



## **Virtual Statewide Conference: Re-Envisioning the Future of Educational Equity in New Jersey**

**June 11, 2022  
9:30AM-3:30PM**

### **Co-Sponsored by:**

**The Rutgers Inclusion Project**

**The Joseph C. Cornwall Center for  
Metropolitan Studies at Rutgers Newark**

**The Institute for the Study of Global Racial  
Justice at Rutgers University**

**Latino Action Network**

**Urban League of Essex County**

**Salvation and Social Justice**

**Education Law Center**

**Latino Coalition of New Jersey**

**Latino Action Network Foundation**

**Fair Share Housing Center**

**NAACP NJ State Conference**

**Abbott Leadership Institute**

**Newark City of Learning Collaborative**

**Fund for New Jersey**

**New Jersey Network of Superintendents**

**Register for the conference: [cvent.me/LkEzDk](https://cvent.me/LkEzDk)**

## **Conference Agenda**

**9:30am - 9:50am:**

Welcoming remarks

**9:50am-9:55am:**

Grounding

**9:55am-11:15am**

Session One: Equity, Funding & Resources

**11:15am-11:20am:**

Break

**11:20am-12:45pm:**

Session Two: The Future of Abbott Pre-School in NJ

**12:45pm-1:15pm:**

Lunch Break

**1:15pm-1:20pm:**

Welcome Back

**1:20pm-2:40pm:**

Session Three: School Discipline Disparities in NJ: A Preliminary Overview

**2:40pm-3:25pm:**

Superintendent Panel Discussion

**3:25pm-3:30pm:**

Closing

# Presenters & Speakers Bios



## Dr. Steve Barnett

Dr. Steve Barnett is an economist, Board of Governors Professor and Senior Co-Director of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University--He began his research on the benefits of investing in early education for children in poverty with the Perry Preschool study in 1980, developing an economic analysis of lifetime costs and benefits. Nearly two decades later he worked with Dr. Ellen Frede, the ELC, and Abbott district administrators to develop the evidence base on the unmet needs of young children in the Abbott districts (using parent surveys, program quality measures, and child assessments) and to propose to the New Jersey Supreme Court remedies to meet those needs which included well-funded, high-quality pre-K for all beginning at age 3 in the Abbott districts.

## Elise Boddie

Elise Boddie is a nationally recognized expert in civil rights and award-winning legal scholar. She is a Professor of Law, Henry Rutgers Professor, and Judge Robert L. Carter Scholar and the founding Newark Director of Rutgers University's Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice and the founder and director of The Inclusion Project, which works to advance racial equity and inclusion in law and policy using multiple tools of research, outreach, community engagement, and media.. She holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School and a master's in public policy from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Before joining the Rutgers faculty, Boddie directed the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.'s nationwide litigation program.



## Dr. Jesselly De La Cruz

Dr. Jesselly De La Cruz currently serves as Executive Director for the Latino Action Network Foundation. She has a BA in Political Science (Rider University), MSW (Rutgers University), and DSW (Rutgers University), and is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in NJ. She completed a Post-Graduate Certificate in Family Therapy at The Multicultural Family Institute, Inc. in Highland Park, NJ. Having originated from an underprivileged background and being a child of an immigrant family herself, Dr. De La Cruz's education and work has been motivated by her desire to support traditionally underserved populations. Towards that overarching goal, she has worked with Latino advocacy nonprofit agencies.

# Presenters & Speakers Bios

## Latrel Dortch

Latrel Dortch is the Dean of Students in Bloomfield High School. She is an experienced education professional with a special interest and training in educational psychology. She has experience as a learning specialist and teacher in public and charter schools. She is interested in implementing Restorative Practices into the community and schools in which she works.



## Danielle Farrie

Danielle Farrie is the Research Director at Education Law Center (ELC). She conducts analysis on school finance and other education issues to support litigation and public policy for ELC and partner organizations. ELC is a non-profit law firm that specializes in enforcing the rights of public school students. Her work includes an annual school funding report on the condition of school finance, Making the Grade: How Fair is School Funding in Your State, and state-level analyses of school funding policy with the goal of improving resource equity. Before joining ELC, Danielle conducted research in the field of urban education on such topics as school choice, racial segregation, and school segregation. Danielle has a Ph.D. in Sociology from Temple University.



## Rosie Grant

Rosie Grant is the Executive Director of the Paterson Education Fund (PEF), where she has given 28 years of educational leadership. PEF's mission is to stimulate community action for change so that the Paterson Public Schools (PPS) ensure that all Paterson children achieve high standards. PEF's programs are specifically designed to engage a broad cross-section of stakeholders in the improvement of Paterson Public Schools. Rosie has background in accounting, grant writing, program management and nonprofit management. In her work at Paterson Education Fund she has designed, constructed developed and executed many community engagement programs and strategies for Paterson Public Schools children and their families.





# Presenters & Speakers Bios



## Larry Hamm

Larry Hamm is a veteran community activist, community organizer, and community leader. He is the Chairman and founder of the People's Organization for Progress (POP), which was established in 1982.

## Robyn Brady Ince

Robyn Brady Ince is the Executive Director of the Newark City of Learning Collaborative and Assistant Professor of Professional Practice in the Department of Urban Education at Rutgers University–Newark. Robyn joined the University from the National Urban League where, as vice president of education policy, advocacy, and engagement, she led the Equity and Excellence Project and the annual Youth Leadership Summit. She previously held posts at Youth About Business, the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation, and Prep for Prep. She has also worked in higher education, serving as adjunct faculty at Hunter College and holding a progression of positions in admissions at Vassar College.



## Saafir Jenkins

Saafir Jenkins is the Chief Public Affairs Officer of Newark Special Education Parent Advisory Council (“SEPAC”), an organization that actively advocates for the rights of individuals with disabilities and equity within Newark Public Schools and across NJ. Saafir is also the President and Founder of Optimum Human Centered Solutions LLC, a company that is committed to fostering meaningful culture change with person-centered solutions. He is a Devoted Father, Committed Education Advocate, Impactful Keynote Speaker, Mental Health Educator and a Dynamic Human Capital Management Executive. Saafir consistently serves as a voice for underserved communities with a passion for ethical capacity-building, development, advocacy, and education. His advocacy includes in-depth research, analytical reporting, publishing articles, and public testimony at the NJ State Special Education Advisory Council meetings and related public hearings. He works tirelessly to provide critical information, resources, and support to parents and administrators in the Newark Public Schools District where he and Anfal live and raise their family, one of whom is diagnosed with autism, and another, a successful business owner and internationally acclaimed sustainability expert who lives with a mental health condition.

# Presenters & Speakers Bios

## Rita Koromi

Rita Koromi has over 25 years of experience in the field of education. She is currently the Senior Director of Early Childhood and Youth Services at PRAB. Her primary responsibility is to supervise PRAB's Early Childhood Centers that includes 5 Preschools, the Parent Infant Care Center (PIC-C), 2 After School Programs, the Artists Mentoring Against Racism, Drug & Violence (AMARD&V) Summer Program and the Youth Development Mentoring Program (YDMP).



## J. Kenyon Kummings

J. Kenyon Kummings has been the Superintendent for Wildwood Public Schools since 2014, and is the current president for Great Schools New Jersey, a committee that is a partnership between NJASA and The Education Law Center representing high need school districts with free and reduced lunch rates of 40% or more. He earned his Bachelor of Arts from Rutgers University, Masters of Education in Educational Leadership from The College of New Jersey, and is a Doctoral student with Rowan University.



## Jessica Laus

Jessica Laus holds a Bachelor of Arts from Wayne State University, a Master of Science from the London School of Economics, and worked in the field of international diplomacy for five years. A practitioner and advocate of restorative justice, Jessica currently serves as the Director of Youth and Community Engagement for The Inclusion Project.



# Presenters & Speakers Bios



## Dr. Larry Leverett

Dr. Larry Leverett currently serves as the Managing Director for New Jersey Network of Superintendents (NJNS). Before retiring in January 2017, Dr. Leverett served ten years as the Executive Director of the Panasonic Foundation, and has previously worked at all levels of the education system, from teacher's aide for Head Start to the Assistant Commissioner of Urban Education in the New Jersey DOE.

## Dr. Louis Moore

Dr. Louis Moore serves as the Superintendent of Red Bank Regional High School District. He previously served as the Principal of Ramapo High School (Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District) in Franklin Lakes, and his career as a social studies teacher at Ridgewood High School.



## Anfal Muhammad-Jenkins

Anfal Muhammad-Jenkins is a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner, Certified Recovery Support Practitioner, and Behavioral Health and Recovery professional. Through tireless work within advocacy organizations, non-profits, philanthropic ministry, event coordination and educational counsel, Anfal's life trajectory saw a transition from high performance sales to organizing and enhancing education for underserved communities in mental health, developmental disabilities and co-occurring substance abuse treatment. Anfal champions the cause of children with various intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as those with mental health conditions; specifically, among those confronted with Autism and bi-polar syndrome, depression, and schizophrenia. Being trained by PRA (Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association), MHANJ (Mental Health Association of NJ) and NAMI NJ (National Alliance for Mental Health) proved invaluable to serving on the front lines of engaging individuals and families grappled with these serious conditions in adults and children. As a mother of two such children, one diagnosed with autism and one diagnosed bipolar schizoaffective, she seeks to enlighten society with a broader view of individuals who face challenges that developmental, or behavioral conditions present. As founder and Director of Newark SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council), Anfal advances equity for all students..



# Presenters & Speakers Bios

## Dr. Brian Osborne

Dr. Brian Osborne is currently a professor of practice in educational leadership at Lehigh University's College of Education. He previously served as the superintendent of schools for two districts: New Rochelle, New York and South Orange-Maplewood, New Jersey.



## Dr. Charles Payne

Dr. Charles Payne is a Henry Rutgers Distinguished Professor of African American Studies at Rutgers University- Newark where he also directs the Joseph Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Research. He is a sociologist whose interests include urban education and school reform, continuous improvement research, social inequality, and the civil rights movement.

His books include *So Much Reform, So Little Change: The Persistence of Failure in Urban Education*; and *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. He is co-editor of the forthcoming *Dignity-Affirming Education: Cultivating 'Somebodiness' in Students and Educators*, (Teachers College Press, May ,2022). He expects to finish *When The World Comes for Your Children: Defending Black Children After the Age of Trump* this fall. He is also working on a sequel to *So Much Reform*. He has taught at Northwestern University, Duke, Southern University and Williams College and served briefly as Chief Education Officer for Chicago Public Schools.



## Darrell Price

Darrell Price was the Former New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) Director who possesses over twenty (20) years of youth development programming experience. During his tenure with YouthBuild Newark, he has served as Program Manager, Director of Re-Entry and Program Director. He has also served as the Director of Climate and Culture at Newark Leadership Academy, which operated in partnership with YBN serving over-aged, under-credited high school students. He served as the Director of Student Supports at LEAD Charter School as the co-lead with the Head of School upon its opening and now holds the position of Program Director at LEAD Charter. Darrell resides in North Brunswick, New Jersey.





# Presenters & Speakers Bios



## Peter T. Rosario

Peter T. Rosario is president and chief executive officer of La Casa de Don Pedro – New Jersey’s largest Latinx nonprofit serving Greater Newark’s most resilient Black and Brown communities. Peter leads and serves with La Casa’s 280 employees, who collectively impact upwards of 50,000 people per year through programs that foster self-sufficiency, empowerment and neighborhood revitalization. As La Casa celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2022, Peter’s highest priorities include racial and social justice, affordable homeownership, high-quality early childhood education, and addressing the ongoing impact of Covid-19 that continues to disproportionately impact BIPOC communities. Throughout his 26-year nonprofit career, Peter distinguished himself in multiple executive leadership, operational and fundraising roles for the YMCA and the Boy Scouts of America.

## Kasai Sanchez

Kasai Sanchez is a junior at Teaneck High School where she serves as Jr. Class President. She is the recipient of the NNJC social justice organizer award as well as the Mayor Lizette Phillips Parker Memorial award for her community and volunteer efforts. She is an organizer for the first BLM Mural in Bergen County. Kasai advocates for the needs of the youth as Chairperson of the Teaneck Youth Advisory Board and as a member of the Teaneck Board of Community Relations. She is the Co-founder of TILT which collaborates with various high school students who work to guide elementary and middle school students. Kasai serves as co-leader of Students Demand Action against gun violence. She is determined to create a positive change in her community and beyond.



## Quincy Wansel

Quincy Wansel is a Rutgers-Camden senior pursuing a major in Africana Studies and a double minor in English and Museum Studies. She has a fiery passion for gender studies, social justice, and racial issues. Quincy continues to work for equality with fellow college students through the Black Student Union at her school, participating in Black Lives Matter marches, and writing Black focused poetry. After graduation, Quincy plans to pursue an MA in Education and then to begin her career as a high school African American History teacher.