</li> <li>• Establish and reference examples of how data can be incorporated into a school’s SEL/behavior interventions</li> <li>• Review and modify resources provided as they may be applicable within their school setting</li> </ul>
<p><b>Thursday</b>  <b>2:15 – 3:15</b></p>	<p><b>The Power of Positive Relationships</b>  <b>Mark Millington</b>  This presentation will inform its participants of the power and necessity of positive relationships between educators and students to optimize the potential of a school’s student population. Participants will have an opportunity to speak of anecdotal experiences regarding the session topic. Participants will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Various strategies on how to develop positive relationships with students and how to encourage teachers to use such strategies</li> <li>▪ Relationships and environments shape the developing brain for good or for bad.</li> <li>▪ Classrooms designed to promote integrated growth and development will support the fullest expression of each child’s potential.</li> </ul> <p>“Positive relationships produce a biological response, the release of the hormone oxytocin. Known as the love hormone, oxytocin opposes the effects of the stress hormone, cortisol, and opens the brain to new experiences and to learning. So, when you develop a positive relationship with a student, you are helping to develop a learner.” (Cantor et al., 2018)</p> <p>This presentation is designed to reach school building leaders, enabling them to convey this important information to their staff.</p> <p><b>Culturize Your School!</b>  <b>Jennifer Mousseau</b>  Based on a study done by Dr. Bill Daggett from the International Center for Leadership in Education, the top 1% of high performing schools had a notably high positive school culture based on respectful relationships. In this presentation we will use concepts from the book "Culturize: Every Student. Every Day. Whatever It Takes." by Jimmy Casas to emphasize the importance of positive school culture and how we can achieve it. We will also highlight Casas’ 4 core principles of positive school culture, discuss strategies to promote positive climate and culture, and the importance of adults’ well-being.</p> <p>Learning objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand why positive school culture improves student achievement and teacher satisfaction</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn strategies to improve their school culture with a focus on Jimmy Casas’ 4 core principle areas</li> <li>• Leaders vs Managers – learn about the power of empathy</li> <li>• Identify how prioritizing the well-being of adults increases positive student outcomes</li> </ul> <p><b>Parent &amp; Community Engagement from Scratch: A Recipe</b>  <b>Kargsia McDuffie</b>  Serve it, and they will come. All parents have an “appetite” to be involved in their students’ education and to be engaged by the school community—even if they may not know it or seek it on their own. This session will share the “ingredients” for creating a “stock” for Parent Engagement that encourages parents to “taste” and, hopefully, “savor” the critical role they play as stakeholders for their students and for their communities. Participants will reflect on their current parent engagement programs and identify three sustainable ways to either enhance or establish them.</p> <p><b>Strategic Planning - Make Positive Changes with Collaborative Efforts of Stakeholders</b>  <b>Christine Davis</b>  What is Strategic Planning? It’s a plan that guides your school to develop decisions and operations of the school, how to implement them, and reassess them as needed. Are you interested in learning about the process of how to involve stakeholders in evaluating and revising the school’s mission, vision, and more? If so, this session will provide you with a general understanding of the components of the Strategic Planning process that consultants use. Attendees will have a basic understanding of the four main elements involved in Strategic Planning. Attendees will have a better understanding of the process that schools have implemented or are looking to implement.</p>
<p><b>Thursday</b>  <b>3:30 – 4:30</b></p>	<p><b>Creating Equitable and Inclusive Learning Environments</b>  <b>Alexandria Renton</b>  <b>Christina Zontini</b>  Creating equitable and inclusive learning environments for all students should be a priority for district leaders. But what do we consider a truly inclusive and equitable education? This session will provide teachers and leaders with resources and supports to ensure that all students, regardless of ability, socioeconomic status, gender, race, and other factors are equitably included within the educational setting. There will be a specific focus on inclusion in the general education setting for two of our most vulnerable populations: students with disabilities and our English Language Learners. We will discuss the challenges these populations face and provide strategies for educators and leaders to ensure equitable inclusion. Attendees will be able to define inclusion and equity, identify limiting factors that prevent successful inclusion, and recognize the training and resources required for teachers to approach inclusion and equity with a positive frame of mind.</p> <p><b>Empowering School Culture: Supporting Educator and Student Mental Health</b>  <b>Jessica Muscanelli</b>  <b>Sarah White</b>  Have you hacked the code for building a positive school culture yet? In this interactive presentation, attendees will discover methods to best support the mental health of all educators, supporting staff, and students in their school community, as well as consider their own commitment to self-care. In the wake of the pandemic and day-to-day challenges educators are being faced with, the time is now to teach and practice self-care, as well as create a classroom for all students where a growth mindset approach is present. Through this interactive presentation, attendees will look inward at their own commitment to self-care and challenge themselves to meet their own needs in order to support their school building. Following this presentation, attendees will have the tools necessary to begin, or continue, working with their school(s) to build welcoming, kind, student-centered environments where everyone is a valued part of the community.</p>

	<p><b>Failing to Show Up: The root cause of Chronic Absenteeism and what school leaders can do about it</b>  <b>Tricia Pipitone</b>  Based on personally conducted interviews, research and experience, administrators, teachers, and staff feel a sense of hopelessness and helplessness when it comes to students’ poor attendance. Whether it’s showing up late or not at all, Chronic Absenteeism spiked during COVID and continues to be an area of concern in many schools. Students need help to build lifelong habits of showing up for themselves. We can only do this when we identify the cause to address it at its root. The presentation objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendees will learn what chronic absenteeism really is and how it is formed.</li> <li>• Attendees will learn strategies to help rebuild attendance habits.</li> <li>• Attendees will learn what question we need to ask of students.</li> <li>• Attendees will learn what it means to show up for yourself and others</li> </ul> <p><b>Planning the Pathway: From Kindergarten to Careers</b>  <b>Rebecca K. LaForest</b>  Schools aim to prepare students to become thriving, contributing members of our community. However, more recently, in a post-pandemic, technology-driven global society, our school-based practices often do not reflect the needs of the 21st-century workforce. This session will review traditional methods of career education in schools and compare them to the changing employment landscape, focusing on New York State. We will explore individual and societal barriers that affect success and identify strategies to improve school-based career development programming. We will highlight ways to garner support from and engage the community to create authentic and meaningful experiences. The resources provided are adaptable for various ages, abilities, interests, and local industries. Attendees will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gain insight into employment trends and school-level career planning strategies</li> <li>• employee diagnostic tools to evaluate career programing in your buildings</li> <li>• develop an outline and entry points to support career programming in your schools</li> </ul> <p>We hope you leave this session informed and invigorated to include career pathway planning as part of your building goals for the success of all students!</p>
<p><b>Friday</b>  <b>July 8</b>    <b>9:00 – 9:30</b></p>	<p><b>Marianne Young</b>  <b>Leadership Academy Director</b>  <b>A consideration to start the day: The “School Voice”</b></p>
<p><b>Friday</b>  <b>9:45 – 10:45</b></p>	<p><b>Promoting Student Success through Intentional Planning and Curriculum Development</b>  <b>Jacqueline Ziemek</b>  Creating equitable and inclusive learning environments for all students should be a priority for district leaders. But what do we consider a truly inclusive and equitable education? This session will provide teachers and leaders with resources and supports to ensure that all students, regardless of ability, socioeconomic status, gender, race, and other factors are equitably included within the education setting. There will be a specific focus on inclusion in the general education setting for two of our most vulnerable populations: students with disabilities and our English Language Learners. We will discuss the challenges these populations face and provide strategies for educators and leaders to ensure inclusion within the general education setting. Attendees will be able to define inclusion and equity, identify limiting factors that prevent successful inclusion, and recognize the training and resources required for teachers to approach inclusion and equity with a positive frame of mind.</p> <p><b>Creating a Positive Environment for ELL Students and Families in Your Building</b>  <b>Hunter Andrews</b>  <b>Joseph Pillitteri</b></p>

	<p>Engaging families in the process of developing a positive school environment is vital for all students to succeed. This is particularly important for English Language Learners and their families. Throughout the years, as educators and school administration, there seems to be a growing disconnect between ELL students, their families, their community, and school district. It is important for the district and teachers to have a full understanding of the ELL students' strengths and weaknesses, family, and cultural background. In this session, we will look at the need for engaging ELL families. Giving them a voice in their child's educational process is very important. We will explore the process of developing a committee for ELL students and their families.</p> <p>Participants will have the opportunity to brainstorm tasks and activities to present to the ELL families. Participants will examine state and federal guidelines on the best way to work with ELL students in the school setting. It is crucial that this is a district wide initiative and done throughout all grade levels so that the ELL students and their families feel fully supported. The devotion of a committee to ELL students and their families must occur on a district wide basis. By the end of this session, participants will take away two to three strategies as school leaders to develop a positive academic and educational experience for our ELL students and their families.</p> <p><b>Restorative Justice - The First Year</b>  <b>Stacey Muscato</b>  Implementing a restorative justice program in a school district can feel both exciting and overwhelming. This session will show how it was done in one urban middle school. Participants in this session will learn what worked successfully and what struggles the school went through. This session is not exhaustive but will outline a foundation on what steps a school can consider utilizing if they are looking to implement a restorative justice program in their school.</p> <p><b>The Role of Administrators in Creating a Positive School Climate</b>  <b>Kara Likar</b>  Administrators play a crucial role in determining the morale and the climate of any school. The best leaders make it clear the people in their building are important and they are appreciated, which in turn begins the creation of a positive school culture. In this session, we will explore the seven critical elements of a positive school climate and how administrators can create the trickledown effect within their buildings by "feeding the teachers!"  Book of Reference: <i>If You Don't Feed the Teachers, They Will Eat the Students</i> (Connors)</p>
<p><b>Friday</b>  <b>11:00 – 12:00</b></p>	<p><b>Student-Led Learning and Community: Lessons from an EL/Outward Bound &amp; Consortium High School</b>  <b>Lauren Moffett</b>  Leaders High School in Brooklyn, New York is a small public high school that values real-world oriented collaborative inquiry, authentic learning products, and close relationships that develop students' leadership, character, and active citizenship. Two vital structures guide this work: standards or mastery-based grading and a long-term social-emotional advisory program. Both make space for flexible curriculum and deep relationships with students and families. And the end results are filled with vibrant student learning opportunities and highlights of a close-knit school community. Participants in this session will learn about key instructional vision shifts they can make in their own schools to follow a standards-based model. They will also gain resources on the socio-emotional benefits of the Outward Bound Crew advisory model and discover how it transforms relationships within the school community. Participants will take with them ideas for how to innovate learning and community within existing parameters in their future school buildings or districts.</p> <p><b>Goldilocks Schools: Structuring Educational Communities to Enhance Teaching and Learning</b>  <b>Carrie Patch Knudsen</b></p>

While humans have evolved significantly over time, we are still social primates, only able to productively maintain a certain number of healthy, positive relationships. Based on evolutionary biologist Robin Dunbar's work, this presentation will examine the impact of school and/or cohort size on the efficacy of instruction and learning beyond the ubiquitous class sizes often discussed.

Attendees will interactively explore the characteristics of both small and large educational communities and can gain insight into how group size impacts communication positively and negatively. Attendees will leave with a stronger understanding of what makes school size "just-right" and with concrete ideas of how to structure their schools in the most effective way to enhance teaching and learning.

**Learning Together: The Role of Learning Walks in Collaborative Professional Development**  
**Justine Olszewski**

Collaboration. Reflection. Shared Vision. These three critical phrases are often tossed around in schools everywhere, but how can administrators support educators in finding opportunities to genuinely collaborate, reflect, and develop a shared vision? In this session, we will explore how Learning Walks can be used as a collaborative professional development tool that supports educators in continuous learning and professional growth through teamwork and conversation. Participants will discuss what collaboration, reflection, and shared vision mean to them, why it is important for educators, and reflect on its presence in their schools. Finally, using other successful Learning Walk examples as guides, attendees will have a chance to design a general framework for building a Learning Walk program in their school.

**Tracking Success: Models for Token Economies and Data Collection for Special Education Populations**  
**Jake Pinkston**  
**Ellie Rizzo**

The session will dive into behavior management systems for students on Autism and developmental disabilities as well as students with behavioral challenges that impact their learning in schools. We will present various models of tracking and rewards, discuss how to make it student-driven, and examine the data that can be gleaned from a robust system. We will also review the school-wide implementation, including staff training, teacher input, and creating alternative systems so that students with disabilities who are struggling have the support and opportunities to repair and grow outside of the traditional disciplinary system. Participants will have opportunities to discuss and troubleshoot their own school's systems and leave with templates and system documents to use.

**12:00 – 1:00:**  
**Lunch**  
**Campus Center**

**Friday**  
**1:00 – 2:00**

**What's Good for ELLs Is Good for All Students**  
**Mary Sandoval**

English Language Learners (ELLs) or Multilingual Learners (MLs) account for 10.4% of students in U.S. Schools (NCES, 2019). Whether you find yourself in a rural, suburban, or urban setting, the work needed to meet ELLs/MLs can have a positive impact on ALL your students.

In this session, we will examine how an assets-based approach and collaboration can lead to designing equitable instruction for ELLs/MLs, while also building culturally responsive relationships with students and their families.

Through collegial conversations, attendees will:

- reflect on their current practices as it relates to English Language Learners (ELLs) or Multilingual Learners (MLs) in their schools,
- examine principles and practices that support an assets-based, collaborative approach to supporting students and families, and
- identify areas that are viable options for improvement in their own school contexts.

	<p><b>Transformational Leadership: Achieving Success</b>  <b>Jonathan Parker</b>  Would you like to be a leader who is trusted, admired, and respected? All while teachers, staff and students perform beyond expectations. Sounds too good to be true, right? Well, it isn't. Transformational Leadership Theory has been around for over 40 years. This presentation will review Transformational Leadership from theory to practice.  Transformational Leadership style has been shown to increase job satisfaction, improve school climate, enhance the performance of schools, encourages creative problem solving, develops leaders from followers and increases staff commitment, capacity, and engagement in meeting goals.</p> <p><b>Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't</b>  <b>Nathaniel Reals</b>  Great leaders are what make organizations work. Sure, fear works too, but only to a point. If you want real sustainable success, consider Simon Sinek's book "Leaders Eat Last". In this presentation we'll take a deep dive into the strategies and mindsets many successful leaders use to create environments in which people naturally work together to create success. You'll learn the biology of organizational management and have an opportunity to synthesize these concepts into your own practice. We will also cover the long-term negative effects Cortisol can have on organizational success and discuss strategies to mitigate its influence.  All PSAL Standards will be addressed during this session.</p> <p><b>Bringing Restorative Practices to Your School</b>  <b>Jeff Augustine</b>  <b>Nathan Ellis</b>  Opposed to traditional disciplinary actions that center on punishment for misbehavior and breaking the rules, restorative practices offer schools an alternative method of discipline. Restorative approaches are designed to empower students to learn from their mistakes, to understand the impact of their actions, and to grow personally in their ability to problem-solve and make responsible decisions. Different processes like circles, conflict-resolution programs, peer-led practices, and more, are used instead of punitive discipline processes. Strategies are used within the school to help create a sense of community, build healthy relationships, and develop conflict resolution skills, sense of belonging, and agency.  Our presentation will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dive into the basics of restorative practices by definition</li> <li>• give examples of strategies that can be used to apply the principles of restorative practices to build community</li> <li>• and show how these strategies can help to improve school culture</li> </ul>
<p><b>Friday</b>  <b>2:15 – 3:15</b></p>	<p><b>Restorative Practices: An Alternative to Traditional Discipline</b>  <b>Mandy D'Andrea</b>  <b>Caryn Simone</b>  Join us in the global shift of discipline moving from punishments to "teachable moments" through restorative justice techniques. This positive approach to discipline emphasizes prosocial behavior and promotes conflict resolution and restitution to those harmed. If you are ready to seek concurrent accountability and behavioral change through restorative practices and want a clear understanding of restorative techniques and restorative circles this interactive workshop is for you!</p> <p><b>The Power of Purpose – Leadership is More than Checking the Box</b>  <b>Lisa Wilber</b>  Leadership is more than checking the box.</p>

	<p>Leadership is composed of communication and connections, transparency and truth, action and achievement, motivation and mindfulness, courage and character, innovation and integrity, growth, and goals.</p> <p>Educational and instructional leadership involve thinking deeper, communicating openly, mentoring, and guiding, asking questions, active listening and leading by example. Why must we embrace all these attributes? These characteristics are all apart of leadership and are a pathway to achievement. Leadership and achievement matter. Our students and stakeholders are human not just a number or a profile. Their interests, needs, and concerns should drive our educational platforms and instructional leadership goals, not be defined by numbers, guidelines, and regulations. Educational leadership is a complex and intricate web of performance, action, and outcomes. Our goal as educators is to promote education, learning and achievement.</p> <p>In this presentation you will examine the role of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the significance of smart goals in meeting performance outcomes</li> <li>• how questioning and reflection promote achievement</li> <li>• the effect of transparency and communication in establishing leadership</li> <li>• the importance of building relationships and collaboration</li> <li>• the role of leadership in determining success</li> </ul> <p><b>Navigating Difficult Conversations</b>  <b>Joshua Clark</b></p> <p>In this session, attendees will take away tools that they can use when having difficult conversations. Many times, administrators are tasked with the unenviable task of telling a teacher they won't be renewed for the following year, providing constructive criticism to a close colleague on how to better handle a situation, conducting a meeting during which a student with a difficult home life will be externally suspended; the list goes on. Navigating those difficult conversations and maintaining professional composure is a skill that can be learned. During the session, we will discuss excerpts from the book <i>Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most</i> by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, et. al. This book provides tips on how to navigate those awkward and difficult situations without getting defensive, taking things personally, and confusing the point of the conversation. Attendees will work together to model best practices for difficult conversations.</p> <p><b>Working Smart with MTSS- Best Design to Assess, Progress and Help Students Achieve Academic and Social-Emotional Success!</b>  <b>Jennifer Goire-Peralta</b></p> <p>Aiming to assess, progress and help students achieve academic and social-emotional success requires addressing the whole child. Let's face it, our educational roles and expectations are constantly evolving! Teachers and support staff are constantly summoned to various trainings and workshops that may promote best practices but are often well beyond their professional practice. It has become quite challenging and daunting to keep up with the demands of school and district wide initiatives/programs such as SEL, PBIS, DASA and the plethora of support service acronyms that have become impossible for educators to keep up with. The time to work smarter is now!</p> <p>The current state of the world is making its way into the classrooms, causing burn-out, trauma and overall learning/teaching barriers that impact all. An effective approach to aide teachers in doing their job and meeting such demands is the adoption of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS).</p> <p>Have questions or made comments such as "what else do they want me to do," "who has time for that," or "why can't I just teach?" This interactive experience will allow the audience to learn teacher-friendly ways to organize, structure, and streamline existing district and school-wide initiatives/programs that supports whole-child learning. By the <b>time</b> the audience returns to work, they will also have learned how to merge the many existing programs and frameworks into instructional time/schedule to increase teacher buy-in and overall utilization of such efforts with validity and fidelity.</p>
<p><b>Friday July 8</b></p>	<p><b>Dr. Vernee Butterfield</b>  <b>Courageous Conversations about Race</b></p>

## Presenter Bios

**Vernee Butterfield, Ph.D.** currently works at the Booker T. Washington Academy in New Haven, CT, recruiting teachers and providing professional development for educators regarding Racial Equity. In addition to her role at Booker T. Washington Academy, she provides Racial Equity training for schools and medical institutions both nationally and internationally.

Dr. Butterfield attended Tufts University and earned a B.A. in English and Spanish. She later attended Howard University and earned an M.S. in Speech-Language Pathology and practiced bilingual speech-language pathology, internationally and in the United States.

Dr. Butterfield earned her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on Urban Education at Texas A&M University.

Dr. Butterfield was a member of the 2014 Leadership Academy cohort.

**Hunter Andrews** joined the Wallkill Central School District and Wallkill Senior High School in 2016 as a member of the Social Studies department. In 2021, he remained in the Social Studies Department contractually, but took on a new role as the Dean of Students at the same school in which he taught social studies for the previous five school years. As the Dean of Students, Hunter is also the Boys Basketball coach at the varsity level. He runs the National Honor Society, PBIS program, and helps to run the Panther Cub mentoring program.

**Jeff Augustine** joined Newfield Central School District in 2003 as a member of the High School Special Education department. Prior to his tenure at Newfield, Jeff taught in Washington, DC at the Learning Center, an alternative residential learning environment. While at the Learning Center, Jeff designed a therapeutic, outdoor education program in which all students participated monthly. At Newfield Central Schools High School, Jeff has worked with students in courses such as Resource Room, co-taught math, and co-taught science. He has also served in the capacity of Athletic Director, varsity boys basketball coach, and varsity baseball coach. Born in New Hartford, NY Jeff was raised across upstate NY through 6th grade and then Maplewood, NJ where he attended Columbia High School and went on to earn his Bachelor of Arts degree at Richard Stockton College in Environmental Sciences. He holds a Master of Arts degree from the George Washington University in Transitional Special Education, with a concentration in Emotional Disturbances. Jeff continues his education through the Council for Exceptional Children and New York State Athletic Administrators' Association. Jeff believes all students have the potential to learn from their experiences and each other and that it is the role of educators to provide the opportunity for that process.

**Rebecca Ballantine** has been a NYC educator for 27 years. Her focus has been literacy and equity. Rebecca has worked as a humanities teacher, advisor, curriculum coach, and reading specialist.

Rebecca enjoys working with teachers, leading professional learning for teachers in her school and throughout the City. She worked as an instructional coach for several NYC high schools and has taught graduate classes in Adolescent Literacy at LIU.

Her interest in supporting the success of all students is evident in her work of redesigning her school's intervention programs and working with teachers to reimagine curricula to be more culturally responsive and focused on high degrees of student voice and agency. She co-authored an article titled, "Intervention as an Inside Job" (Educational Leadership, 10/2010).

She earned her BA at the University of Pennsylvania and a MA from Teachers College and a Master of Science degree in Advanced Literacy Specialization from Bank Street College.

**Laura Braid** joined her alma mater, Gates Chili Central School District, in 2003 as a member of the Science department. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree at SUNY Geneseo in Secondary Education with a concentration in Biology and Chemistry and holds a Master of Science in Education degree in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

In addition to teaching Chemistry, this is her 9<sup>th</sup> year serving as the Secondary Science Curriculum Leader and National Honor Society co-advisor. Mrs. Braid enjoys providing Science program leadership and is a member of committees that support the district's Strategic Plan for Equity.

Mrs. Braid believes in a collaborative team approach to education that capitalizes on diverse strengths in others. When educators empower connections, there is no limit in the chain of potential. A favorite quote of Mrs. Braid's is by Edith Wharton: "There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it."

**Catherine Casey** joined Bethlehem Central Middle School in 2008 as a member of the English department. Prior to her tenure at Bethlehem Middle School, Catherine worked in higher education, professional training, and public relations. Catherine has worked with students in seventh and eighth grade English as well as in the Response to Intervention program. She also serves as a district technology coach and in the capacity of adviser to the Eagle Eye student newspaper and the school yearbook. Born in California and raised in New York, Catherine attended Monroe-Woodbury High School, and earned her Bachelor of Arts degree at SUNY Geneseo in

2005. She holds a Master of Science degree in Adolescent Education from The College of Saint Rose. In 2021, Catherine was accepted into the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Leadership Academy to be certified as a School Building Leader.

**Joshua Clark** is the interim vice principal at Edward Bellamy Middle School. Prior to starting that role in February, Clark was a history teacher at Chicopee Comprehensive High School. He also graduated from CCHS in 2011.

Mr. Clark attended Westfield State University and earned his Bachelor of Arts in history. He was the editor-in-chief of campus newspaper and vice president of the Student Government Association. He holds an M.Ed. from Elms College and is preparing his thesis defense for his master's in history at UMass Boston. He is the chairman of three city boards and member of various boards of directors in the Pioneer Valley including the Westfield State Alumni Association.

Clark believes that every child deserves a fair and appropriate education, no matter what needs to be done to provide that. He argues that our schools need to adjust to student needs, not students adjusting to our needs. Whatever students need, he wants to be able to provide it.

**Christian Clarke** joined the New York City Department of Education in 2001. Since 2014 he has been a member of the English Language Arts department of Brooklyn Technical High School, where he teaches American literature and drama. Since 2019 he has also been a dean in the Office of Health & Safety. He is also the founder and director of the Bronx Loaf Teen Writers' Conference. Mr. Clarke's focus in education is critical thinking and creative expression.

Raised semi-nomadically throughout the Midwest, Christian earned a dual bachelor's degree in English and History from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Christian holds a Master of Arts in English with a concentration in education grades 7-12. He continues his education through the Leadership Academy at the Massachusetts Academy of Liberal Arts.

Mr. Clarke believes education is key to creating our best selves, that it provides us with the tools to be lifelong learners, regardless of race, creed, gender, neurotypicality, politics or background.

**Jonathan Cruz** joined Poughkeepsie High School in 2016 as a member of the Special Education/Math department. Prior to this, Mr. Cruz taught in New York City at Mott Hall Bronx High School.

Jonathan has worked with students in courses such as Algebra 1, Geometry, Spanish 1, Global 1, Participation Government, Financial Algebra and English 1.

Born and raised in the Bronx, NY, Mr. Cruz attended Lehman High School, earned his Bachelor of Arts degree at John College of Criminal Justice in Forensic Psychology with a concentration in Criminology. He holds a Master of Science degree from Hunter College in Teaching Students with Disabilities Grades 7-12.

He is a member of the U.S. Army Reserves and uses his knowledge to help mentor students who have questions about the military. He enjoys working with students with disabilities and has a passion to ensure they all receive a proper and equitable education.

**Mandy D'Andrea** joined the Myers Education Center, in Saratoga Springs, New York, as a member of the School Counseling Department and is currently the Dean of Students. Prior to a career in education, Ms. D'Andrea worked in the New York State Executive Chamber, Empire State Development Corporation, and served as Vice President of Whelan Media Strategies.

Ms. D'Andrea leads the Myers Center Equity-based MTSS Team, is the building's No Place for Hate Coordinator, a member of the WSWHE BOCES W.I.D.E. Committee, is TCIS and BoysTown trained.

In her community, Ms. D'Andrea is a parent member of the Saratoga Springs School District D.E.I. Committee, volunteers for Saratoga Bridges, and is current President of the Saratoga Golf & Polo Club.

Ms. D'Andrea earned her B.A. at Siena College, M.S. in Education in School Counseling from The College of Saint Rose. She is a passionate advocate for students' individual pathways, believing all students have the right to learn!

**Christine Davis** has been at South Kortright Central School since 2007. Prior to her tenure there, she taught at SUNY Delhi as an adjunct mathematics professor and spent two summers at the Henry Johnson Youth Leadership Academy as a summer schoolteacher for incarcerated boys. Christine has also worked teaching mathematics to English Language Learners with a translator. She is currently serving as a Secretary for the Catskill Regional Teacher Center and the NYS Mathematics Honor Society. Christine believes it is absolutely crucial to build relationships with one another and to build an understanding of oneself. Knowing your core values and recognizing how it impacts decisions is imperative to becoming a successful leader and educator.

**Michelle Dossier** is concluding her 21<sup>st</sup> year as a secondary mathematics teacher at Gates Chili High School in Rochester, NY. For the last 3 months she has been the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Interim Assistant Principal. Most recently Michelle Dossier has been named the Mathematics Curriculum Leader for grades 6-12. Her goal is to be able to be an educational leader who will work tirelessly to provide equity for all learners, in a school system that will continually be making strides towards improvement. She would like to be able to help change the thinking and behaviors of all students to achieve success while being sensitive to the needs of every child. As Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Change does not roll in on wheels of inevitability but comes through continuous struggle."

**Nathan Ellis** joined Berlin Central School District in September 2014 as a member of the Math department. Nathan has worked with students in many diverse middle/high school courses. He also served in the capacity as Team Leader in middle/high school levels. He has coached Modified, JV, Varsity Coach of Basketball, MasterMinds, Modified Baseball, Class Advisor, and Educational Technology Specialist. Born and raised in Upstate NY, Nathan attended Berlin High School, earned his Bachelor of Secondary Education degree at The College of Saint Rose in December 2010 with a concentration in Mathematics, and holds a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction. Nathan continues his education through MCLA, in pursuit of his SBL and SDL. Nathan values hard work, high character, a growth mindset, and a willingness to do whatever it takes to help people. Nathan's personality can be described by a quote from Lewis Carrol: "I can't go back to yesterday because I was a different person then."

**Ryan Fedele** joined the Fonda-Fultonville Central School District in the 2012-2013 school year as a member of the High School Counseling Department. Prior to his tenure at FFCS, Ryan Fedele worked as an intensive case manager for Parsons' Children and Family Services, Troy High School S.T.E.P. Program, and as a Biology Teacher in Albany and Atlanta Georgia. Born and raised in Albany, New York, Ryan has his associates degree in Wildlife Management, from SUNY Cobleskill, Bachelor's from SUNY Albany, and a Master's in Education in Professional School Counseling from SAGE Graduate School. Ryan continues his education through professional development opportunities through CASDA, NERIC, and opportunities throughout the capital district of New York. Ryan is particularly interested in areas of alternative education, working with students of trauma, and alternative disciplinary models. Ryan is the chair of the FFCS SEL Committee, the DASA coordinator, and is the department chair of the school counseling program. Ryan believes in a student centered and student's first approach when it comes to all aspects of learning, and recognizes the value in putting students in charge of their educational decisions.

**Mrs. Christy Ferri** joined the Schenectady City School District in the 2017-2018 school year as a member of the General Education Continuum department. She recently accepted a position as the Assistant Principal at Paige Elementary School. Raised in upstate New York, Mrs. Ferri earned an associate's degree in Liberal Arts-Humanities and Social Sciences from SUNY Schenectady County Community College. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree at Rhode Island College in Providence, Rhode Island, concentrating in Elementary and Special Education. She holds a Master of Science degree in Childhood Education from the State University of New York at Albany. Mrs. Ferri is committed to equity and providing for students' needs socially, academically, and behaviorally. She believes that race, disability, or socioeconomic status, should not be predictors of student achievement. In her free time, Mrs. Ferri enjoys hiking in the Adirondacks with her Golden Retriever.

**Jennifer Goire-Peralta** began her career as a director of community-based organizations throughout lower Westchester County, NY and the Bronx, NY. She then served as an elementary school counselor for the Mount Vernon City School District (MVSD) in Westchester, NY. Mrs. Goire-Peralta is an educational leader and advocate for all students and families. She is focused on addressing the needs of teachers, students and families that serve as direct barriers to learning. Mrs. Goire-Peralta is a member of the NYS & American School Counseling Associations. She is an active leader of and holds positions in the following teams/committees within the MVCSD: Advisory Council, RTI District & Building Design Team, Character Ed/SEL Staff Trainer, PBIS District Liaison/Trainer, No Place for Hate & DASA Coordinator, and PTA Workshop Presenter. Mrs. Goire-Peralta enjoys working with all age groups and firmly believes that with communication, collaboration and some compassion, anything is possible for students!

**James Haertel** joined Colonie Central High School in 2017 as a member of the Music Department. James has worked with bands of all ability levels, chamber music ensembles, music theory, and small group lessons for all band instruments. He also is the faculty advisor of CCHS's Gender/Sexuality Alliance, and co-faculty advisor/co-director/and Vocal Music Director for CCHS's drama club. Born in Latham, New York, James attended Shaker High School, earned his Bachelor of Music degree at SUNY Potsdam's Crane School of Music with a concentration in Music Education and Flute Performance. He holds a Master of Music degree from The University of Hartford's Hartt School of Music with a concentration in Music Education/Pedagogy. James continues his education through working towards his school building level administration certificate at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, involving himself with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work, as well as serving on the Board of Directors for The Empire State Youth Orchestra.

**Nichole Huskie**, MS/HS principal, joined the faculty of Fort Ann Central School in 2006 as a member of the Science department. In addition to her experience as a science educator, Nichole has also developed school recognition programs to promote positive behavior, decrease truancy and acknowledge and nurture academic growth and excellence. Nichole was named as a New York State Master Teacher in 2013 for her excellence in STEM teaching – a position she held for 4 years. She has held the position of Teacher Leader within her district since 2010 and has worked with WSWHE BOCES to organize and execute professional development opportunities for multiple districts.

Nichole attended Glens Falls High School, earned her Bachelor of Science degree at SUNY Geneseo in Biology with a concentration in Chemistry. She holds a Master of Science degree in Secondary Education. Nichole continues her education through Massachusetts of Liberal Arts, pursuing her School Building Leader certification.

**Sean Kelly** was appointed Assistant Principal for Nanuet Senior High School in May 2022. Kelly had previously served as the Social Studies Chairperson and Dean of Students at Nanuet High School which is located in Rockland County, NY.

Kelly has been instrumental in leading the Social Studies department as it transitions to two new New York State Frameworks Regents exams in United States History and Global 10 and spearheading the district's efforts to install the New York State's Seal of Civic Readiness program in the Fall of 2022.

Prior to his tenure at Nanuet, Kelly was recognized as an Urban Master Teacher for his work at P.S./M.S. 15 in the Bronx, NY. Kelly attended Fordham Prep and the University of Scranton where he earned a B.A. in both History and Communications. Kelly holds a master's degree in Secondary Education from Teachers College at Columbia University.

**Rebecca LaForest** joined the Cohoes City School District in 2018 as the 8th-grade Technology teacher. Effective February 2022, she transitioned into the role of Career Education Coordinator. Prior, Rebecca worked in various capacities from teacher to case worker, to positively impact youth focusing on those at-risk.

Rebecca was born and raised in New York's Capital Region, graduating from Cohoes High School in 2002. She earned a bachelor's degree at SUNY New Paltz in Mathematics Secondary Education and a Master's in Adolescent Special Education at CUNY Lehman. She holds a Master's in Nanoscale Engineering from SUNY Albany, with a published thesis entitled STEM Education: A Programmatic & Economic Analysis. Rebecca is currently in MCLA's Leadership Academy.

Rebecca believes every child has the right to a prosperous future and understands that students cannot pursue opportunities if they are unaware. She believes we must prepare youth to be successful advocates in an ever-changing world.

**Kara Likar** became a teacher at Acadia Middle School, in the Shenendehowa Central School District, in 2005. Prior to her tenure at Shenendehowa CSD, Kara began her career at Elmont Memorial High School in Long Island teaching there for one year.

Kara earned her Bachelor's in Secondary Education with a concentration in social studies at Molloy College in Rockville Center. She holds a Master of Social Studies Secondary Education from the University at Albany. Kara continues her education through the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts where she is pursuing certification in School Building Leadership.

Kara's main priority as a teacher is to build positive relationships with her students. She believes there is "no one size fits all" approach to education. Students are different and those differences should be celebrated and respected by educators. She believes schools should be positive, safe, nurturing environments for all students.

**Stephanie Marcinko** has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the State University of New York College at Geneseo and a master's degree in Childhood Education from the College of Saint Rose. Stephanie is a 17-year veteran educator who has spent most of her career supporting students in the primary grades. Stephanie currently serves as a Teacher Leader and sits on her school's RTI Team. In her current position as K-2 AIS provider, she has been tasked with ensuring that every student has a chance to succeed in math. Making data informed decisions is always at the forefront of Stephanie's mind. Making RTI work for everyone is an ongoing challenge for many educators; Stephanie hopes to share her experience and expertise to make this less of a challenge.

**Kargsia McDuffie** joined Schenectady City School District (SCSD) in August of 2019, first as an assistant principal and was then promoted to cohort principal for the Class of 2023. She currently leads the building of the high school parent engagement program. Prior to joining SCSD, Kargsia served as a professional development specialist and assistant principal with District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and principal of the Middle School Division of HYDE Leadership Public Charter School; she taught English and the Humanities for 10 years, 3 of these within an International Baccalaureate high school program.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Kargsia earned her bachelor's at Pennsylvania State University. She holds a master's from Columbia University, Teachers College.

Kargsia believes as an educational leader she is in her role to serve—that her role exists to serve those she leads.

**Mark Millington** joined the PS12 ALP in 2014 as a tutor for students with behavioral issues in both the day school and after school suspension program. Additionally, he took a full-time position as a Social Studies teacher for grades 8-10 in August of 2016. He strongly believes the key to education is developing positive relationships. Mark has worked with students in courses such as American History and Global History, as well as serving in the capacity of head mentor in the My Brother's Keeper program aimed at enriching the life experiences and education of young men of color. Mark also is a tutor at the Sunset program, a night school initiative aimed at helping high school students who cannot attend the traditional day school earn their diploma. Born and raised in Troy, NY. Mark earned his Bachelor of Secondary Education degree at SUNY Oneonta. He holds a Master of Education degree in Educational Technology.

**Lauren Moffett** is a secondary teacher at Leaders High School, Brooklyn, NY and uses she/ella/她 pronouns. She leads the World Language department and the English as a New Language (ENL) department as the ELL/MLL Coordinator. Before Leaders, she taught

at a middle school and worked in programs administration for a K-12 world language education grant initiative. She has led school-level professional development, network-wide sessions, and conference sessions on teacher action research and designing culturally responsive programming. A Bethune Fellow, Teachers for Equity (T4E) and Fund for Teachers Fellow, she continually seeks to improve the outcomes and experiences of historically underserved populations in public education.

**Jennifer Mousseau** is a school counselor at Beekmantown Central School District in West Chazy, NY. She has worked as a professional school counselor in upstate NY for the last 21 years. Ms. Mousseau has provided advocacy and school counseling support and services for high school students, elementary students within a self-contained classroom, and students preparing for the GED. Ms. Mousseau was part of the schooling counseling team who became New York State's first American School Counseling Association Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP). Ms. Mousseau was an expert panelist at the NYS School Counseling Summit and served as NYSSCA's Vice President for Secondary Level. At Beekmantown High School, she formed a Culture Team to enhance school climate and incorporate PBIS practices and SEL opportunities school wide. She believes in a proactive, focused, and positive collaborative approach so that all stakeholders are engaged and supported in education.

**Jessica Muscanelli** is an elementary education teacher in the Burnt Hills - Ballston Lake CSD with an additional background in Special Education. Jessica has taught in various learning communities, gaining experiences in rural, urban, and suburban school settings. She has continued her professional learning through various BOCES courses, PD offerings, and pursuing a leadership licensure at MCLA.

Ms. Muscanelli has worked in behavioral intervention programs as well as taught for nine years as an inclusive teacher. Additionally, she has served on many building and district committees such as: Health and Safety Committee, Drama Club, Positive School Climate Committee, Technology Committee, PD Committee, Building and Representative Council, as well as serving as an ELA Committee Chair Representative for her district.

Jessica believes in the importance of empowering staff by building a positive school climate. She is passionate about creating strong partnerships through collaboration, communication, and respect. Jessica believes that success stems from being an active member in the school's professional learning community as well as advocating for students, families, and staff.

**Stacey L. Muscato** currently works at Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School as a history teacher and an administrative intern. Over the course of her sixteen-year career, Stacey has worked with students in grades 7-12 in social studies classes. Additionally, she supervises the Mediation Matters program currently implemented in Myers Middle School. Throughout her career she has run National Junior Honors Society, led 7th and 8th grades teams, and co-facilitated PBIS, Climate and Restorative Justice teams. Mrs. Muscato earned her Associates of Arts degree at Our Lady of Elms College with a major in Paralegal Studies, her Bachelor of Arts degree at Russell Sage College with a major in History and holds a Master of Teaching degree from Sage Graduate school. Mrs. Muscato is continuing her education through the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts pursuing her administration degree. Mrs. Muscato is an Executive Board member and past-President and Vice President of the Capital District Council for the Social Studies.

**Justine Olszewski** joined the Canandaigua City School District in 2022 as a member of the 1st grade Special Education team. Prior to her time in Canandaigua, she has worked with a variety of students and educators throughout her career in Texas, Delaware and New York in elementary special education and secondary Spanish.

Born in Moravia, NY, Justine attended Moravia High School, earned her B.A. from Wells College in Aurora, NY majoring in Spanish: Foreign Languages, Literatures, & Cultures and Secondary Education. She holds a Master of Education degree in Learning Disabilities and Behavior Disorders from the University of Texas at Austin in Austin, TX.

Justine's primary area of interest lies in the correlation between positive behavior support and developing meaningful relationships, and their positive impact on behavior management in the classroom setting. She is a true believer that when provided with the appropriate support and guidance, all learners – children and adults – are capable of growth and success.

**Jonathan Parker** is currently a School Psychologist with the City School District of Albany.

He earned his bachelor's degree at the State University at Albany with a concentration in Psychology. He holds a Master of Science (M.S.) in Educational Psychology and a Certificate of Advanced Study (C.A.S.) in School Psychology. He holds certificates in Parent Management Training, Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools, and Trauma Informed Therapy.

Jonathan continues his education through the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts pursuing an administration degree. His work has contributed to students receiving additional supports in education, district procedural changes in progress monitoring and improved efficiency with the schools' academic and behavioral teams in implementing a multi-tiered system of supports model.

He enjoys reading, woodworking, golf, and spending time with his amazing daughters.

**Carrie Patch Knudsen** is a classroom literacy teacher and specialist in the suburban East Greenbush Schools. Before that, Carrie was a teacher at two small, rural private schools. Over the years, she has also been a Wilderness Director, a No Place for Hate advisor, a

board member, a Banana Splits facilitator, and a teacher in Edinburgh, Scotland. Born in New Paltz, NY, Carrie earned her Bachelor of Arts degree at Hamilton College with a concentration in Theatre. She also holds a dual Master of Science degree in Teaching Literacy and Childhood Education from Bank Street College. Ms. Patch Knudsen believes that educators are lifelong learners. Currently, she is leading a district-wide book study on Anti-bias Anti-racist teaching. She also facilitated a virtual workshop entitled "Holding Space and Sharing Resources with Hamiltonians Who Parent" at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to her professional endeavors, Carrie enjoys hiking with her family, practicing yoga, and ravenous reading.

**Joseph Pillitteri** joined the Wallkill Central School District in 2018 as a member of the Social Studies Department at John G. Borden Middle School. In September of 2021, Joseph transferred to the Social Studies Department at Wallkill Senior High School. Born and raised in Wallkill, New York, Mr. Pillitteri attended Wallkill Senior High School and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree at Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh, NY in History with a concentration in Adolescence Education and Special Education. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Educational Psychology from Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY. Mr. Pillitteri continues his education through many professional development opportunities, while also returning to school as a member of MCLA's Leadership Academy. Mr. Pillitteri works tirelessly to achieve his goals and develop the best educational experience for all students he encounters. He works hard within the Wallkill Community as an educator and a coach to lead his student-athletes towards a successful future.

**Jake Pinkston** has been an educator for 13 years, specializing in populations with behavioral, emotional, and social challenges. He began teaching his teaching career in La Ceiba, Honduras as a science and history teacher at a small bilingual secondary school. Upon returning to the United States, he made the switch to special education. At Hillcrest Educational Centers in Western Massachusetts, he taught high school students in a self-contained classroom at a residential facility. The population was primarily young women stepping down from long-term psychiatric care with the goal of returning to their communities and home school districts. After five years he transitioned to what is now W. E. B. Du Bois Regional Middle School. For the past 6 years, he has run an inclusion program for middle school students with a variety of mental health and behavioral challenges. As the lead teacher of the Therapeutic Learning Center, he is a jack of all trades. He develops and implements custom behavior plans for each student, co-teaches math and ELA, schedules and supervises 5 paraprofessionals who support students in the classroom, and serves as a lead crisis responder in the building. He is an ardent supporter of inclusion education for all students and addressing behavior issues with skills building and restorative practices.

**Tricia Pipitone** is an educator and administrative intern with over 20 years' experience. She works with children, not just to educate them academically but also to help them see their value and what gifts they have to offer this world. As a relentless defender of justice for our youth and for the freedom and safety it takes to be authentic, she advocates for our youth to know and believe they have limitless potential in this world. Tricia is passionate about and dedicated to creating a ripple of positive change in this world. Tricia is an educator certified for general and special education with experience working in and with many different grade levels and classroom settings. She is a lifelong learner and seeker of personal growth. Most recently teaming up with Renee Gambino to inspire and motivate others to help our youth and future generations become better decision makers and change makers. It's all about the ripple!

**Travis Poirot** is the Assistant Principal at Williamstown Elementary School. Prior to his tenure at Williamstown Elementary School Travis taught in the Cornerstone Program at Hoosac Valley Elementary School for 11 years. The Cornerstone Program is designed for students with social-emotional and behavioral disabilities in kindergarten through 5th grade.

Travis is an advocate of students with social/emotional and behavioral disabilities and strives to make sure that all students are given the services they require to access their education in a safe learning environment with the support that they need to be successful.

Travis believes that the foundation of success in education is building relationships with students, families, and staff to create a positive environment where all feel safe and welcome. He believes that we all must meet the fundamental needs of our children and families before expecting them to have academic success in the classroom.

**Nathaniel Reals** currently teaches at the Mechanicville City School District and has 20 years of experience making the world of business accessible to his students. Mr. Reals also has extensive negotiation experience from his previous career in business and as the Mechanicville Teachers' Association lead negotiator.

Mr. Reals earned his bachelor's degree from the University at Albany in Psychology with a Minor in Business Administration. He also holds a master's degree in Education from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and is a member of the Business and Marketing Educators' Association.

Nathaniel believes the purpose of education is to provide students with problem solving tools needed for happy, productive lives. For the education system to accomplish this task, he believes a safe, nurturing environment must exist and makes this a priority for all the students he teaches.

Born and raised in Richmond, Massachusetts, **Alexandria Renton** is a special education teacher currently employed at Gateway Regional High School. Next year she will hold a position at McCann Technical School as a Special Education Instructor. Alexandria earned a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science as well as a Master of Education from MCLA. She is currently continuing her education through the MCLA Leadership Academy where she will earn an administrative license.

Alexandria's experiences in the classroom include substantially separate behavior and life skills programs, residential programs, and full inclusion settings. She is well versed in working with students with a variety of disabilities and believes that each student has their own unique place in the classroom where they can contribute meaningfully to the environment. Her work focuses on creating inclusive, collaborative, and equitable environments for all learners where each student can have meaningful school experiences.

**Rachel Ribis** was raised in rural Upstate New York and is currently serving as an Assistant Principal at Peru Middle School. She holds two Bachelor of Science degrees in Criminal Justice, as well as French. She holds a Master of Science in Teaching degree with a French Concentration. Rachel continued her education through the Leadership Academy at the Massachusetts Academy of Liberal Arts.

Mrs. Ribis is committed to putting the student first, regardless of race, creed, gender, neurotypicality, politics or background. She recognizes the intrinsic value of patience, kindness, organization, and good communication. Rachel enjoys interacting with those in her community and organizing various activities to further the experiences of her students.

**Ellen Rizzo**, Special Education Teacher, M.Ed.

Ellie currently teaches students with moderate and severe disabilities specializing in autism spectrum disorders and other Developmental Disabilities at W.E.B. Du Bois Regional Middle School. Currently in her 10<sup>th</sup> year of teaching, Ellie has previously taught at specialized schools for students with Autism at the May Institute and Hillcrest Educational Centers. Ellie serves as a mentor to colleagues, MA Alternative Assessment Specialist Trainer, and Coordinator of Developmental Disabilities Specialized Programming within her district. Ellie is dedicated to giving back to her community and enjoys spending time with her family, especially on Greenwater Pond. Ellie believes in creating learning environments for both staff and students to reach their full potential. A deep passion for Ellie is providing quality education including high levels of inclusion opportunities for all students regardless of their abilities. Ellie is committed to her role as an advocate for her students and their families. Ellie values continuous education and recognizes the importance of refining strategies.

Originally from Tingo Maria, Peru, **Mary Sandoval** is currently an ENL and Literacy Lessons teacher in the Guilderland School District. Throughout her 15 years as an educator, Ms. Sandoval has worked with students in kindergarten through 12th grade in Integrated classroom settings, sheltered English language development classes, and as a literacy interventionist. Additionally, she serves in the capacity of Elementary ENL Teacher Leader and mentors new teachers in her school and department each year.

In the summer, Ms. Sandoval has the great honor of teaching as part of Clarkson University's TESOL Department. She is also a member of the New York State TESOL Association and serves as a co-chair for the Capital Region Leadership Team. She enjoys the work of advocating for equitable educational experiences for MLs and uses her growing network to champion this cause. Ms. Sandoval values the experiences that her students, their families, and her colleagues bring to school each day. She recognizes that relationships, reflection, and a commitment to continuous learning will support the growth of all members of a learning community.

**Caryn Simone** joined the Shenendehowa School District in 2006 as a member of the school counseling department. Ms. Simone earned a Bachelor of Arts at St. John Fisher College in Elementary Education and Psychology. She holds a Master of Science in Education in School Counseling and School Building and District Leadership certification through Massachusetts's College of Liberal Arts. Ms. Simone is a member of the District's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity Committee and the K-12 School Counseling Advisory Committee. She has taken an active role in revamping the Middle School Code of Conduct to make it more culturally sensitive and inclusive for every student. Her initiative in a restorative approach to discipline and changing behaviors has been adopted in various buildings within the district. Ms. Simone enjoys the work of providing all students with an equitable education that fosters the whole child.

**Kristen Strothmann** joined Red Hook Central School District in 2015 as a member of the special education department. Prior to her tenure at Red Hook, Kristen taught special education in Poughkeepsie City School District and Watervliet City School District. She was born and raised in Poughkeepsie, NY, attended Arlington High School, and went on to earn a Bachelor of Science in Childhood Education at SUNY Cortland. She holds a dual Master of Science from SUNY Albany in Teaching Students with Disabilities and Literacy.

Ms. Strothmann is passionate about putting people before programs. While high-quality curriculum and instructional practices impact learning, she envisions and hopes for a school system that prioritizes educating the whole child. She believes valuing the children and adults we work with leads to joyful and productive schools, and when teachers and students feel supported, they are willing to take risks and fully commit to improving their teaching and learning.

**Shannon E. Toomey** is currently a special education teacher at Boght Hills Elementary School in Latham, New York. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree at Russell Sage College in Elementary Education and Psychology. She holds a dual master's degree in Special Education and Reading from Sage Graduate School. She has spent her 20-year career working as a reading specialist and special education teacher at the elementary level. She has demonstrated skills as a teacher leader, joining various district level teams and as the sub-committee on special education co-chairperson. She is passionate about supporting struggling students and ensuring high quality instruction both in the classroom and intervention settings.

**Sarah White** joined Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake School District in 2003 as a member of the Fine Arts faculty and now serves as the District Fine Arts Administrator.

Born and raised in Ballston Lake, NY, Sarah earned her Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education at the Crane School of Music with a concentration in Vocal Studies. She holds a Master of Music degree from the College of Saint Rose.

Sarah has worked with over 1,800 students teaching general music classes, chorus ensembles, and directing Drama Club. She currently serves as Building Technology Coordinator and sits on the Professional Learning Plan Committee, which seeks to develop a high quality and inspirational plan for future professional learning opportunities.

Ms. White was the 2013 recipient of the BHBL Founder's Day award. Her creative work can be found in *Sing a Song, Play a Game* by Aimee Curtis Pfitzner, a collection of singing games from around the world.

**Lisa M. Wilber** is an SBL candidate and 2021-2022 cohort member of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. Lisa is currently the Library Media Specialist, Coordinator for the ODY Afterschool Program and Chair of the Technology Committee at Owen D. Young CSD. She holds degrees in Interior Design, Art History and Elementary Education. Lisa serves as advisor for the ODY Student Council and has led her district's College for Every Student program to be awarded School of Distinction three years in a row. She has negotiated five contracts as a union leader and President. Lisa has served on the NYS Mathematics Standards Review Committee (PK-2 grade), with Questar, The Mohawk Valley Teacher Center, participated in Instructional Rounds, served as Dignity Coordinator, aided in designing ODY's Annual Professional Performance Review, and presented professional development for BOCES and within her district. She is currently President and Trustee of The Jordanville Public Library.

**Jacqueline Ziemek** has been a Chemistry teacher for the past twelve years at both the high school and college level. She earned her master's degree from New York University in Secondary Science Education, and her bachelor's degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Chemistry. Jacqueline has taught as a science teacher at Coalition School for Social Change in New York City, at Berkshire Community College as an adjunct faculty member, and she currently teaches at Taconic High School in Pittsfield, MA. During her time at Taconic High School, she has been a member of the Instructional Leadership Team and the Equity Team. Jacqueline's educational passions include ensuring that foster teens get the support they need in school and working with teachers to enhance their instructional practice.

**Christina Zontini** earned her Bachelor of Science degree at the College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York for Childhood Education and Special Education with a concentration in Spanish. She holds a Master of Science degree from the University at Albany in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). She is currently pursuing her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction at the University at Albany.

Christina currently works as a 4<sup>th</sup> grade sheltered elementary teacher at the Albany International Center (AIC) in Albany, New York. This school is specifically designed to educate and support newcomer English language learners (ELLs). During her time at AIC, Christina has been a member and facilitator of the Building Leadership Team, MTSS core committee, PBIS committee, and Tier 2/3 Behavior Team. Christina is passionate about teaching ELLs and ensuring equitable inclusion for all students.

When not working, Christina enjoys spending time with her new baby, Vincenzo, that she welcomed this June.