

BELONGING & WELLBEING IN EDUCATION: NORTH CAROLINA SHOWCASE

Monday, July 22, 2024
9:00AM - 3:30PM

The Conference Center at GTCC
Colfax, NC

Sponsored By:



REGION 6
Georgia
North Carolina
South Carolina



KEYNOTE SPEAKER



NICK YODER

Associate Vice President of Whole Human
Education & Research
Harmony Academy at National University

Nick Yoder serves as the Associate Vice President of Whole Human Education & Research for the Harmony Academy at National University. With a career in education spanning two decades, Dr. Yoder's expertise in integrating social, emotional, and academic development into educational policy and practice has been pivotal. His work is marked by a commitment to equitable whole child development, underpinned by a strong foundation in research and data to improve educational outcomes.

He has led seminal work on social, emotional, and academic integration that was recently updated, Instructional Practices That Integrate Equity Centered Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning, and he was co-editor of the Advances in Motivation & Achievement Series, Motivating the SEL Field Forward Through Equity.

Dr. Yoder serves on the advisory board of CASEL's Collaborating States Initiative and the boards of the SEL Providers Association and CREATE for Education. He is also an Associate Editor for Journal of Social and Emotional Learning and serves on the Local School Council for his neighborhood school in Chicago Public Schools.

Prior to Harmony Academy, Dr. Yoder was the Director of Policy and Practice at the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a principal/senior technical assistant consultant at the American Institutes for Research, a pre-service instructor and field coach at the University of Michigan, and first grade teacher in Chicago Public Schools. He received his PhD in Education and Psychology, a masters and bachelors in Psychology at the University of Michigan, a masters in Instructional Leadership at the University of Illinois-Chicago, and his teaching certificate at Dominican University.

BREAKOUT SESSION A: PRESENTERS & BIOS



Amy Nichols

District MTSS Coordinator
Wilson County Schools

Amy is an educator passionate about supporting students and school staff around school improvement. Her journey began as an elementary teacher, devoting fifteen years to nurturing young minds, fostering a love for learning, and instilling fundamental skills. Driven by a desire to impact beyond the classroom, she transitioned seamlessly into the role of Beginning Teacher Coordinator. Over four years in this position, she dedicated efforts to guiding and mentoring novice educators and participating in Response to Intervention (RTI) and, later, MTSS initiatives in Wayne County Schools. This experience laid a solid foundation for the transformative work undertaken in Wilson County. Embracing new challenges and opportunities for growth, Amy currently serves as the District MTSS Coordinator in Wilson County Schools. With a tenure spanning seven years, she spearheads the implementation of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), demonstrating a commitment to enhancing educational outcomes for all students.



Amanda Bell

MTSS Behavioral Health Coordinator
IC Imagine K-12 Public Charter
School, Asheville

Amanda Bell is the MTSS Behavioral Health Coordinator at IC Imagine K-12 Public Charter School where she leads the systemic implementation of social emotional learning, restorative practices, positive behavioral intervention supports, and the continuum of mental health services. Prior to her current role, Amanda served as a school psychologist at IC Imagine and Buncombe County Schools, as well as districts in the suburban Chicagoland area and southern Indiana. She received her training from Purdue University where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Psychological Sciences before obtaining a Master's and Educational Specialist degree from Indiana University. However, her most invaluable experiences were gained by growing up in a multicultural, adopted family of 12 leaving her with the heart, courage, and sense of responsibility to continually strive for equitable opportunities and outcomes for **all** students. When not working, Amanda enjoys hiking, mountain biking, practicing yoga, and reading. She spends as much quality time as possible, preferably outdoors, with her husband, two children, and their amazing community.

BREAKOUT SESSION A: PRESENTERS & BIOS



Leela Harpur Heyder

Founder & CEO
Calm Minds Kind Hearts

Leela's exuberance for life may only be matched by her passion for supporting others in illuminating their inner joy, calm and kindness. Her interest in Well-Being was instilled in her from a young age as her parents who were "wise beyond their years" modeled the importance of preventative and maintenance practices for both mental and physical Well-Being. Over the years, Leela has developed her own Mindfulness practice and been trained through Mindful Schools in **Mindfulness Fundamentals**, **Mindful Educator Essentials**, **School Implementation Clinic**, **Working with Difficult Emotions** and currently, the **Mindful Teacher Certification Program** and **Mindful Communication**. She was also trained at the Omega Institute in **Yoga, Youth & Mindfulness**. Leela is a provisionally trained teacher in the Community Resilience Model (CRM) through the Trauma-Resource Institute. While working with youth from Washington, D.C. to Mexico and from Nicaragua to North Carolina, Leela has experienced the benefits of sharing skills that can proactively support children (who will become working adults, leading our countries) in handling the stress in their lives and increasing their capacity for emotional self-regulation. Additionally, Leela has a deep appreciation for and admiration of teachers whose job it often becomes to counsel, mother/father, model, discipline, coach and teach our youth. Calm Minds Kind Hearts took seed while Leela worked amongst a group of incredibly passionate and dedicated teachers in Manteo, NC who embraced Mindfulness with open minds and hearts and who inspired her to share these skills more widely. Calm Minds Kind Hearts dedicates its work first and foremost to our teachers, who help shape the minds and hearts of our students and future. Leela has her B.A. from Southern Methodist University in Corporate Communications & Foreign Languages and her M.A. in International Affairs from American University.

BREAKOUT SESSION A: PRESENTERS & BIOS



Dejanell (Daisy) Mittman

SEL Specialist

Guilford County Schools

Dejanell Mittman is a licensed school counselor in North Carolina and National Board Certified School Counselor. She has worked as a professional school counselor in Title I elementary schools for nine years and served on her district's school counseling leadership team. Dejanell has a keen interest in systemic SEL implementation and educator wellbeing and has done much work in her current role as Social Emotional Learning Specialist to collaborate with schools in support of SEL implementation, sustainability, and wellness.



Ronnie Armstrong

SEL Specialist

Guilford County Schools

Ronnie Armstrong is a District Social Emotional Learning Specialist in Guilford County Schools. He earned a Master of Science and Educational Specialist degree in School Counseling from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor-Associate and National Certified Counselor. He was a professional school counselor in an elementary school for three years. As an SEL specialist, he strengthens systemic SEL implementation including SEL curriculum integration, Adult SEL development, and culture and climate support for students, staff, families, and the broader community. He currently serves as the marketing and promotion lead for the Social Emotional Learning Alliance for North Carolina (SEL4NC).

BREAKOUT SESSION A: PRESENTERS & BIOS



Dr. Donald Phipps
Superintendent
Caldwell County Schools

Dr. Donald Phipps joined the Caldwell County Schools as superintendent in July 2018. Prior to that, he served the Beaufort County Schools as superintendent for nearly nine years. Dr. Phipps' 28-year career has been entirely in education. He has been a school psychologist, non-profit director of research and development, university professor and department chair, assistant principal, principal, executive director, and superintendent. He has earned the following degrees: a Bachelor's degree from Methodist College (now Methodist University) in Psychology and Management Psychology; a Master's degree and Certificate of Advanced Study from Appalachian State University in School Psychology; an Education Doctorate from Appalachian State University in Education Leadership; and a Master's of Education from UNC -Charlotte in Instructional Systems Technology. Dr. Phipps is actively involved in public education locally and across the state. He has been a presenter to the NC General Assembly, State Board of Education, and at various professional conferences across the state. He also serves on several local and state-level committees and boards. He has served as the President of the Northeast North Carolina Superintendents RESA and is currently the Chair of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Testing Compliance Commission. He was named Region 1 Superintendent of the Year in 2015 and Pfeiffer University Professor of the Year in 2001. Dr. Phipps is married to Nancy and they have four children and two grandchildren.



Dr. Katrina McEllen
Assistant Superintendent for
Educational Program Services
Caldwell County Schools

Dr. Katrina McEllen serves as Assistant Superintendent for Educational Program Services in Caldwell County Schools. She has over 23 years of experience in education and has been with Caldwell County Schools since 2007. Previous roles include high school director, school administrator, curriculum coordinator, and classroom teacher.

BREAKOUT SESSION A: PRESENTERS & BIOS



Dr. Desiree Murray

Director
Be CALM

Dr. Murray, PhD is a Senior Research Scientist at the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and a Research Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As a licensed clinical psychologist and prevention scientist, Dr. Murray works to promote the well-being of youth, particularly those living in stress and adversity. A key focus of this work is building the capacity of educators to support adolescents through caring relationships, a safe and equitable school climate, and intentional teacher-student interactions. Dr. Murray has over 25 years of clinical research experience in school mental health and implementing evidence-based programs for children and youth with emotion regulation difficulties. Her work has been supported by over 12 million dollars in federal funding from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), the National Institute of Health (NIH). With colleagues at UNC, Dr. Murray developed the [Be CALM Program](#) for secondary students that promotes educator wellbeing and builds social-emotional skills in youth through mindfulness and includes a classroom curriculum and coaching supports from school mental health staff.



Dr. Beverly Rudolph

Trainer
Be CALM

Dr. Rudolph was a teacher, assistant principal, and principal in North Carolina's Public Schools for 25 years. She comes to UNC to focus on one of her passions, teaching mindfulness to school staff and their students. She has a BA in Literature from UNC Asheville, her master's in educational leadership from UNC Chapel Hill, and her doctorate in educational supervision and administration from UVA. In her free time, she loves hanging out with her family and two dogs, going to the theatre, reading a good book, and watching the Tar Heels play basically any sport. She is a proud first-generation college student and native North Carolinian.

BREAKOUT SESSION B:

PRESENTERS & BIOS



LaTrayl Adams

Director of SEL &
Restorative Practices
Winston Salem/Forsyth
County Schools

LaTrayl Adams serves as the SEL and Restorative Practices Director at Winston Salem-Forsyth County Schools, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise to the role. Before this position, she distinguished herself as a Social Emotional Learning Specialist in Guilford County Schools. Adams collaborated closely with the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) in both capacities, spearheading district and schoolwide initiatives to integrate social and emotional learning into educational practices seamlessly. Her dedication to SEL was further underscored during her tenure as a 2022-2023 CASEL Fellow, where she was chosen among a select group of 50 leaders nationwide to enhance her SEL proficiency through collaborative endeavors. Adams has also been instrumental in developing and facilitating ongoing professional development sessions focused on equity and bolstering adult SEL competencies for educators, administrators, district staff, and parents. Before assuming district leadership roles, Adams served as a secondary professional school counselor for over 13 years, significantly boosting graduation rates, securing student scholarships, and guiding first-generation students through college applications. Adams holds a bachelor's degree in Organizational Communications and Industrial/Organizational Psychology from UNC -Charlotte, as well as a master's degree in Agency/Human Resources Counseling from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. She is pursuing her doctorate in educational leadership at High Point University. Passionate about student well-being, equitable learning environments, and continuous growth, Adams fervently advocates for restorative communities and the pivotal role of social and emotional learning in fostering inclusive and safe spaces for all. She is also certified as a Restorative Practices and Trauma-Informed Trainer, further amplifying her impact in creating supportive educational environments.



Shannon Dobson

Director of Behavior
Support & Intervention
Winston Salem/Forsyth
County Schools

Shannon Dobson is an experienced special educator and Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) with 22 years of experience in the field. Currently serving as the Director of Behavior Support and Intervention, Shannon is dedicated to improving educational outcomes for students with diverse needs. With a strong understanding of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Shannon oversees the implementation of evidence-based behavior support strategies and tiered intervention systems. She specializes in tiered behavior supports, Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs), and the development of individualized behavior intervention plans. Shannon's approach is centered on collaboration, ensuring that teachers, parents, and support staff are equipped with the tools and knowledge necessary to foster positive behavioral changes. Her extensive experience and passion for education drive Shannon's commitment to excellence. She continues to make significant contributions to the field of special education and behavior analysis, promoting inclusive, supportive, and effective learning environments for all students. Her core values are: Justice, Compassion, Knowledge

BREAKOUT SESSION B: PRESENTERS & BIOS



Karen Hollar

Director of Student
Health & Wellness
Cabarrus County Schools

Karen Hollar is the Director of Student Health and Wellness for Cabarrus County Schools in North Carolina. Prior to this role, she served as the MTSS Coordinator for Cabarrus County Schools. Her work centers around implementing an integrated system of support to meet students' wellness and behavioral needs. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in K-6 Education from Methodist University, as well a Master's Degree in School Administration from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Mrs. Hollar is well versed in the implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and in 2014 was recognized by the NC Department of Instruction for her implementation and coaching achievements. Mrs. Hollar has a total of 23 years of experience in education, in which she has taught and served as a lead teacher at both the elementary and middle school levels as well as serving as a district level administrator.



Dr. Mary Beth Roth

Chief Student Services &
Compliance Officer
Cabarrus County Schools

Dr. Mary Beth Roth is an experienced educator with over 30 years of experience in teaching, administration, and central office work. She is currently the Chief Student Services and Compliance Officer for Cabarrus County Schools and is an adjunct professor at Gardner-Webb University. She previously served as the Director of Middle Schools & MTSS. Her work is centered around building supports for student health and wellbeing as well as sustaining comprehensive school improvement. Dr. Roth has conducted professional development for educators on a variety of topics including professional learning communities, MTSS, and student assessment. Dr. Roth holds a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and Middle School Math from Appalachian State University. She obtained both a Master's Degree in Elementary Education and a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership from UNC - Charlotte.

BREAKOUT SESSION B:

PRESENTERS & BIOS



Ann-Marie Palmer

Title 1 & Behavior
Support Coordinator
Cumberland County Schools

Ann-Marie Palmer, a dedicated professional educator, is the Title 1 & Behavior Support Coordinator. She has been a part of Cumberland County Schools since 1995. Her journey began as a Middle School Visual Arts Teacher, and she has since held various roles, demonstrating her versatility and commitment to education. Her career also includes 20 years of experience as a school administrator at both the Elementary and High School levels.

Ms. Palmer obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Education from East Carolina University in 1995 and her master's degree in school administration from Fayetteville State University in 2004. She is currently furthering her academic pursuits by working toward the completion of her Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership from Capella University.



Dr. Melody Chalmers McClain

Associate Superintendent of
Student Support Services
Cumberland County Schools

Dr. Melody Chalmers McClain, a veteran educator, was named the Associate Superintendent of Student Support Services in June 2022. From 2018 until 2022, she served as Assistant Superintendent of Transformation and Strategic Initiatives, fervently supporting the district's schools and administrators. Additionally, she has 14 years of experience as a school administrator and served as the 2016 Wells Fargo North Carolina Principal of the Year. Dr. Chalmers McClain's educational journey is a testament to her dedication and commitment to the field of education. She joined CCS in 1998 and went on to obtain her master's degree in school administration from Fayetteville State University in 2005. Her academic qualifications also include a Bachelor of Science in English Education from North Carolina A&T State University. Dr. Chalmers McClain's pursuit of knowledge didn't stop there, as she obtained her Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership from Gardner-Webb University, further enhancing her understanding and expertise in the field.

BREAKOUT SESSION B: PRESENTERS & BIOS



Darlene S. Hodges
IABS Coordinator
Wayne County Public Schools

For over 20 years, Darlene S. Hodges has worked to invest in human capital and dismantle systems of oppression in both direct services and administrative capacities. Her employment experience spans multiple disciplines including early childhood education, family involvement, poverty elimination, criminal justice, and for the past seven years, education. Her current role as IABS Coordinator for Wayne County Public Schools allows her to marry her passions of: real life application of evidenced practices, continuous improvement, and supporting equitable outcomes. Darlene holds a BA: Communications with a concentration in Public Relations and a minor in Journalism from NC State University, an MSA from Central Michigan University, and an MSW with a concentration in Community Management and Policy Practice from UNC -Chapel Hill. She resides in Goldsboro, NC and has six children ages 11 to 30 and five grandchildren.



Angela Griffith
Behavior Support Coordinator
Wayne County Public Schools

Angela R. Griffith was born and raised in Hempstead, New York. She earned her B.S. in Elementary Education with a minor in Sociology from the State University of New York College at Old Westbury in 1995. While attending SUNY@ Old Westbury she became a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated which has helped shape her professional philosophy. Ms. Griffith relocated to Raleigh, North Carolina where she began her career in education at Kingswood Elementary School. As she continued her career as an educator she strived to enhance her professional skills by earning a graduate certificate in Academically-Intellectually Gifted as well as a MS. in Special Education and a MS. in Educational Leadership. Her Certifications are: Elementary K-6, EC General Curriculum K-12, Academically-Intellectually Gifted K-12, EC: Behaviorally -Emotionally Disabled K-12, Principal, Exceptional Children's Director. Additionally, throughout her career she has acquired certifications from the Cognitive Behavior Theory Institute, Crisis Prevention Institute as well as Facilitative Leadership. In 2006, she served as the ambassador for Exceptional Children's Program for the state of North Carolina. Ms. Griffith has been recognized as Teacher of the Year in 2013 and 2015. She earned district honors as the Exceptional Children's Teacher of the Year in 2014. Ms. Griffith is an active participant on the Wayne County Mental Health Association where she cooperatively works with others to maintain mental health awareness within the community. Ms. Griffith currently holds a position as Behavior Support Coordinator for Wayne County Public Schools.

BREAKOUT SESSION B:

PRESENTERS & BIOS



Tima Williams

Director of SEL & Wellbeing
Asheville City Schools

Tima Williams is the Director of Social Emotional Learning and Well-being in Asheville City Schools. She has over 27 years experience as a preschool-college teacher of exceptional needs and academically gifted students, instructional coach, curriculum specialist, state and national speaker, trainer for math, literacy, crisis intervention, and restorative practices, educational consultant, Montessori leader, school and district administrator. Her priorities are preparing student centered learning environments, equipping schools for a culture of belonging, planning for educator wellness, and coaching for effective change.



Crystal Barnes

Elementary Dean & Director
of Student Support
Sugar Creek Charter School

Crystal Barnes, a proud Charlotte Native, has been in service to others as an advocate, community leader, writer, motivator, solution strategist and confidant throughout her life. The oldest daughter of an educator and a counseling entrepreneur, she intentionally continues her family's love of the humanities and service to the community. Carrying their family legacy forward as a graduate of the illustrious Winston-Salem State University, her studies in English and Speech Communications challenge her to "Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve" in her public & private practices. #HBCU Professionally, she has worked as Teacher Leader, Curriculum Designer, Educator Mentor, School Administrator, Behavior Specialist, Elementary Dean of Students, Director of Student Support and Leadership Coach for over 18 years. Thousands of students and parents have benefited from the masterful teaching, resourcing and mentoring of Ms. Barnes. She is a highly sought after trainer in the area of positive behavior supports, best practices for serving students of generational & situational poverty and educator self-care for districts, schools and community agencies. Countless awards & accolades have been given to Crystal Barnes over her education tenure; however, the greatest reward has been the phenomenal number of returning students that have taken on the work of becoming educators themselves because of her motivational mentoring, teaching and authentic relationships with students.

SPONSORS



The Region 6 Comprehensive Center (RC 6) at SERVE is a hub for technical assistance and capacity-building services for those deeply involved in innovative, equitable public education. ED awarded SERVE a \$15.6 million grant over five years to operate the RC 6, which is one of 19 Regional Comprehensive Centers and a National Comprehensive Center also funded by ED.

The RC 6 supports the National Comprehensive Center in providing targeted and universal services to support the selection, planning, implementation, and evaluation of evidenced-based practices (EBPs). Along with key partners the RC 6 supports SEAs, LEAs and schools that have high percentages of students from low-income families.



SERVE at UNC Greensboro (SERVE) has over 30 years of experience in providing technical assistance at the state, district and school levels. SERVE has built extensive experience in providing technical assistance and evidence-based interventions in southern states.

SERVE is a university-based, non-profit center dedicated to the most efficient and effective use of data, research, and evaluation at all levels of the education. When SERVE began, the challenges that schools faced were lack of data and access to research. Today, the challenges for leaders often lie in too much information and too little time to make sense of the vast amount of data, research, and evaluation. Thus, we commit to helping educational leaders make sense of the complicated array of data, research, and evaluation available in light of their particular issues, organizational challenges, or specific needs and time frames. We work closely with our clients to understand their organizational context, then design tailored services that result in timely, relevant, and responsive information to inform strategies, policies, programs, and practices.