



Meet the Social Studies Accelerator Teacher Advisory Group

Nakita Carson



Nakita Carson is an elementary teacher in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County. She is a proud graduate of North Carolina A&T State University and Appalachian State University. Motivated by a lifelong love of history and social justice, Nakita has written several African American history lessons for her district that are infused with reading and comprehension. Her most recent projects include being one of the original authors of the third-grade Social Studies curriculum for her school district, and creating a lesson centered on African American life at one of the local landmarks turned museums in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In 2022 Nakita was selected as the Elementary teacher of the Year by the North Carolina Social Studies Council.

Melissa Collins



Melissa Collins is an elementary school teacher in Memphis, TN, where she is constantly amazed by her students' curiosity about the world around them. Her classroom is her "Happy Place," where she enjoys working with her bright, brilliant, urban students. In her classroom, she promotes scholars that create change in the world through problem-solving. Her entire teaching career has been at John P. Freeman Optional School, right in the very community where she was raised. She is an expert in teacher leadership and voice, and she is an advocate for global learning, STEM education, and high standards for all students. She believes STEM is for all and collaborates with several organizations to promote and advocate for STEM. She is also the first and only teacher to serve on the National Science Foundation (NSF) Directorate for Education and Human Resources Advisory Committee. She is currently the co-chair for the National Science Teacher Association/Shell Award.

To help ensure that all children have access to caring and committed teachers, she has mentored several teachers through the National Board process. She is a proud National Board-Certified Teacher in Early Childhood Education. She serves as a board member for the National Board Professional Teaching Standards. She is a founding member of the National Board Network of Accomplished Minority Educators. To promote higher standards, she has served on the Student Achievement Partners Advisory Board. Melissa believes in bridging policy and practice and has been

a fellow in several policy fellowships such as America Achieves, TN-Teach Plus, and TN-Hope Street group. She has advised policymakers and educational leaders on how to support students and teachers with a focus on equity among our marginalized students. She has been featured on NBC Nightly News for promoting racial harmony and desegregating her classroom.

Melissa has traveled as an NEA Foundation Global Fellow to Brazil and South Africa. She has been recognized as a Maverick Teacher, and she was invited to the Agastya Foundation in India, where she collaborated with other educators to create a curriculum for the children in India. Melissa has been the recipient of several awards and honors, including Amazon Future Engineer Teacher of the Year, National University Award, Harriet Sanford Award, National Board Fellowship Program, the Global Teacher Prize Finalist (Top 50), the Queen Smith Award, the Stephen Sondheim Award, the Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence, the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science Teaching, the National Science Teaching Association (NSTA) Sylvia Shugrue Award, NSTA/ Shell Urban Development Award, and the West Tennessee Teacher of the Year. She was also inducted into the National Teacher Hall of Fame in 2020.

She received her bachelor's degree in early elementary education at Murray State University. She went on to earn a master's in education in 2005, a specialist of education certification in district-level administration in 2008, and a Ph.D. in district level administration in 2011 from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Medea Kennedy



Medea S. Kennedy (4th Grade). Ms. Medea Simone Kennedy has been teaching for over 17 years and holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology, with a minor in Chemistry from Coppin State University. She has also obtained a master's degree in educational leadership from Loyola University and is currently employed by the Baltimore City Public Schools system. Ms. Kennedy holds dual teaching certificates in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education. Working her entire career in Baltimore's urban district, she is presently teaching 4th grade at her current school, George Washington Elementary, where she has worked in various teaching and leadership positions for the past 12 years.

Following a non-tradition teacher certification track, Ms. Kennedy graduated from the Baltimore City Teacher Residency in 2010 and was the recipient of the George Washington Elementary Teacher of the Year award (2012). She was a member of the inaugural Growing Great Leaders program in 2014 and has served multiple years as the Math Lead, New Teacher mentor, testing

coordinator and Student Learning Objectives ambassador while at George Washington. She absolutely loves her school community and is committed to teaching the young scholars of Baltimore City while helping to prepare them to become college or career ready upon graduation.

Ms. Kennedy lives with her partner and is the proud mother of two beautiful boys, the oldest having just graduated *cum laude* from Bridgewater College in Virginia (2021). In her spare time, she loves to travel, enjoy live sporting events and volunteer as the Recording Secretary of the National Alumni Association at her alma mater, Coppin State University.

Angela Lee



Angela A. Lee is a world history educator at Weston High School in Weston, Massachusetts. In the 20+ years as a teacher, she developed the 10th grade Modern World History course and the AP World History course for her district. She served on the Massachusetts Department of Education's History and Social Studies Standards Review panel from 2017-2018 and worked to keep world history on the forefront of the new Massachusetts state curriculum framework. Lee was one of the 90 readers at the first AP World reading in 2002 and has been a leader for the AP World History reading since 2006. From 2013-2017, she served as a member of the AP World History Test Development Committee, and from 2019-2020 she served as a member of the SAT World History Test Development Committee.

Lee is an active member of the New England Regional World History Association (NERWHA) Executive Council, served on the World History Association (WHA) Nomination Committee from 2011-2013, as the chair of the WHA Social Media Committee from 2015-2020, and as a WHA Council Member from 2017-2020, She is currently serving on the WHA Teaching Committee. She also served on the advisory board for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) funded project, World History Commons.

Her passion is to connect historians, and scholars with practicing educators who are teaching world history in secondary schools to benefit both constituencies, and she has enjoyed presenting at conferences to show innovative pedagogical strategies for teaching world history.

She is active on social media to help connect with other educators, as well as creating a presence for AP World History teachers under the hashtag #whapchat. She also actively contributes to #historyfoodies to help teachers and friends connect to the history of food from all over the world.

Echohawk Lefthand



Echohawk Lefthand is an enrolled member of the Dine' (Navajo) Nation and has been an education and Public Health champion for over 10 years. His knowledge of public health and education is intertwined with his understandings of Indigenous ways of being, with prevention and self-awareness at the center. He currently serves as an administrator for the Office of Health Disparity and Health Equity (OHDHE) in the Nebraska

Department of Health and Human Services. Previously Echohawk served as the director, manager, and specialist of the Title VI Indian education program with Omaha Public Schools, Veteran Affairs, and Indian Health Service, respectively. His lived and work experience showcase his dedication to developing, implementing, and impacting health and education equity policies, ensuring higher quality of life for all.

Abeer Ramadan-Shinnawi



Abeer Ramadan-Shinnawi is a Palestinian American educator of 18+ years. She has held a variety of leadership positions both in the U.S. in various school and district settings. Abeer is a veteran middle school social studies teacher who has used her own upbringing as a child of immigrants to help connect students, schools, and communities. Throughout her career, she has worked with schools, cultural institutions, and publishers to provide

curriculum, content, and activities that reflect BIPOC students and teachers. Ramadan-Shinnawi started her own education consulting business in 2019 called Altair Education Consulting out of a need to create learning pathways about Muslim and Arab youth for all educators but also providing educational materials, professional development and speaking sessions about amplifying the voice and history of the Arab/Muslim American communities. She worked as a resource teacher in the Baltimore County Public Schools Office of Social Studies, leading curriculum development and supporting teachers. In addition, she served as an equity liaison and the co-facilitator of an affinity group for teachers of color. She also created and facilitated a student support group that provided safe spaces for immigrant students. Ramadan-Shinnawi is a member of the Teacher Advisory group for the Smithsonian National Museum of Native Americans located in Washington DC. Abeer has been featured in several conferences and podcasts, and written several blogs, journals, and newsletter publications with the hopes to continue working with educators to empower students to share their narratives to work towards global equity, and justice. Ramadan-Shinnawi is also Program Lead for the non-profit Re-Imagining Migration.

Dana Stone



Dana Stone graduated from Towson University in Baltimore, MD in 2010 with a bachelor's degree in History Secondary Education. Dana Stone has worked in Baltimore City Public Schools since 2011. She was the Social Studies Department head at Frederick Douglass High School where she partnered with local universities and museums to expand students' learning opportunities to allow them to research local history and create a museum exhibit. She now teaches Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics at Western High School in Baltimore, MD.

Gabriel Valdez



Gabriel Valdez is a K-12 Social Studies Coach in Texas. He is the administrator of the Social Studies Network on Facebook, a professional learning network of over 14,000 educators. He currently is the NCSS Committee Chair of Membership, a member of the TxCSS Advocacy Committee, serves on the WAC-DFW education committee, on teacher network groups: iCivics, National Constitution Center, and the George Washington Teacher Institute. He has participated in numerous research grants via Fulbright Hays, Yad Vashem, Turkish Cultural Foundation, U.S-China Institute, National Consortium of Teaching About Asia, and Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates.

Corey Winchester



Corey Winchester (he/him) is a Chicago-based, Philly-born educator with over a decade of experience serving in various roles as a veteran classroom teacher, professional developer, coach, mentor, coordinator, fellow, consultant, and student.

Corey has worked for several local, state, and national organizations such as Breakthrough Collaborative, Northwestern Academy for Chicago Public Schools, Evanston Township High School, Loyola University Chicago, Northwestern University, the Golden Apple Foundation, the Aspen Institute's Aspen Young Leaders Fellowship (AYLF) and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. As a Queer Black man, his work centers around developing, creating, and sustaining more humanizing and liberatory learning environments so that individuals like him (namely Black, Brown, Indigenous and LGBTQ+ folks), who have historically experienced and are

currently navigating marginalization can individually and collectively thrive.

Corey has been recognized as an Excellent Early Career Educator by the Illinois State Board of Education in 2013, a Distinguished Alumni from Loyola University Chicago's School of Education in 2016, received the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2019, and was honored as Illinois History Teacher of the Year by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History in 2020.

In addition to being a History/Social Science educator at Evanston Township High School he is also pursuing a PhD in Learning Sciences at Northwestern University seeking to improve his practice as an educator by expanding knowledge in how to manifest and cultivate learning environments for teaching and learning both in school and out of school contexts where we all can thrive.