

FOURTH ANNUAL TEACHER LEADER  
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM INSTITUTE

**Trusting Teachers to Lead:  
Stories of Teacher Creativity,  
Innovation, Collaboration  
and Resiliency during an  
Extraordinary School Year**

WEDNESDAY  
**MAY 26**  
**2021**

VIRTUAL  
CONFERENCE

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN REGISTERING  
FOR THIS CONFERENCE, PLEASE CONTACT  
**MYPROFESSION@CEA.ORG.**

Sponsored by Central Connecticut State University in  
partnership with Connecticut Education Association,  
and Duke TeachHouse.



# PROGRAM

- 8:45 - 9:00 am ..... **FRAMING THE DAY** Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, TLFP Director
- 9:00 - 9:20 am ..... **KEYNOTE** Tim Walker *In Teachers We Trust: The Finnish Way to World-Class Schools*  
Tim will lead us through seven key principles for building a culture of trust in schools throughout the world—from offering clinical training for future teachers to cultivating student agency to fostering a collaborative professionalism among educators.
- 9:20 - 9:50 am ..... **PANEL DISCUSSION** with Tim Walker and three TLFP fellows who visited Finland  
Mike Zaba, Plainville; Sarhanna Smith, Bridgeport; Kate Field, CEA; Betty J. Sternberg, Moderator
- 9:55 - 10:25 am ..... **BREAKOUT GROUPS**  
Continue the Discussion - All Attendees
- 10:30 - 11:30am ..... **PANEL** **Teacher Voices for Change: How Teaching and Leading During the Pandemic Clarified What's Important - Unveiling the Monograph**  
TLFP fellows share insights about teaching during the pandemic and their hopes for the future - Moderator, Tawana Graham-Douglas, Plainville; Panelists: Anthea Grotton, Tolland, Kindergarten; Julia Darcy Bristol, Grade 5; Grace Braniff, Stratford, HS English; Nadine Mills, CT Technical School, Math instructor
- 11:30am - 12:30pm..... **LUNCH** **Special Interest Chat Groups**  
**Self-Care for Teachers** Bruce Cryer, The Graduate Institute (TGI)  
**Personalized Learning** Bena Kallick  
**Visiting Schools in Finland** Maureen Brummett, Superintendent, Newington PS  
**Visiting Schools in Ottawa, Canada** Pino Buffone, Director of Schools, Renfrew County Public Schools, Ottawa
- 12:30 - 1:30 pm..... **BREAKOUT SESSIONS** (see page 2-7 for topics) **15 minute TED-Type Talks by Breakout Session Teacher Leaders and an Interactive Discussion of the Talk**
- 1:30 - 2:30 pm..... **A TED-TYPE TALK AND DISCUSSION - OUR COVID YEAR AND THE TLFP THROUGH A HABITS OF MIND LENS** with Bena Kallick, Co-Author of *Habits of Mind*, and Teacher Leader Fellowship Program Fellows including Jennifer Norman, CT Technical Schools; Jessica Slater, Newington; Gina Rivera, Bristol; Jennifer Warfield, Bridgeport; Jennifer Leniart, Stratford
- 2:30 - 3:00 pm..... **SUMMARY OF TLFP FELLOWS' PERSPECTIVES ON THIS EXTRAORDINARY YEAR**  
Julia Darcy and Georgina Rivera, Bristol Public Schools and Betty J. Sternberg, Director of TLFP

## CATEGORY I: USING TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE TEACHING AND LEARNING

### LOOKING FOR THE PROMISE: EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY -

Jennifer Anderson Norman, English Instructor at H.H. Ellis Technical High School in Danielson

In this session, participants will explore the different learning apps and learning platforms that have supported students, teachers, and families throughout the pandemic. We will examine what has worked, what has not worked, and a variety of outcomes from experimenting with educational technology. We will walk through the catastrophes, the successes, and the idea of what is curriculum in this new age of learning.

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**BIO:** Jennifer Anderson Norman is an English Instructor at H.H. Ellis Technical High School in Danielson, Connecticut. When not teaching, she may be found working on her doctorate in curriculum and instruction, dancing with her ten year old daughter in the kitchen, kicking the soccer ball with her twelve year old son, and chasing the cows on her family's three hundred acre dairy farm.



### HARNESSING THE POWER OF TWITTER FOR COLLABORATION IN A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING NETWORK

Dr. Corey Nagle, Science and AVID teacher at Bristol Central High School in Bristol

Do you want to overcome the limitations of time, money, and lack of in-person opportunities to increase professional learning? Even as we have navigated the impacts of the pandemic, the power of Twitter allows for professional growth and networking with other educational experts. This session will be tailored to participants who created a Twitter account but have not fully utilized it for professional learning. Participants will be introduced to the benefits of Twitter to create and expand professional learning networks for global collaboration. From creating a strong profile to locating valuable resources, participants will leave with an improved understanding of Twitter for professional growth. Participants in the session will have the opportunity to ask questions and engage in identifying ways to use technology to develop and expand teacher leadership opportunities. It is recommended that those attending the session download the Twitter app and create an account prior to the session.

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**BIO:** Dr. Corey Nagle is currently a high school science and AVID teacher at Bristol Central High School in Bristol, CT. Prior to teaching high school science, Corey taught science at Chippens Hill Middle School in Bristol and at Joseph A. DePaolo Middle School in Southington, CT. Corey serves on various committees within his school and district as well as on the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Council. Corey can be reached at [coreynagle@bristol12.org](mailto:coreynagle@bristol12.org).



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## CATEGORY II: EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

### EXAMINING VISUAL IMAGES TO UNDERSTAND AND PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE

**Dr. Tina Manus, English teacher and General Education Department Head at Bullard-Havens Technical High School, in Bridgeport**

In this session teachers will examine photos and artwork of current and historical significance that inspired or captured activism for social justice in America. The content will include examples from the labor movement, the climate crisis, the women's movement, LGBTQIA+ advocacy, and the Black Lives Matter movement for racial equity. Discussions will be inquiry-based and use the framework provided by the National Archives. Graphic organizers for both elementary and secondary level students created by the National Archives will be shared and used by teachers themselves to unpack meaning in images based upon evidence. In addition, the presenter will share classroom applications and student work submitted as visual artifacts to earn a National Board Teacher Certificate in Early Adolescence/ English Language in 2018. Teachers will then discuss messages they want to convey to students, colleagues, and the public with their "teacher voices" using these techniques regarding teacher leadership and the current educational landscape.

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**BIO: Dr. Tina M. Manus, PhD** is an English teacher and General Education Department Head at Bullard-Havens Technical High School, in Bridgeport. Tina is dedicated to improving teacher quality to increase equity and access for all students. Dr. Manus earned her PhD in Organizational Leadership with a focus upon Emotional Intelligence. She is Chair of the ACT CT Leadership Council and a frequent participant in virtual EdCamp's sponsored by Digital Promise where teacher-leaders share best practices and tech strategies. In 2019, she had the opportunity to visit Helsinki, Finland with the TLFP to examine education there as well.



### ERASURES, POWER, AND VOICE: A JOYCEAN APPROACH TO CREATIVE CONSCIOUSNESS IN EDUCATION

**Dr. Yvonne de St. Croix, Consultant in Gifted and Talented Education, former Talented and Gifted Enrichment Educator in New Milford**

This presentation fosters creative thinking as an integral piece of practical ideas for educational systems from a perspective of experimentation with structure, collaborative dialogue and understanding of diverse and distinct student populations. Participants in this session will have the opportunity to engage with research and data supporting flexibility in preparing and planning for programs addressing the needs of high performing students of all racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds. We will consider how the need to be flexible, receptive, and responsive to multiple stakeholders can increase the effectiveness of transcendent policies and programming. Receptive and responsive actions consider the inclusion and influence of diverse populations of learners in regard to program decisions and purposeful, yet malleable changes. This presentation's research derives from flow, positive psychology, and resiliency through collaboration and in doing so not only supports creative talent development, but its implementation as well.

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**BIO: Dr. Yvonne de St. Croix** is a high-energy optimist who performs in the field of gifted education with perseverance and curiosity. Utilizing her strong expertise in national, state, and local education policy and advocacy, she serves as a tireless advocate for high-quality education with equity and fidelity for all learners. Dr. de St. Croix designs, teaches, coaches, models, and implements differentiated instructional techniques to advance the academic and cognitive abilities of all students and research includes qualitative and quantitative data analysis to advise and recommend cohesive and proactive educational practice and discourse. Professionally, she collaborates with teams of specialists at the local, state, national, and international level to maximize the impact of data-driven, educationally focused policy endeavors to effectively produce and communicate proposed recommendations and site-based plans and curriculum with relevant, rigorous content.



## CATEGORY III: CARING FOR KIDS/CARING FOR TEACHERS (SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND RESILIENCY)

### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING - A BRIDGEPORT PERSPECTIVE - READ SCHOOL

**Sarhanna K. Smith, Principal**

**Jeanna Reiff, 7th Grade Language Arts Teacher**

**Diana Lipman, 2nd Grade Teacher**

**Kristen Lewis, 8th Grade English Language Arts Teacher**

**Jennifer Warfield, 1st grade Teacher**

In 2014, Bridgeport Public Schools committed to a district-wide initiative centered on emotional intelligence. The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence became a partner to help implement RULER across all Bridgeport schools. The RULER implementation team at Read School worked diligently over the years to help train staff and students to become emotionally intelligent. Over the past several years, Read School's RULER initiative expanded to include the concepts of restorative practices. Our RULER team became known as the SEL Team. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit and our schools closed in March 2020, we had to rethink our approaches to SEL. Participants in this breakout session will hear firsthand accounts of our journey through social and emotional learning, and in particular, how we have adapted during the pandemic. Members of the Read School Social and Emotional Learning Team will present ideas for supporting SEL during a pandemic, including working with staff and students, creating stakeholder buy-in, and "ah-ha" moments.

#### BIOS:

**Sarhanna K. Smith** is Principal of Read School, a PreK-8 school in Bridgeport. She is passionate about tackling factors that often interfere with learning, such as the negative effects that trauma and poverty have on children's development. Sarhanna was trained at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and she is a licensed trainer of restorative practices through the International Institute of Restorative Practices. Sarhanna began teaching in 1994 in Washington, D.C. She earned her B.A. in Elementary Education from Howard University, M.A. in Reading from SCSU, and Sixth Year Diploma in Educational Leadership and Executive Leadership Superintendent Certificate from UConn.



**Jeanna Reiff** is a 7th Grade Language Arts Educator at Read School in Bridgeport. Jeanna began teaching in 2009 in NYC. In 2018, Jeanna received the *Going the*

*Extra Mile* award from her colleagues. She is the faculty advisor for the National Junior Honor Society. Jeanna believes that all children can succeed and that relationships with students come first. She is on the school's SEL Committee and has led various professional development sessions focusing on RULER and Restorative Practices. Jeanna earned her B.S. in Childhood Education at SUNY Oneonta, M.S.E. in Literacy (K-12) at The College of New Rochelle, and has her certification in Remedial Reading (102) in Connecticut. She may be reached at [jreiff@bridgeportedu.net](mailto:jreiff@bridgeportedu.net)



**Diana Lipman** is a second-grade teacher at Read School in Bridgeport. Diana received her B.S in Elementary Education from SCSU, M.A in Elementary Education and Sixth Year Diploma in Educational Administration and Supervision from the University of Bridgeport. Diana believes that a positive school climate and building relationships with students will lead to increased academic success. Diana has been a part of Read's SEL Team since it was established. She has received training by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence in RULER approaches, and the CSDE in school climate and restorative practices. Diana has led school-based professional development and parent workshops focused on SEL.



**Kristen Lewis** is the 8th Grade English Language Arts Teacher at Read School in Bridgeport. Kristen received her B.A. in English from Sacred Heart University and an M.A. in Secondary Education, also from SHU. Kristen believes that a positive rapport and environment are a necessity in teaching and learning. Kristen has been a part of Read School's Leadership Team as well as assisted in giving Professional Development to the Read School Staff, as well as the fellow English teachers throughout the district. In 2019, Kristen was nominated for and received the *Going the Extra Mile Award* by her colleagues.



**Jennifer Warfield** is a first-grade teacher at Read School in Bridgeport. Jennifer began teaching in 2008 in Bridgeport. In 2015, Jennifer received an Inspiration Award for excellence in education. She is a member of the school leadership team and a TLFP fellow.

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Jennifer believes that all children can succeed if you differentiate for each learner. She is on the school's SEL Committee and has led various professional development sessions focusing on RULER and Restorative Practices. Jennifer earned her B.A in Education and Psychology at Ohio Wesleyan University, M.A. in Literacy at the University of St. Joseph, and has her administration certification in Educational Leadership (092) from Sacred Heart University in Connecticut. She may be reached at [jwarfield@bridgeportedu.net](mailto:jwarfield@bridgeportedu.net).



## **DEALING WITH DIFFICULT MOMENTS: MICRO SELF-CARE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN EDUCATOR RESILIENCY**

**Dr. Kate Field, CEA, Specialist in Professional Learning and Teacher Evaluation**

Do you love your job, but find yourself regularly losing sleep over a student struggling in class? Felt heartbroken and helpless because a student can't concentrate at school due to difficulties at home? Felt anxious or even had nightmares on a Sunday night? If you answered yes to any of these questions, this workshop might be for you.

Learn simple, quick strategies to integrate mindfulness into your daily routine, allowing you to approach the most difficult of days with a sense of calm and focus. From 10-minute yoga, to mantras and breathing exercises, participants will experiment with a variety of self-care activities designed to decrease stress, enhance the quality of life, and improve sleep and mental clarity. The strategies shared can also be easily adapted for classroom use, helping to decrease student anxiety, improve student behavior, and enhance learning outcomes.

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**BIO: Kate Field** was a teacher and school administrator for 18 years before joining the staff at the Connecticut Education Association, where she specializes in professional learning and teacher evaluation. A 2007 finalist for Connecticut Teacher of the Year, she was also recognized as UConn's Outstanding High School Educator of the Year in 2015. A two-time Fulbright Scholar, Kate has visited schools around the world, including South Africa, Japan, China, Hungary, Germany and Finland. She has presented for numerous national organizations, including ASCD, Learning Forward, National Council for Social Studies, National Association of Biology Teachers, and the College Board.



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## CATEGORY IV: LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER (COLLABORATION)

### STORIES FROM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

#### Jessica Slater, Counselor, Newington High School, Newington Students

In this session a panel Newington High School students will share their experience of navigating school during Covid. After the abrupt change to school, not only have teachers had to shift and adjust over the past year, but students have had to adjust to a completely new learning model. Students will share their perspective on navigating the new and unique learning environments. Students will discuss their reactions to moving to remote learning and how they had to adjust. Students will be asked to share their challenges with remote and hybrid learning models, as well as hopes they have for what the future of school could look like. Students will share creative ways teachers connected and lessons that resonated with them. Participants will have an opportunity to ask the students questions during this session.

**BIO:** Jessica Slater is a school counselor at Newington High School. Jessica Slater has been a school counselor for 7 years at Newington High School. She has earned her Educational Leadership and Master of Education degree at the University of Connecticut.



### EMPOWERING TEACHER LEADERSHIP BY DESIGN: OPENING UP THE CLASSROOM DOOR

#### Jeremy Visone, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership, CCSU

#### Melissa Bornas, 2nd Grade Teacher, Newington

Teachers are not empowered in their work by accident. Many learning opportunities are lost because of the structure and schedule of most schools, where teachers are not typically able to see and learn from each other's work. This situation has been exacerbated by hybrid and remote teaching environments during the COVID-19 pandemic. CCSU Department of Educational Leadership, Policy & Instructional Technology faculty member, Dr. Jeremy Visone, together with Melissa Bornas, a 2nd-Grade Teacher in Newington, will explore principles and strategies that underlie teacher empowerment, as well as a specific professional learning design, known as collegial visits, which involve teachers viewing each other's instruction. New

pedagogical demands for hybrid and remote teaching formats meant that teachers were resources for each other more than ever. With an anticipated return to more in-person interaction in the fall of 2021, peer observation can again resurface as an authentic source of professional learning.

*This presentation is geared toward teams of administrators and teachers, preferably teams that work in the same building.*

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#### BIOS:

**Jeremy Visone** is an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership, Policy & Instructional Technology at Central Connecticut State University. Prior to working at CCSU, he was a teacher and building leader in the Newington Public Schools for 16 years. His leadership experience includes both the secondary and elementary levels, and he most recently was the proud principal of Anna Reynolds Elementary School, named a National Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education in 2016. Jeremy writes about teacher leadership, structures for educator collaboration, and educator evaluation. He can be reached at [visone@ccsu.edu](mailto:visone@ccsu.edu).



**Melissa Bornas** has been an educator for the Newington Public Schools for the past 12 years, serving as a classroom teacher in Grade 2. In this role, she has hosted several peer observations, known as collegial visits, for her grade level. She has served as a cooperating teacher for student teachers and has additional training in the TEAM Program, focused on promoting the success of young educators. She received her Master's Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Bridgeport in 2009. Her areas of interest are literacy instruction and improving student outcomes. Melissa may be contacted at [mbornas@npsct.org](mailto:mbornas@npsct.org).



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## CATEGORY V: SUPPORTING TEACHERS AS LEADERS

### SOLIDARITY CIRCLES: SUPPORTING WOMEN IN CHANGE LEADERSHIP

**Dr. Paula Talty, Adjunct Professor of Educational Leadership, CCSU**

**Dr. Toni Ryan, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership, CCSU**

Participants will be introduced to the power of a Solidarity Circle as a vehicle for supporting transformation and change. Solidarity Circles provide participants with opportunities to join together to deepen their connections to each other to understand “What is already happening within me, my community and our society. What do I need to let go of and grow toward in order to create change?” Participants will experience the processes of a Solidarity Circle, complete discovery tasks while in the Circle, and reflect on the Circle as a means of supporting personal and professional transformation.

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#### BIOS:

**Dr. Paula Talty** is a retired Superintendent of Schools in Connecticut. She has over 37 years of experience in public education and also serves as an adjunct professor at Central Connecticut State University in the department of Educational Leadership, Policy and Instructional Technology. Most recently, Dr. Talty has been supporting the Southbridge Public Schools as a leadership mentor and consultant. Dr. Talty’s professional interests include women in leadership, organizational innovation, and social justice.



**Dr. Toni Ryan** has enjoyed a 20+-year career in K-12 public schools. She served for a decade as Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Accreditation, providing central office leadership for high schools and K-12 clinical day treatment programs. She also provided curriculum development and professional learning programs for districts in northeastern Connecticut. Most recently, Dr. Ryan joined Central Connecticut State University’s Department of Educational Leadership as Assistant Professor. Dr. Ryan’s professional interests include organizational learning, applied critical leadership, and social justice.



### IN SUPPORT OF LEADING FROM THE CLASSROOM: A DISCUSSION

**Michele Ridolfi O’Neill, CEA, Educational Issues Specialist**

Participants will engage in a discussion about what they, as aspiring or current teacher leaders, find helpful in their pursuit of leading organizational change from within the classroom. In this discussion-based session, participants should prepare to share their thoughts and ideas about how initiatives like the Teacher Leadership Fellowship Program or education-based organizations/associations can support their members.

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**BIO: Michele O’Neill** is the Connecticut Education Association’s Educational Issues Specialist and serves as state organizer of the CEA Aspiring Educator Program, which has chapters on six university campuses, as well as members throughout Connecticut. She taught for almost twelve years in the Montville Public Schools before coming to work for CEA, and in those twelve years, served as her local union’s vice president and president, and represented New London County on the CEA Board of Directors. Michele earned two separate teaching certifications while completing a double major in English and history/social science at Eastern CT State University, and received her master’s degree in curriculum and instruction at St. Joseph College in West Hartford. In her second year of teaching, she was one of only five teachers in New England to receive the New England League of Middle Schools’ Promising Practitioner Award. She has delivered trainings and presentations for numerous statewide, regional, and national organizations, most notably Phi Delta Kappa/Educators Rising, and Learning Forward



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## SPEAKERS

### TIM WALKER

Tim, who grew up and went to public schools in Greenwich Connecticut and taught in Massachusetts, moved to Finland with his wife to raise their children in her country of origin. There he encountered and valued the ways in which Finnish teachers, unlike many of his US counterparts, were valued and treated with utmost respect and dignity.

In his keynote, based on the principles delineated in the book Tim co-authored with Pasi Sahlberg, *In Teachers We Trust*, Tim describes a compelling vision, offering practical ideas for educators and school leaders wishing to develop teacher-powered education systems. He will reveal why teachers in Finland hold high status and show what the country's trust-based schools look like in action.



### BENA KALLICK

Bena Kallick co-authored *Habits of Mind* with Art Costa and has authored numerous books that use the Habits of Mind as a lens to think about and explore personalized learning, early childhood education and leadership among many other areas. Over the decades Bena has served as a consultant providing services to school districts, state departments of education, professional organizations, and public agencies throughout the United States and internationally. She has taught at Yale University School of Organization and Management, University of Massachusetts Center for Creative and Critical Thinking, and Union Graduate School.

