

Deputy Superintendent Nicole T. Johnson Presents

# *The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Women's Leadership Conference*

*Celebrating the Women Who Tell Our Stories*



**SATURDAY  
MARCH 25, 2023**

9:00 AM - 1:30 PM

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

**Webinar Number: 2624 694 8398**

**Webinar Password: brVMYMJ296u (27869652 from phones)**



**Newark**  
Board of Education  
Roger León, Superintendent



There's an unspoken message that the only stories worth telling are the stories that end up in history books.

This is not true.

Every story matters....We are all worthy of telling our stories and having them heard.

**Viola Davis**  
**Actor, Producer, Author**



March 25, 2023

To our Women Leaders:

It is with great excitement that I welcome you to our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Women's Leadership Conference!

As we continue with the bold implementation of our ten-year strategic plan, *The Next Decade 2020-30*, the importance of our women leaders throughout the organization remains at the forefront. For over three decades, American Presidents have honored the historic contributions of women to our country by issuing a series of annual proclamations designating the month of March as *Women's History Month*. These Presidential proclamations celebrate and recognize the achievements women have made over the course of American history in all fields. In the Newark Public Schools, we are honored to join in this celebration and provide a forum to recognize and celebrate the impact our women leaders make here in Newark each and every day.

The theme for this year's Women's Leadership Conference is *Celebrating the Women Who Tell Our Stories*. I am confident that the sessions you participate in will build upon the many talents and leadership skills you are already bringing to the table. My team has assembled a dynamic lineup of speakers and presenters to embrace and empower you as you continue to serve our children and families with distinction, and navigate the unique and myriad complexities of society.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Deputy Superintendent Nicole T. Johnson, her entire office, all committee members responsible for this year's conference, and all of the presenters and partners who helped make this event possible. All involved were determined to ensure that this wonderful event continued to provide purposeful leadership opportunities for our current and aspiring women leaders.

As I have shared on many occasions, my own life path has been guided by the strong women in my family as well as the women who have been my teachers, mentors, and colleagues. To them and to all of you participating in this year's conference, I say, THANK YOU and may your efforts continue to uplift the children of our beloved city of Newark.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger León', written in a cursive style.

Roger León  
Superintendent

## Program Schedule



### **Welcome Address**

Nicole T. Johnson, Deputy Superintendent  
Newark Board of Education



### **Greetings**

Roger León, Superintendent  
Newark Board of Education



### **Greetings**

The Honorable Mayor Ras Baraka  
City of Newark



### **Greetings**

Honorable M. Teresa Ruiz, State Senator  
The State of New Jersey



### **Greetings**

Board President Dawn Haynes  
Newark Board of Education



### **Special Message**

Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D., Acting Commissioner  
Department of Education, State of New Jersey

## Program Schedule



### **9:45 AM - 10:30 AM - Keynote Address**

Michellene Davis, Esq. President & CEO  
National Medical Fellowships, Inc.

### **10:45 AM - 12:00 PM - Breakout Session #1**

#### **I Said What I Said**

**Presenter:** Dr. LaChan Hannon, Director of Teacher Preparation & Innovation -  
Department of Urban Education, Rutgers-Newark

#### **The Art of Leadership**

**Presenter:** Rosa Branco, Principal, First Avenue School

#### **The Empathetic Leader: Keep Yourself in Your Own Shoes**

**Presenter:** Jonelle Massey, Consultant, Creative Leadership Solutions

#### **Improving Mindfulness**

**Presenter:** Dr. Donnette Green, CEO and Founder, Distinctly Guided, LLC

#### **Finding Your Own Path to Serendipity**

**Presenter:** Allyson Apsey, Consultant, Creative Leadership Solutions

### **12:15 PM - 1:30 PM - Breakout Session #2**

#### **The Divine Feminine: A Coming to Balance**

**Presenter:** Dr. Monique Swift, Founder & CEO, Swift Solutions Consultant Services, LLC

#### **The Balancing Act: Passionate Leadership with Personal Self-Care**

**Presenter:** Genique Fluornoy-Hamilton, Principal, University High School

#### **By the Power Vested in Me**

**Presenter:** Dr. Chris Pernell, Apostle of Public Health

#### **Courageous Leadership**

**Presenter:** Dr. Ann McCarty Perez, Consultant, Creative Leadership Solutions

#### **Leading WELL!**

**Presenter:** Dr. Rema Vassar, Chair, Board of Trustees, University of Michigan

March 25, 2023

Dear Women Leaders:

Welcome to the Newark Board of Education's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Women's Leadership Conference!

This month, as we celebrate Women's History Month, we are reminded of the achievements of women both past and present who have shared their stories, created endless opportunities, and paved the way for so many of us. Spearheaded by [The National Women's History Alliance](#), the 2023 theme is *Celebrating the Women Who Tell Our Stories*. Highlighting women who have used their voices to share stories that educate and inspire is the goal of this year's theme. In honor and recognition of Women's History Month and in the spirit of this year's theme, the 2nd Annual Women's Leadership Conference aims to uplift current and aspiring women leaders by highlighting our individual and collective stories, while creating new paths for stories yet to be told. Through this experience, we hope to promote a society where women feel empowered to talk about their accomplishments, successes, and triumphs. This is in fact an essential leadership skill.

Many thanks to the Superintendent, the Office of the Deputy Superintendent, the Office of Staff Development, the Office of Communications, the presenters, facilitators, partners, and all staff members who have worked tirelessly to put forth a conference that celebrates and uplifts women leaders. For your support and belief in this vision, I am forever grateful. This has truly been a vision unfolding in real time.

To our current and aspiring women leaders, let us be bold, courageous, and fearless as we come together to elevate our voices and tell our own stories! Powerful stories of challenges, triumphs, and success that demonstrate our resilience and recognize us as the Wonder Women we truly are.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N.T. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nicole T. Johnson  
Deputy Superintendent

## Welcome Address 9:00 AM



**Nicole T. Johnson**  
**Deputy Superintendent**

Newark Board of Education Deputy Superintendent Nicole T. Johnson is a talented educator, respected leader, and committed advocate for equity in education. Deputy Johnson has over 25 successful years of experience in public education and she leads with a heart for service and always keeps students at the center of every decision. Under her leadership as Deputy Superintendent, Deputy Johnson has overseen the streamlined reorganization of the District's Office of Academic Services, including the development of robust Offices of Teaching and Learning, School Leadership Teams, and Staff Development. Deputy Johnson has also led the district's design and implementation of its ten-year strategic plan, *The Next Decade: 2020-30*, which prioritizes equity, access, and achievement for all Newark students.

Deputy Johnson began her teaching career at the Marie Katzenbach School for the Deaf, and a few years later joined The Newark Board of Education at the Bruce Street School for the Deaf. For the next several years, she was appointed to many central office positions including Resource Teacher, Master Coordinator, and Literacy Supervisor. In 2010, she joined Elliott Street School as a Vice-Principal and three short years later was appointed as Principal of the same school.

As Principal, Deputy Johnson had the distinguished honor of opening up the brand new Elliott Street School building. Under her leadership, Elliott Street School implemented the highly successful Blended Learning program. This educational program combined online digital content with traditional classroom methods, and allowed students to receive individualized instruction on a daily basis. The school's enrollment doubled and the school was the recipient of many grants and national partnerships, including My Very Own Library. Through this initiative, hundreds of students and families expanded their home libraries.

Deputy Johnson specializes in school leadership development. She works closely with school and district leaders in the areas of professional learning communities, systems thinking, and school improvement through strategic planning. She currently serves as adjunct faculty at Montclair State University, teaching graduate courses to aspiring school leaders. Her expertise in the field of leadership has led her to be sought by national organizations as a presenter. Deputy Johnson also serves on several nonprofit boards, all dedicated to improving education and community. In 2018, Deputy Johnson was selected as one of Newark's Living Legends in Education by the Mayor and City Council of Newark, NJ.

Deputy Johnson is an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®. Her proudest accomplishments and joys of her life are her two sons Taji and Jordan. Taji is a graduate from the University of Delaware and currently resides in Los Angeles, California, and Jordan is a senior at Temple University.

Deputy Johnson operates under the belief system that "If you expect more, then you will achieve more". She brings that impactful spirit into the lives of the staff and students whom she encounters each and every day.



Yes to everything scary.  
Yes to everything that takes me out of my comfort zone.  
Yes to everything that feels like it might be crazy.  
Yes to everything that feels out of character.  
Yes to everything that feels goofy.  
Yes to everything.  
Everything.  
Say yes.  
Yes.

**Shonda Rhimes**  
**Television Screenwriter**





## Special Message



**Angelica Allen-McMillan,  
Ed.D  
Acting Commissioner,  
Department of Education  
State of New Jersey**

Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan is a proud product of a New Jersey public school education. She is also a passionate educator and an inspirational public speaker. "I understand and value the importance of strong relationships between people as a path to learning," said Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan, "and I am deeply committed to the wellbeing of children both inside and outside of the classroom."

Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan plans to utilize the lessons learned through her 25-year career in public education to lead a Department of Education that is quick to listen, precise in its execution, and ready to advance access to a high-quality education for all students. A Cedar Grove resident, she began her career in education as a substitute teacher in Essex County and taught in East Orange Public Schools before she launched the Marion P. Thomas Charter School in Newark. She served as an assistant principal and principal in the South Orange-Maplewood School District, and as an assistant superintendent in both Irvington Public Schools and Newark Public Schools. Most recently, Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan served the New Jersey Department of Education as the Interim Executive County Superintendent for Morris County. She welcomes the opportunity to join an organization with the goal of strengthening teaching, leading, and learning in order to increase educational equity for New Jersey's 1.4 million students.

A parent of three, Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan has also served on the Montclair Board of Education, where she focused her expertise in the area of special education. She also volunteered as a PTA Executive Board member while her children were in elementary school, coordinating fundraising efforts and promoting parental involvement in all facets of school.

Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan holds a bachelor's degree in industrial and labor relations from Cornell University, and she earned a master's in educational administration, as well as a doctorate in education, leadership, management and policy, from Seton Hall University.

She has served as trustee for the County College of Morris and as a board of education member of the Morris County School of Technology. She has received numerous awards, and has been featured in many publications ranging from local news outlets to U.S. News & World Report. She continues to be involved with her alma mater, such as assisting with alumni relations and serving on the Cornell University Library Advisory Council. One of her greatest joys professionally was serving as a mentor for aspiring administrators through New Jersey Leaders to Leaders, the state-approved comprehensive mentoring and induction program for new school administrators.



Be open to new ideas and experiences because you'll never know when someone else will have an interesting thought or when a new door will open to take you on the journey of your dreams.

**Judge Ketanji Brown**  
**First Black Female Supreme Court Justice**



**Keynote Address**  
**9:45 AM - 10:30 AM**



**Michellene Davis, Esq.**

Michellene Davis assumed the role of President and Chief Executive Officer of National Medical Fellowships, Inc., (NMF) in May of 2021. Founded in 1946, NMF was one of America's first diversity organizations and remains the only national organization advancing health equity at the intersection of wealth and health. It provides scholarships to Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) medical and health professions students underrepresented in medicine to ensure equity of access to culturally competent, high-quality health care. NMF also increases the number of BIPOC clinician leaders to diversify clinical trials.

Davis is named among Modern Healthcare magazine's Top 25 Most Influential Minority Leaders in Healthcare and Becker's Hospital Review's Top113 Great Leaders in Healthcare 2022 and 75 Black Healthcare Leaders to Know 2022. The National Association of Health Services Executives awarded her their 2021 Senior Health Care Executive Award.

Davis most recently served as Executive Vice President and Chief Corporate Affairs Officer at RWJBarnabas Health, the largest academic medical center system in New Jersey and one of the largest in the nation. She founded Social Impact and Community Investment, an equity-centered, policy-led community health practice addressing the social and political determinants of health. She was the first African American in state history to serve as Chief Policy Counsel to former New Jersey Governor Jon S. Corzine, the first African American and only the second woman to serve as New Jersey State Treasurer. She was the youngest person to serve as CEO of the New Jersey Lottery and also served as a senior policy advisor in the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

She co-authored *Changing Missions, Changing Lives: How a Change Agent Can Turn the Ship and Create Impact*, published by ForbesBooks in 2020, which provides a blueprint for those committed to leading systems change within organizations.

Ms. Davis began her legal career as a trial litigator, is an Honors graduate of Seton Hall University and holds a Juris Doctorate from Seton Hall School of Law. She holds Executive Education Certificates in Corporate Social Responsibility from the Harvard Business School and in Social Impact Strategy from the Wharton School of Business.

*Celebrating the Women Who Tell Our Stories*



## **SALON 1** *I Said What I Said*

**10:45 am - 12:00 pm**

In this session we will talk about the value of friendship and camaraderie that women teachers of color rely on to feel safe in their working/teaching environments. This presentation will focus on a particular incident that highlights the ways in which schools and school leaders can implement and foster active listening skills and open communication when it comes to issues of safe and positive work environments.



**Presented by**  
**Dr. LaChan Hannon**  
Director of Teacher Preparation & Innovation  
Department of Urban Education, Rutgers-Newark



**Facilitated by**  
**Marilyn Mitchell**  
Director  
Office of Special Education

# About the Presenter

LaChan V. Hannon, Ph.D. is a former high school teacher and the current Director of Teacher Preparation & Innovation in the Department of Urban Education at Rutgers-Newark. Dr. Hannon received her Ph.D. from Montclair State University in teacher education and teacher development with a focus on parent engagement and culturally responsive school practices. Her scholarly work investigates the intersectionality of race, disability, and parent involvement as they relate to the professional development for school leaders and educators. Her research and teaching interests are on culturally responsive school/parent partnerships, teacher self-study, and teaching for social justice. Her TEDx Talk titled *Young, Gifted & Black with Autism* was released in 2016. Dr. Hannon has published articles and chapters in academic texts including: *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices*, *Contemporary Justice Review*, and *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*.

Dr. Hannon graduated from the University of Delaware in 1999 with a Bachelor of Arts in English and a minor in Sociology. Through an intentional course of study, Dr. Hannon simultaneously pursued and received special education graduate certificates in Educating Individuals with Autism and Applied Behavior Analysis from the Pennsylvania State University in 2009, which have impacted her both professionally and personally. Dr. Hannon and her husband Dr. Michael D. Hannon co-founded the 501c3 non-profit organization Greater Expectations Teaching and Advocacy Center Inc (GETAC) as a means to support families of children with developmental differences in addition to education professionals through parent workshops, professional development, and advocacy support.

After spending seven years as a high school teacher and desiring to broaden her professional skill set, Dr. Hannon transitioned into early intervention services as a teacher for preschool children with developmental disabilities. She then accepted a position as the county-wide behavioral health and rehabilitative services program director that provides behavioral and mental health services to children and adolescents with diagnosed disabilities between the ages of 3-19. In 2012, Dr. Hannon returned to the classroom with a professional focus on increasing teacher confidence and knowledge working with students with disabilities in educational settings. In 2013, she completed a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership/Teacher Leadership from Pennsylvania State University.

Currently, Dr. Hannon presents at both local and national conferences on topics of autism education, culturally responsive school practices, and educational leadership. Dr. Hannon is an advocate for equitable access to quality education, a supporter of teacher learning, and a believer that schools improve when they intentionally engage families and communities in the education of their children.

*Celebrating the Women Who Tell Our Stories*



## **SALON 2**

### ***The Art of Leadership***

**10:45 am - 12:00 pm**

In this session, Principal Branco will share her personal journey to leadership and encourage aspiring leaders to be their authentic selves as they move forward in the profession.



**Presented by  
Rosa Branco  
Principal  
First Avenue School**



**Facilitated by  
Valerie Wilson  
School Business Administrator  
Office of the School Business Administrator**

# About the Presenter

Principal Rosa Branco is a creative, kind-hearted educator that has served the children of Newark for the past 25 years.

Principal Branco was born and raised in Newark and put her leadership skills to use at a young age while helping to run her family's business in the Ironbound section of Newark. While working through her college years at Kean University, she changed majors from Elementary Education to Arts Education. Always having a passion for the arts, Principal Branco determined she could have the best of both worlds teaching the visual arts.

After teaching art to the students of Roberto Clemente Elementary School in the North Ward for about 3 years, she was encouraged to go back to school to obtain a masters in Educational Leadership by her principal at the time, Margarida Carrasco. Upon completion of her masters at Kean University, Principal Branco worked as a Facilitator at Gladys Hillman Jones Middle School for a year. She was then promoted to Vice Principal at Luis Muñoz Marín, followed by a year as Vice Principal at Dr. E Alma Flagg.

Principal Branco then served as Vice Principal at McKinley Elementary School when Gladys Hillman Jones combined with McKinley, making McKinley school a Prek-8th grade school. Principal Branco worked at McKinley for six years and then transitioned to Chancellor Elementary in the South Ward, where she continued as Vice Principal for five years. Next Principal Branco returned to the North Ward as Vice Principal at First Avenue Elementary School and was then promoted to Principal. She has been the Principal of First Avenue for the past five years. Under her leadership, they have won 1st place in the math olympics twice. Students have consistently ranked high academically in the district. This year they started their first Algebra course and won 2nd place in the nationwide Khanathalon. Grants awarded to First Avenue include "VHI Save the Music," "Lang Lang," and Victoria Foundation grants 3 consecutive years for STEAM.

Principal Branco believes greatly in the children of Newark, dedicating her entire career to educating them and creating a culture in her building that entices children and teachers to want to come to school. First Avenue has provided Principal Branco the opportunity to use not only her leadership, but also her artistic background. She has been able to create an environment where students excel academically and artistically. Young artists shine at First Avenue Elementary School!

*Celebrating the Women Who Tell Our Stories*



## **SALON 3**

# **The Empathetic Leader: Keep Yourself in Your Own Shoes**

**10:45 am - 12:00 pm**

Too often women leaders are criticized for being too empathetic. The belief that being an empathetic leader leads to emotional fatigue, enmeshed boundaries, and perceived weakness does not stand up to the scrutiny of research! People want to work in psychologically safe and supportive work environments. They want leaders who listen, connect and empathize with them. This presentation will focus on equipping leaders to strategically implement empathetic practices with boundaries, emotional agility, and self-care.



**Presented by  
Jonelle Massey  
Consultant  
Creative Leadership Solutions**



**Facilitated by  
Dr. Shakirah Harrington  
Assistant Superintendent  
East/Central Ward Leadership Team**



# About the Presenter

Jonelle Massey, who is in her twentieth year as an educator and nationally certified licensed mental health therapist, received her master's degree from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Jonelle's diverse service in education as a school counselor and therapist includes both public and private, primary and secondary educational settings, as well as psychiatric hospital care and private practice.

Married to a Division I college basketball coach for fifteen years, Jonelle adjusts well to relocation and makes an immediate impact with each professional move. As a former Division I athletic scholarship recipient with Xavier University's women's basketball program, Jonelle shares her passion for teaching effective teamwork, work ethic, motivation and resilience through an empathetic framework.

Her strength in leadership is also evident in her professional development lectures as a school counselor and crisis counselor, community service involvement, and entrepreneur successes. Jonelle volunteers as an advisor for two chapters of the Young Women of Excellence student leadership group, a small business mentor, board member for the National Alopecia Areata Foundation, STEMinist with the Imagination Station, consultant with local college athletic teams, and Business Mentor with Women of Toledo, 501c3. She is a founding member and board liaison of Her Hub, a Toledo women's business organization.

A native of Cincinnati, Ohio, Jonelle resides in Toledo, Ohio with her husband, Jeff ("Coach Mass") and two daughters, Aubrey and Kayla.

*Celebrating the Women Who Tell Our Stories*



## **SALON 4** ***Improving Mindfulness***

**10:45 am - 12:00 pm**

Life constantly demands our attention, but when we become fixated on the past, or worried about the future, we often miss vital information in our present situations. This presentation will focus on helping attendees acquire a sense of perspective that can allow them to learn from past experiences without it overwhelming them with resentment or regret, and plan for the future without anxiety or dejection.



**Presented by**  
**Dr. Donnette P. Green**  
**CEO and Founder**  
**Distinctly Guided, LLC**



**Facilitated by**  
**Michelina Thornton**  
**Director**  
**Office of Grants Development**

# About the Presenter

Dr. Donnette P. Green exerts an infinite background as a child welfare professional. Additionally, her portfolio includes, but is not limited to, strategic planning, development of policy, education, and community engagement. With an intense love of public service, Donnette spent the last fifteen plus years advocating for at-risk youth, counseling families, and serving as a liaison between them and all essential services. She is an accomplished professional and leader in her community who possesses an ability to set standardized learning objectives while facilitating, teaching, and exhibiting public speaking skills.

Donnette holds a PhD in Law and Public Policy where her study focused on "Kingstonian Parents' Perspectives on Discipline Using Corporal Punishment." She also holds a Master of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. Dr. Green is a proud member of the National Society of Leadership and Success, the Golden Key International Honor Society, and the Alpha Phi Sigma Honor Society.

Ever expanding her scope of interest, Donnette has provided training to many organizations including law enforcement, educators, healthcare providers, community leaders, child welfare professionals, and parents. She has determined that her greatest goal as a community leader is to bridge the gap in communication through restorative practices. It is her belief that when families and stakeholders understand their roles, there is a better chance of improving human behavior, restoring relationships, and providing effective leadership within families and organization. Additionally, Dr. Green is a firm believer in the importance of continuous training within organizations to improve employee satisfaction and boost employee performance. With an intense passion for social change, Donnette is the CEO and founder of Distinctly Guided, which offers innovative approaches through coaching, consulting, support, training, and strategic guidance to improve outcomes for families, professionals, and community stakeholders.

Dr. Green is known for her literacy initiative in partnership with Newark Board of Education, Office of Early Childhood's "Pancakes and Pajamas," as well as "J-DOC" an annual mission to Jamaica engaging children and families while providing health and wellness resources and education; school supplies and resources to encourage literacy; and workshops along with mentorship to teenagers to encourage goal settings.

*Celebrating the Women Who Tell Our Stories*



## **SALON 5**

# ***Finding Your Own Path to Serendipity***

**10:45 am - 12:00 pm**

Serendipity comes from a Persian tale, "The Three Princes of Serendip" where three princes tried to impress their father by traveling as commoners rather than nobles. In their travels, they saw people's hardships as well as the good in the world. They learned a life without hardships was a life devoid of valuable lessons. This presentation is a journey of reflection and self-discovery and about embracing all experiences, particularly our challenges, and allowing them to make us better.



**Presented by  
Allyson Apsey  
Consultant  
Creative Leadership Solutions**



**Facilitated by  
Samantha Lott-Velez  
Assistant Superintendent  
South/West Ward Leadership Team**

# About the Presenter

Allyson Apsey has been an award-winning school leader for nearly 20 years, leading all levels from elementary to high school.

Allyson had the honor to help open a highly successful charter school in northern Michigan and there she transitioned from teacher leader to school leader. The school opened with 300 students in K-6 and added a grade per year until they had over 1300 students in K-12. Developing a secondary program from scratch was a dream come true because it was an opportunity to design the school around research-proven practices.

Allyson's next adventure was becoming the principal of Quincy Elementary in Zeeland, MI. This award-winning school is full of dedicated, passionate, and skilled teachers who elicit wonder, excitement, and a love for learning in their students. In addition to her role as principal for Zeeland Public Schools, she was also the District Leadership and Mentoring Coach.

Recognizing the significant impact that trauma has had on many of our students, staff and families, Allyson became a Certified Trauma Practitioner in Education and she is an Educator Wellness Coach with Opportunity Thrive. She was honored to serve on the Executive Board of Directors for MEMSPA (Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association) as the Professional Development Chair and is on the NAESP (National Association of Elementary School Principals) Editorial Advisory Board.

Allyson writes on a blog called Serendipity in Education and is a best-selling author of several books—including *Leading the Whole Teacher*, *The Path to Serendipity*, the picture book *The Princes of Serendip*, *Through the Lens of Serendipity: Helping Others Discover the Best in Themselves* and a middle-grades chapter book called *The Serendipity Journal*. She also loves speaking to passionate groups of educators to support them in taking care of the whole child and the whole educator by implementing research-proven practices. Allyson's [TEDx Talk](#) can give you an insight into her passion.



We need women who are so strong they can be gentle, so educated they can be humble, so fierce they can be compassionate, so passionate they can be rational, and so disciplined they can be free.

**Kavita N. Ramdas**  
**Globally Recognized Advocate**





You either walk inside your story and own it;  
or you stand outside your story and hustle for  
your worthiness.

**Brené Brown**  
**Professor, Author**



*Celebrating the Women Who Tell Our Stories*



## **SALON 6**

# ***The Divine Feminine: A Coming to Balance***

**12:15 pm - 1:30 pm**

This presentation will describe the principle of the divine feminine, the significance of elevating it at this dispensation of time, and why this is relevant for educators.



**Presented by  
Dr. Monique Swift  
Founder & CEO  
Swift Solutions Consultant Services, LLC**



**Facilitated by  
Carolyn Granato  
Assistant Superintendent  
Student Support Services**



# About the Presenter

Dr. Monique Swift, proprietor of Swift Solutions Consultant Services, LLC, is a psychologist, a NJ Licensed Professional Counselor, and a NY Licensed Mental Health Counselor. She has over 20 years of clinical experience in the field of mental health and operates a private practice in Rahway, NJ where she specializes in couple's therapy and trauma.

In addition to her clinical work, Dr. Swift also offers keynote talks, curriculum design, personal development workshops, and professional training. She consults with religious, community-based, and non-profit organizations, public and private schools, as well as with private groups. As a trauma expert, she offers consultation to organizations that want to become trauma-informed. She furthermore specializes in issues that form at the intersection of trauma and race.

Dr. Swift is actively involved in racial social justice efforts and initiatives. Her extensive volunteer work typically benefits the Black community specifically, and oppressed and under-served populations, in general. Her volunteer activity often involves grassroots and civic organizing, personal and community empowerment building, and addressing issues of racial inequality, and racial trauma.

Dr. Swift serves as a member of the Board of Advisors for Volunteers of America, the Newark Community Collaborative Board, Torchlight Educational Academy, and the Union County Juvenile Conference Committee under the Family Division of the Superior Court. Since 2014, she has also served as an executive board member for the New Jersey Chapter of The Association of Black Psychologists and is the immediate Past President of the chapter. Dr. Swift additionally serves on the National Board of The Association of Black Psychologists as Eastern Regional Representative.

Dr. Swift's special interests include youth empowerment, race and social issues, and holistic health.

*Celebrating the Women Who Tell Our Stories*



## **SALON 7**

### ***The Balancing Act: Passionate Leadership with Personal Self-Care***

**12:15 pm - 1:30 pm**

Women in leadership are often challenged with being not only the head of their organization, but also the head of their family. With that, the challenge to balance all that is required in both roles can be quite consuming and often results in the leader being the last priority on their 'to do' list. This session aims to remind women that "If your compassion does not include yourself it is not complete (Jack Kornfield)". It will include some practical ways to prioritize YOU during your leadership journey!



**Presented by**  
**Genique Flourney-Hamilton**  
**Principal**  
**University High School**



**Facilitated by**  
**Yolonda Severe**  
**Executive Director**  
**Office of Early Childhood**

# About the Presenter

Principal Genique Flournoy-Hamilton is a compassionate educator committed to serving youth from the city of Newark.

Principal Hamilton is a product of Newark Public Schools. She attended and graduated from Camden Middle School and University High School in Newark, NJ. Her diligence as a scholar athlete at University High School afforded her a four-year Presidential Scholarship to Tuskegee University, one of the nation's best historically Black universities.

While attending Tuskegee University, Principal Hamilton was honored as a Gates Millennium Scholar, Pi Sigma Alpha honor society member, United Negro College Fund Scholar, and Tuskegee University's Scholar Athlete of the Year. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Tuskegee University with a BA in Political Science and English.

Principal Hamilton furthered her academic career at Rutgers University Graduate School of Social Work and School Counseling. She earned a master's degree in Social Work and began her career as a school social worker in Newark. She later earned a certificate in Educational Leadership, eventually leading to her obtaining a position as a Vice Principal and later Principal at a charter school in Newark, NJ. In August 2019, she returned to University High School, her alma mater, to serve as Principal. She currently continues to serve as Principal there and prides herself in increasing the academic outcomes at the school.

During her first three years as Principal, the English Language Arts state assessment scores rose by twenty-six percent. In addition, University High School expanded the college-in-high-school course offerings and became the first Newark Public School to offer dual enrollment courses with a Historically Black College or University, Howard University. In addition, the school has college partnerships with Brown University, Montclair State University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rutgers University, and Essex County College.

Principal Hamilton has been recognized by the National Sorority of Phi Delta kappa, Inc., Delta Pi Chapter and the Clergy Alliance for her educational contributions in the city of Newark. Principal Hamilton is a firm believer that every scholar is gifted with varied intelligences and it is the job of the educational ecosystem to support them in discovering these gifts and maximizing them to become local, state, and global leaders.

*Celebrating the Women Who Tell Our Stories*



## **SALON 8**

### ***By the Power Vested in Me***

**12:15 pm - 1:30 pm**

The audience will learn how storytelling and individual and community narratives can be used to provoke brave practices and policy change in sectors such as healthcare, public health, and public education, especially in light of the imperative to create just, equitable, and inclusive systems. Using her lived experiences as a healthcare executive and public health expert, Dr. Chris Pernell will use the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and corporate spaces to describe how women can lead and shift the paradigm from race and gender tokenism to substantive social and institutional transformation.



**Presented by  
Dr. Chris Pernell  
Apostle of Public Health**



**Facilitated by  
Nancy Deering  
Director  
Office of Board Relations**

# About the Presenter

Dr. Chris T. Pernell is a dynamic physician leader and social change agent. In her public health practice, she focuses on health justice, community-based advocacy, and population-wide health promotion and disease prevention. Previously, she worked at University Hospital in Newark, New Jersey as the first Chief Strategic Integration and Health Equity Officer. She oversaw a portfolio which included Population Health, Strategic Planning, Community Affairs, and the Human Experience. Her office was responsible for launching health equity strategy development and integrating diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism initiatives across all system operations.

Prior to joining University Hospital, she led the 1199SEIU/League Labor Management Initiatives (LMI) Workplace and Community Health Program. Working with 1199SEIU leaders and frontline workers—the nation's largest healthcare union—and executive partners across NYC healthcare institutions, her efforts centered on workplace health strategies, worker empowerment, health equity, and health system transformation.

Dr. Chris is a charismatic and leading voice in preventive medicine and public health. The New Jersey Public Health Association recently awarded her the Dr. Ezra Mundy Hunt Award for her distinctive leadership in public health. In 2022, NJBiz chose her as one of the Best 50 Women in Business. ROI-NJ named her a ROI Influencer in their Women in Business roster as well. The American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM) selected her to receive the 2022 Volunteer of the Year Award and the Ron Davis Special Recognition Award in 2021. Also, NJBiz named her a 2020 Public Health Hero. Dr. Pernell has spearheaded issues such as prison reform, care for justice-involved populations, evidence-based wellness programs, civic health, and high-quality education. Known for her community work in the Greater Newark, New Jersey area, she serves on the Essex County Civilian Task Force as a medical expert. Dr. Pernell is a frequent contributor across television, radio, and print media leveraging her lived experiences and expertise as a public health physician and health equity champion. She regularly speaks at professional symposia and social forums and advises community, state, regional, and national leaders on health equity, racial justice, population health, community well-being, and faith-based initiatives.

Dr. Chris graduated cum laude from Princeton University before attending Duke University School of Medicine. She received her Master of Public Health from the Columbia Mailman School of Public Health and completed the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health General Preventive Medicine Residency. Dr. Pernell is a fellow and Regent-at-Large for the American College of Preventive Medicine. She holds an appointment as a Clinical Assistant Professor at the Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. Previously, she taught as an adjunct associate professor at the NYU College of Global Public Health. She labors as a faith leader in a groundbreaking assembly, BET HaSHEM YHWH Worldwide Ministries, and travels domestically and overseas helping to transform lives through love, truth, creativity, and inspiration.

*Celebrating the Women Who Tell Our Stories*



## **SALON 9** ***Courageous Leadership***

**12:15 pm - 1:30 pm**

Culture trumps strategy every time! How we define ourselves as female leaders shapes our schools and affects our every interaction. Increasing our capacity to provide a safe, inclusive, and positive school culture where teachers and students thrive starts with a personal journey and few key strategies. This session is designed for those who want to reflect on their personal selves to increase their ability to connect with others by listening, reflecting, visioning, and acting.



**Presented by**  
**Dr. Ann McCarty Perez**  
Consultant  
Creative Leadership Solutions



**Facilitated by**  
**Krystle Whitlock**  
Assistant School Business Administrator  
Office of the School Business Administrator

# About the Presenter

Dr. Ann McCarty Perez is a passionate educator with over 25 years of experience working in schools to improve processes and outcomes. She has been a middle school teacher, high school assistant principal, middle school principal, and central office administrator for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. She is well versed in state and federal programming and data driven decision making. In her various roles, she has implemented curriculum reviews and writing activities, program and process reviews, MTSS and responsive instruction, student behavior modification plans and PBIS, coordinated projects to reduce truancy, increased student achievement and closed gaps, provided services for at-risk students, and collaborated with parents to create school community. Her experience includes a variety of settings to include urban, sub-urban, and rural schools.

As a presenter and facilitator, Dr. McCarty Perez has helped school leaders with vision and mission, master scheduling, equity and courageous leadership, implementation of MTSS, and Professional Learning Communities to increase teacher capacity and improve instructional outcomes. As a school and district leader, she has demonstrated results of closing achievement gaps and improving outcomes for all students through continuous improvement efforts and strategic planning. Dr. McCarty Perez has been an adjunct professor at George Washington University where she worked with aspiring school leaders on supervision of instruction. Most recently, she authored the book *The Successful Middle School Schedule*.

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## **SALON 10** **Leading WELL!**

**12:15 pm - 1:30 pm**

In this session, Dr. Rema Vassar will provide strategies to focus on wellness as a priority for women leaders.



**Presented by**  
**Dr. Rema Vassar**  
**Chair, Board of Trustees**  
**University of Michigan**



**Facilitated by**  
**Jazleen Othman**  
**Special Assistant**  
**Office of Teaching & Learning**



# About the Presenter

Rema Vassar, Ph.D, affectionately known as Dr. Rema, was elected to the Board of Trustees for an eight-year term that began January 1, 2021. Dr. Vassar earned her doctorate from UCLA in Urban Schooling and currently serves as Professor in the department of Administrative and Organizational Studies at Wayne State University's College of Education. The author of many scholarly journal articles, her research interests include parent-school partnerships; race, gender, and class implications in schools; implications of policy and practice on student achievement and outcomes; and equity, justice, access, and inclusion for minoritized communities. In addition to her work in higher education, Dr. Vassar has extensive experience in K-12 public education, having served over 20 years as a teacher, counselor, and principal. This year, Governor Gretchen Whitmer appointed Dr. Vassar to the MiSTEM Advisory Council for a 3-year term. She maintains a steadfast commitment to community service through her partnerships with school districts across the state to develop students and educators' transformative leadership skills. Dr. Rema is particularly committed to leadership development in Detroit where she resides with her husband and children.



Every woman's success should be an inspiration to another. We're strongest when we cheer each other on.

**Serena Williams**  
**Tennis Grand Slam Champion &  
Olympic Gold Medalist**

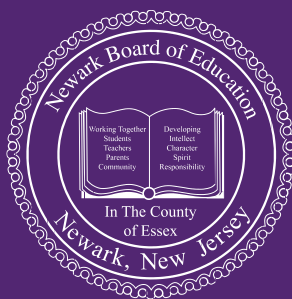


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Presenters & Special Guests

Each and every woman participating in the Women's Leadership Conference.



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