

# **OLENTANGY LOCAL SCHOOLS**

presents:

## **The 4th Annual ONE COMMUNITY Conference**

[Click Here to Register](#)

**Olentangy Orange High School**  
**2840 E. Orange Rd, Lewis Center, OH 43035**

**February 3, 2018**  
**8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

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**Conference Theme and Description: *"Inclusive Excellence"***

Olentangy Local School District believes in promoting an environment of inclusive excellence for all of our students, staff members, and families. In order to achieve this goal, we emphasize the following beliefs, values, and actions:

- 1). We strive to ensure structures, processes, and opportunities meet the needs of all students.
- 2). We recognize that our success is integrally linked to how well we value, engage, and affirm the rich diversity of our students, staff, families, administrators, and community members.
- 3). We focus on ensuring access to educational opportunity, cultivating student success, and fostering high-quality learning.
- 4). We believe in active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity and inclusion - not the delivery of isolated initiatives.

The ONE COMMUNITY Conference is jointly-hosted by diversity and inclusion, gifted services, pupil services, and parent program teams. It will feature two keynote presentations followed by adult and student facilitated workshops. Across a variety of topics, sessions will focus on the lived experiences of our young adults; how these experiences impact their social, emotional, psychological, and academic growth; and how to support them on their path to success.

**MORNING GENERAL SESSION: 8:30-9:20 a.m.**  
**(Sign Language Interpretation Services Provided by Charlotte Lawson)**

Opening Remarks.....Superintendent Mark  
Raiff



**Performance: Taiko Drumming Group**

Dublin Taiko Group is student performance group in the Dublin City School District that studies Taiko drumming, a Japanese art that encompasses music and choreographed movements. Formed in 2004 with just 20 students, today Dublin Taiko Group, under the direction of Sensei Susann Blair serves over 100 students in grades 6 through 12. Supported by Dublin

City Schools and funded by the Dublin Taiko Boosters, the group operates as a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization to deliver on its mission of education and support in advancing the art of Taiko. You can learn more about Dublin Taiko Group by visiting [www.dublintaiko.com](http://www.dublintaiko.com)

**Keynote Address by William White: "Together Everyone Achieves More"**

## **William White Former OSU and NFL Football Player; Director of Trazer Technologies Inc. and President of Traq II, LLC**

White received his Bachelor of Science in Metallurgical Engineering from the Ohio State University. He served as starting Corner Back from 1984 to 1987 and was Team Captain in 1987. He was awarded the Academic All Big Ten and Best Student Athlete/Arnie Chonko Award in 1986 & 1987 and the Dr. St. Pierre Award, Metallurgical Dept in 1991. He was drafted by the Detroit Lions in 1988 and played professionally for 11 yrs. He ended his career with the Atlanta Falcons after SUPER BOWL XXXIII, where he led the team with 13 tackles. He has served on the Board of "Athletes in Action", "Big Ten Conference Advisory Commission", "Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary" and currently the Men's Varsity "O". Since 2001, White has served as a Director of Trazer Technologies Inc., a world leader in the use of computer-based simulation for the improvement of health, physical performance and fitness of everyone. He is also a founding member of Traq, Ltd, a new fitness center primarily focused on addressing the childhood obesity crisis.



**Keynote Address:** This presentation will focus on the power of coming together for a common purpose to achieve collective goals. It is vital that we work on embracing and accepting people for who they are, recognizing the value and unique talents that everyone brings to the table. As a community, we must begin to shift our mindset from one of individual success to developing a team mentality. By weaving in personal experiences from his Ohio State University and NFL football career, keynote presenter William White will share with our community why "Together Everyone Achieves More."

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**ONE COMMUNITY: Inclusive Excellence**

**February 3, 2018**

### **Workshop Sessions**

**Session I: 9:30-10:30 a.m.**

**Session Title: Cross-Cultural Exchange (Middle School Student Session)**

**Room: 1524**

**Description of Session:** When we meet someone from a different culture, do we know the appropriate way to interact with them? This session will dive into how we may feel during first encounters with people from different cultures. We will explore how to navigate cultural differences and develop relationships based on mutual respect and understanding.

**Facilitators: Global Scholars Level 2 High School Students**

**Session Title: It's Okay to Be Different (Elementary Student Session)**

**Room:**

**Description of Session:** Building a kind world starts with how we treat each other. We might look the same as each other but be very different, or we might look different than each other yet be very similar. In either case, we can learn to get along and appreciate each other. Using songs, stories and games, Joanie will help us learn more tools for appreciating everyone in our world.

**Performer:** Joanie Calem, Singer, songwriter, musician, storyteller and inclusion advocate

**Session Title: Empowering our Students to Change the World\***

**Room: 1524**

**Description of Session:** The world is full of problems and we are in business of making problem solvers. Take a walk through history as we highlight a few of the young adults and children who have made a positive impact on the world. Finally, explore some ways in which we can foster leadership and empower our students to believe that they can change the world.

**Presenter:** Lauren Heitkamp, Supervisor of Gifted Services & Federal Programs

**\*Teachers attending this session will receive 1 hour of Gifted Credit.**

**Session Title: Olentangy P.R.I.D.E.**

**Room: 1520**

**Description of Session:** This session will give an overview of the P.R.I.D.E. program at OHS and the purpose behind creating the group. We will have a couple of mentor and mentee pairings talk about their experiences in the group and how it's been impactful.

**Presenter:** Ziyen Sears, Olentangy High School Senior  
Student Panel TBD

**Session Title: Sex and Gender Minority Youth - the Gender Revolution**

**Room: 1525**

**Description of Session:** Provide clinical guidance and perspective for education professionals to assist sexual minority, transgender, & gender nonconforming youth with safe and effective ways to achieving lasting personal comfort with their gendered selves, in order to best perform in the academic atmosphere and maintain psychological well-being.

**Presenter:** Amy Walliser LPCC, LGBTQ+ Program Coordinator, Syntero

**Session Title: It's Not What You Say; It's How You Say It!: Building a Positive Parent/School Partnership Through Communication**

**Room: 1518**

**Description of Session:** Research shows that parents working with school personnel in a positive manner shows marked improvement in student success. We will introduce strategies and ideas to employ in your future meetings to help build a strong partnership between the parent and school through communication.

**Presenters:** LeRae Nesbitt, OLSD Parent Mentor for Preschool and Elementary Families  
Fran Gardner, OLSD Parent Mentor for Middle and High School Families

**Session Title: Rethinking Cross-Cultural Students**

**Room: 1519**

**Description of Session:** Presenters will provide an overview of cross-cultural thinking and the interaction of culture and language with learning.

**Presenters:** Dr. Kristin Bourdage, Otterbein University  
Dr. Beverly Good, Otterbein University

**Session Title: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty**

**Room: 1521**

**Description of Session:** In my session I would like to begin with an interactive activity called, "Stack the Deck," using playing cards to demonstrate earning potential based on your socioeconomic background. Next I will show a short clip detailing the education specific challenges faced by student living in poverty. Turning to my PowerPoint presentation, I will break down the statistics of of students in poverty, tell true stories of experiences of students in our area, detail the effect socioeconomic background plays on school experience and on learning, and explain what we can do as educators to break the cycle of poverty for our students. We will end with another interactive activity called, "Take a Step." This personalizes the experiences of students living in poverty and will give each person in the session the opportunity to participate.

**Presenter:** Emily Karst, Music Teacher at Johnnycake Corners Elementary, Cheshire Elementary, and Arrowhead Elementary

**Session Title: Effects of Chronic and Acute Stress on Socioemotional Learning**

**Room: 1517**

**Description of Session:** This session will examine structures of the adolescent brain affected by chronic and acute stressors and the different ways those stressors impede social emotional learning (SEL). Participants will explore readily available tools while experiencing specific strategies to help assess, monitor, and promote SEL growth.

**Presenter:** Thomas G. Reed, Ph.D., Executive Director ESC of Central Ohio



**Session Title: Uncommon People with a Common Goal****Room: 1517**

**Description of Session:** Setting a long term goal takes a tremendous amount of courage when one must risk their time and effort in pursuit of an unknown. This can be especially challenging when the pursuit involves team dynamics. The mission of this presentation is to present the necessary skill set and the mindset to bring together uncommon people to achieve a common goal.

**Presenter: Jared G. Mills, Teacher and Coach at Olentangy Local Schools**

**Session Title: Teaching Students to Believe in Themselves with I Believe in Me!****Room: 1522**

**Description of Session:** Mike Dooley's Infinite Possibilities, a New York Times bestseller, has been adapted for kids and young adults by Rebecca Psigoda. Her program, known as I Believe in Me! helps students uncover their own personal magnificence. The program is based on the foundations of a positive mindset, thoughts becoming things, calming the mind and body with meditation to deal with life's stresses, unleashing creativity, saying affirmations, and taking the action steps required to go after goals. The intention is that students understand how powerful and wonderful they are, and that they learn to love themselves, thus making the world better. World peace begins within each and every person. "My 7th graders love the lessons on breaking down false beliefs about themselves so that they can gain the confidence to go after whatever it is they want in life."

**Presenter: Sarah Zettler, Educator and Infinite Possibilities Certified Trainer**

**Session Title: Using Art & Self-reflection for Cultural Inclusion****Room: 1526**

**Description of Session:** Participants gain skills in developing more culturally inclusive learning environments using art, critical self-reflection, and storytelling. Educators explore the stories they hold for their diverse students to investigate if those stories contain harmful biases that prohibit a productive relationship with learners.

**Presenter: Dr. Melissa Crum, Mosaic Education Network**

**Workshop Sessions**  
**Session II: 10:40-11:40 a.m.**

**Session Title: Exploring Identity Through Drawing and Collage (Elementary and Middle School Student Session)**

**Room: 1524**

**Description of Session:** Students will explore identity through self-portrait, drawing, and collage. A portrait photograph will be taken, printed, and collaged into a work of art. All ages welcome.

**Facilitator: Katie Kikta, Visual Arts Teacher, Olentangy Orange High School**

**Session Title: Middle School Student Group Collaboration**

**Room: 1524**

**Description of Session:** This session will provide an opportunity for students who are a part of our middle school student diversity and leadership groups to build community, share ideas, explore their roles within their schools and brainstorm for our future together!

**Presenter: Brian Barkhurst, Orange Middle School Foreign Language Teacher & Diversity Liaison  
Jenna Srivastava, Berkshire Middle School Math Teacher & Diversity Liaison**

**Session Title: Perfectionism: What it Looks Like and What It Leads To\***

**Room: 1524**

**Description of Session:** Presenters will be helping parents identify perfectionist tendencies in their children and interpret what these tendencies mean. We will provide research from the OLSD population about perfectionism and stress, and the ways to mitigate some of the harmful effects of this type of stress.

**Presenter: Michelle Mimna, Olentangy High School English Teacher  
Rachel Dobney, High School Gifted Coordinator**

**\*Teachers attending this session will receive 1 hour of Gifted Credit.**

**Session Title: It Can Be Done: Creating an Environment of Excellence for African American Students**

**Room: 1520**

**Description of Session:** This session will explore best practices for creating the kind of environment inside and outside of the classroom that is necessary and essential for African American students to realize their full academic potential. It will include with a frank and honest discussion about the kinds of obstacles black students face, and delve deeply into the things students, teachers, administrators, coaches, and parents can do to create an environment of excellence for black students.

**Presenter: Dr. Hasan Kwame Jeffries, Associate Professor of History at The Ohio State University**

**Session Title: The Ins and Outs of Meeting Our LGBTQ+ Students Where They Are**

**Room: 1525**

**Description of Session:** LGBTQ+ students, an often overlooked group within our district's diverse population, have unique needs in our school buildings. How can we meet them where they are to ensure we are offering them the most inclusive learning environment possible? This session will focus on recognizing our own biases, clarifying inclusive terminology, and examining the complexities of the LGBTQ+ school experience.

**Presenter: Drew Rock: Teacher, OOHS; School & Clinical Counselor in Training, University of Dayton**

**Session Title: Blending In a High Performing District - an IEP student perspective**

**Room: 1518**

**Description of Session:** A panel of current and former OLSD students will answer questions on how they cope with their learning differences, the use of technology to compensate, how they explain their disability to others their age and how they deal with social pressure in one of Ohio's top performing school districts.

**Presenter: Mindy Patrick, Olentangy School Board Member**

**Holly Robbertz, Literacy Support at Olentangy Orange High School**

**Student Panelists: Trevin Ecker, Michael Fernandes, Bryce Houston**

**Session Title: See Sports Differently: Using Sports Films to Teach Diversity**

**Room: 1519**

**Description of Session:** Film, a powerful medium that allows viewers to vicariously experience circumstances and cultures that they may otherwise never come to know, can break down social barriers while teaching equity, diversity and inclusion. Join us to screen and discuss films clips, ask questions and learn more about the mission of the International Sports Film Festival of Ohio.

**Presenters: Megan Chewansky, Ph.D. and Marcy Kuehl Freed, M.A.**

**Co-Founders and Directors of the International Sports Film Festival in Ohio (ISFFO)**

**Session Title: Culture of Affluence**

**Room: 1521**

**Description of Session:** This workshop will explore the range of economic diversity within the school district, with an emphasis on the complex impact of affluence on the learning and teaching process. Also included will be an examination of how preconceived notions can result in unintended outcomes. Practical strategies about assessment and motivational techniques will be a focus of the conversation.

**Presenter: Dr. Dee Knoblauch, Otterbein University**

**Session Title: Critical Mixed Race Studies Workshop****Room: 1517**

**Description of Session:** I will introduce the word “Mixed” by having an interactive activity where people can write down what they think when they hear the word "Mixed." We will have a short discussion about this. Then I will show a few minutes of a Mixed race experience video. Following this, I will talk about the history and policy of Mixed race individuals in the U.S. and terms used to describe people of Mixed heritage. I will end with a section about questioning one's racial identity and the intentions one may have behind that. I would also like to include more activities throughout to make the presentation more interactive rather than just lecture-based.

**Presenter: Lulu Abdun, Miami University****Session Title: Drug Trends Among Youth and Young Adults****Room: 1517**

**Description of Session:** This session will include a panel discussion with Olentangy students on drug use. Commonly used drugs amongst youth and young adults will be shared as well as resources available in the community to assist parents, leaders, and school personnel with prevention tools.

**Presenter: Candice P Simpson, CEO and Founder of Be Free Enterprises, LLC, Criminal Justice Regional Coordinator for CareSource****Session Title: Why Diversity is Not Inclusion or Self-Reflection: I’m the Change I want to see****Room: 1522**

**Description of Session:** Many people make the mistake of thinking diversity and inclusion are the same things, but take a look at how these two terms are defined.

"Diversity" encompasses all the ways people can be different from each other, which extends to both protected class characteristics like race/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, and veteran status and to things like socioeconomic class, level of education attained, urban/rural background, and family structure and composition. "Inclusion" occurs when all people have equal and meaningful opportunities to participate and contribute regardless of their differences, and without having to hide those differences or conform to the norms of the dominant culture or way of being—that is, without having to assimilate or pretend to be someone or something one isn't.

Diversity is required for inclusion, but it is not, by itself, sufficient. Diversity is being invited to the table. Inclusion is being asked to plan the event. A key remedy to find ways to engage a diverse student population is to review teachers, team and population for inherent bias.

Include students in the process- “teaching each” (woman, person of color, LGBTQ person, person with a disability) as an individual who has their own perspective rather than The Voice of Their Group.

Ways to learn the barriers that stand between words and actions on diversity and inclusion and how to lead diversity and inclusion change with youth will be explored.

**Presenter: Kay Wilson, LeaderSpark**

**Session Title: From Me to We: Understanding Ourselves to Understand Others**

**Room: 1526**

**Description of Session:** Most people move through their day run by subconscious observations and reactions. Mindfulness practices give us a chance to move from our subconscious stories to present moment non-judgmental awareness: to respond rather than react. Developing this open awareness and self-knowledge opens the door to awareness of and empathy for others. Attendees will participate in mindfulness exercises and learn the science and rationale behind them. These exercise will be applicable for all ages pre-k through adult.

**Presenters: Cathryn Brenner, Educator**

**Mindy Skinner, Teacher at Liberty Tree Elementary**

**Kileen Sprouse, Teacher at Liberty Tree Elementary**

**Session Title: Military Connected Youth - From Bootcamp to Special Forces**

**Room: 1526**

**Description of Session:** A simple question: Do you know who the military youth are in your school building? More than likely you have at least one student whose parent or guardian is serving or have recently served in the Armed Forces. In Ohio, there are military youth in every county in the state! We are all patriotic enough to support our Veterans but who is looking out for their children while they are deployed? Our military men and women can only concentrate on protecting our country when they know their own family is being taken care of. What rights and resources do they have access to? What resources does your school have to help these children who are put into a unique situation? This session will help explain how you can identify these students and their family and feel confident in providing them resources when they are in need. We will share effective practices used in our own school district that have helped our district to be more military family-friendly. We'll also explain the rights that military youth have regardless of what state they live in. You'll enter like a recruit in bootcamp but you'll leave with the knowledge of the special forces!

**Presenter: Jason Durell, School Counselor at Olentangy Liberty MS**

**Chip Merkle, Child & Youth Educational Outreach Specialist, Ohio National Guard Family**

**LUNCH HOUR: 11:40-12:50 p.m.**

**Commons Area**

- 1. Lunch (optional):** Participants will have the opportunity to purchase pizza, salad, and a drink for \$5. Pepperoni, cheese, and gluten free cheese will be available. You will need to pre-register for which type of pizza you are interested in purchasing.
- 2. Global Scholars Level 3 Student Showcase:** As part of a program to build global awareness, high school students will showcase independent research projects as a culmination of the three year program. Topics include:
  - Cybersecurity
  - Equality in Sports
  - Food Poverty
  - Foreign Language Development
  - Global Literacy
  - Influenza & Vaccination
  - Refugee Integration
  - Religious Awareness
  - Stress
  - Urban Food Security
- 3. Student Art Showcase**
  - a. Olentangy Liberty Middle School:** Sixth grade students will have their Ceramic Nichos on display. In Latin American culture, these sculptures are traditionally created as shrines to honor someone they value in their life - often someone who is deceased. Each student has placed a photo of this special person in their nicho, as well as symbols that represent them.
  - b. Olentangy Orange High School:** TBD
- 4. Local Community Resource Fair:** The purpose of the resource fair is to connect community members with local resources available to them. The following community organizations will be represented at our fair:
  - Blue Star Moms
  - Cancer Support Community Central Ohio
  - CollegeEase
  - Dress for Success

- Epilepsy Foundation Ohio
- Kaleidoscope
- LASER/Latinx Space for Enrichment & Research
- Olentangy Dyslexia Network
- Olentangy Parent Mentors Group
- Orange Branch Delaware Area Library
- OSU Alumni Club of Delaware County
- ROX

## GENERAL SESSION: 1:00-2:00 p.m.

(Sign Language Interpretation Services Provided by Charlotte Lawson)

### Afternoon Keynote Address: “Speaking Our Truth”

#### 1. “My Life in Hair”: The Journey of a Black Girl and Her Mane

When assigned in her AP Lang class to analyze her own truth through an expressive essay, she struggled with what to write until about two days before the due date. She wanted to explore some aspect of her identity through its progression, and her racial identity had always been something of conflict for her. Looking back through photos for inspiration, she realized that at the most pivotal moments for the way her identity was shaped, she usually underwent a drastic change in her hairstyle. Thus, she penned “My Life in Hair”, a first-person expressive essay from age six to 17, about life’s challenges for a black girl trying to be seen.

**Janae McKenzie:** Janae McKenzie is a senior at Olentangy Liberty High School and the President of Liberty’s Diversity and Inclusion Club. She is an avid writer and the Editor-in-Chief of Liberty’s news website, [olhspatriotpress.com](http://olhspatriotpress.com). In addition, she is a proud bass member of Liberty’s all-girl a cappella group, Liberty Belles. When not singing or writing, Janae can be found with earbuds surgically attached to her ears, watching depressing cartoons and/or drinking Diet Coke.



#### 2. “Embrace”

This poem will cover the realized importance of embracing not only others but more critically yourself. It also will cover the personal struggles that took place and how they were successfully overcome to strengthen the

self. Also, it will call for a better mentality or ultimately confidence among the audiences with different cultural identities in an educational way.



**Justin Huang:** Justin Huang, the vice president of Diversity and Inclusion Club in Olentangy Liberty High School, was born in China. He moved to the United States two years ago. Having two identities, he has encountered numerous challenges when trying to adjust to the new culture. Although the road to his confidence has been rough, he has managed to transform into a stronger and more insightful person. Having the global view, he's ready to share all of his struggles and success.

### 3. “Different Not Less: Understanding Autism”

This video is about what it is like to live in the silent world of autism and how if people take time to get to know a person with autism, they would find that they are alike in many ways.

**Rachel LaGrand:** Rachel LaGrand is a freshman at Olentangy Orange High School. She loves to go to school and learn about all the different subjects. Rachel has nonverbal autism, so she can't speak with words, but she can type her thoughts and ideas. She hopes to teach others that people with autism are not that much different from everyone else. Even though they may act differently, people with autism have the same hopes and dreams as other people do. Rachel is committed to increasing understanding and acceptance of those with autism. She hopes to continue her advocacy and education efforts in the years to come. When not in school, Rachel likes to play music, go swimming, and always do her homework.



### 4. “This Is What It Feels Like”

My presentation will cover information about depression in teens, common misconceptions, and how depression has affected me and the people around me.





**Olivia Ball:** My name is Olivia Ball, I am a senior at Olentangy Liberty. In my free time, I love to bake and knit. I have a part time job at Beehive Bread Co. in Downtown Powell. During my downtime, I enjoy helping others. I volunteer at Northwest Library once a week. I also volunteer in my school's multiple disabilities classroom. I have a very supportive family who has helped me fight my depression. My parents, my brother Donovan, and my sister Lianne are all part of my strong support group. Since I was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder, we have all worked to help educate others on mental illness in the community. In the future I would like to study social work and pre-medicine at the University of Pittsburgh.

### 5. "Learning to Appreciate"

I never tried to explain my culture to anyone. I tried so hard to blend in because I never realized how "cool" my heritage was. Then this one moment opened my eyes to the countless other instances that I had overlooked. Instances where my peers had the opportunity to learn about my culture, but I neglected to explain. This talk focuses on how I learned to share parts of myself, but also listen. It also distinguishes the difference between appropriating and appreciating cultures. When we talk about things we care about, things that we identify with, we create a more open community. Talking triumphs ignorance and leads to empathy in friendships and beyond.



**Sophie Tayade:** My name is Sophie Tayade, a senior at Olentangy High School. I'm captain of the tennis, involved in diversity club, and officer in orchestra, spanish club, debate club, and HOSA. I want to pursue a career in medicine. I currently volunteer at Nationwide Children's Hospital and Riverside Methodist Hospital. I recently learned to discover hidden diversity, and I think it is important today because we need to remember that it unites us, instead of having it divide us.

### 6. "Naturally Perfect"

My poem will talk about society's ever changing description of beauty. It discusses how people's daily lives are affected in both minor and major ways. You will hear people with different ethnicities, different stories, and different struggles all come together to tell you one thing; that you are perfect.

**Noor Yunis:** Hello dear reader! My name is Noor Yunis, I'm a 15 year old freshman at Liberty High School. My hobbies include marching band, indoor drumline, procrastination, and sarcasm.



## Workshop Sessions

### Session III: 2:10-3:10 p.m.

**Session Title: Exploring Identity Through Poetry and Painting (Elementary and Middle School Student Session)**

**Room: 1524**

**Description of Session:** Students will explore their identity through words, color, and line creating an “I am” poem and painting. All ages welcome.

**Facilitator: Katie Kikta, Visual Arts Teacher, Olentangy Orange High School**

**Session Title: Windows & Mirrors: Exploring Our World through Picture Books (Elementary Student Session)**

**Room: 1524**

**Description of Session:** Join two Olentangy Elementary teachers in an exploration of multicultural picture books. Children will interact with a variety of books in multiple ways including crafts, games, and book talks.

**Presenter: Amy Lewis, Olentangy Meadows Elementary School Teacher & Diversity Liaison  
Cheryl Agranoff, Freedom Trail Elementary School Teacher & Diversity Liaison**

**Session Title: Finding a Balance\***

**Room: 1524**

**Description of Session:** Many students are faced with an overwhelming pressure to be successful. Finding a balance between the demands of school and life outside of school will be discussed with a panel of high school students.

**Facilitator: Rachel Dobney, High School Gifted Coordinator**

**Student Panelists: TBD**

**\*Teachers attending this session will receive 1 hour of Gifted Credit.**

**Session Title: FreeDumb Fighting: The Literacy and Liberation of Young People through African American Voice**

**Room: 1520**

**Description of Session:** This session will examine and discuss how curricular study and praxis rooted in the Black experience can challenge understandings of achievement, identity and critical consciousness for racially diverse students in a high school classroom. It will also emphasize how establishing learning spaces of introspection that center Black historical and social ways of knowing can foster a culture of belonging and community in classrooms and assist young people in constructing expansive understandings about 'Blackness', social justice, and freedom in contemporary life.

**Presenter: Dr. Donja Thomas, Gahanna Jefferson Public Schools**

<p><b>Session Title: All In! - Diverse Literature and Inclusion in Your Library or Classroom</b></p> <p><b>Room: 1525</b></p> <p><b>Description of Session:</b> This session will cover what diverse literature is, why we should use it, and resources for teachers/librarians. I will also book talk some of my favorites.</p> <p><b>Presenter: Kelly Silwani, Teacher-Librarian at Olentangy Orange Middle School</b></p>
<p><b>Session Title: It's Not What You Say; It's How You Say It!: Building a Positive Parent/School Partnership Through Communication</b></p> <p><b>Room: 1518</b></p> <p><b>Description of Session:</b> Research shows that parents working with school personnel in a positive manner shows marked improvement in student success. We will introduce strategies and ideas to employ in your future meetings to help build a strong partnership between the parent and school through communication.</p> <p><b>Presenters: LeRae Nesbitt, OLSD Parent Mentor for Preschool and Elementary Families</b>  <b>Fran Gardner, OLSD Parent Mentor for Middle and High School Families</b></p>
<p><b>Session Title: Cultural Understanding of Indian American Families</b></p> <p><b>Room: 1519</b></p> <p><b>Description of Session:</b> This session will provide information on background, academic expectations in Indian culture, integration of parents into school &amp; local culture, attitudes towards gifted &amp; differently abled children, ALE, food preferences, gift giving, gender roles, and more.</p> <p><b>Presenter: Geetha Nori, Community Activist</b></p>
<p><b>Session Title: #InclusionMatters</b></p> <p><b>Room: 1521</b></p> <p><b>Description of Session:</b> Research shows that inclusion benefits all students. In this session, we will discuss the components of successful inclusion in schools (as related to individuals with disabilities), as well as the importance of its impact on those with and without disabilities.</p> <p><b>Presenter: Jennifer Franklin Kearns, Inclusion Advocate</b></p>
<p><b>Session Title: Reel and Real Latinx Lives Matter</b></p> <p><b>Room: 1517</b></p> <p><b>Description of Session:</b> This interactive, dynamic session will demonstrate how Latinx cultural phenomena--from comic books to music to films and so much more--can and does push back against negative stereotypes of Latinxs. It will touch on the importance of my founding of LASER, SOLCON: Brown and Black Comics Expo, and the Humanities &amp; Cognitive Sciences High School Summer Institute that bring our African American and Latinx communities together. The presentation will demonstrate teaching of pop culture by people of color in school curricula can and does empower youth of color.</p>

**Presenter: Dr. Frederick Luis Aldama, Ohio State University**

**Session Title: What Goes on Behind Closed Doors**

**Room: 1517**

**Description of Session:** This session will be a three-fold session. The audience will be inform and educated on awareness of Domestic Violence through prevention and recognition of the signs of Domestic Violence and what to do if in a situation where there is Domestic Violence. This session will also discuss the purpose of Child Protective Services and what to do in a case where Child Protective Services are needed. Lastly this session will infuse healthy self esteem as statistics show that there is some correlation in victims of Domestic Violence and low self esteem as well as youth that are involved with Child Protective Services. Audience will be able to interact through answering questions or sharing their own views and perspectives about subjects discussed.

**Presenter: Diona Clark, Social Worker with Franklin County Children Services**

**Session Title: An Introduction to Health Equity**

**Room: 1522**

**Description of Session:** This presentation will introduce the audience to health equity, explaining "What is health equity and why is it important?". The audience will learn the obstacles to health equity and what strategies public health and the community can do to advance health equity. This presentation will contain specific examples of data regarding health disparities within Delaware County.

**Presenter: Travis Irvan, Disease Prevention Program Manager at Delaware General Health District  
Dr. Heather Lane, Epidemiologist at Delaware General Health District**

**Session Title: I'm Not THAT Kind of Person: Discussing Implicit Bias**

**Room: 1526**

**Description of Session:** Biases. We all have them. What happens when these biases are unchecked or exist without our conscious knowledge? This session will look at the concept of implicit bias. Moreover, we will explore how it impacts decision making and shapes interactions. The session will end with participants discussing practical tools to address their own implicit biases.

**Presenters: Sheronda Palmore LISW-S, Program Director**


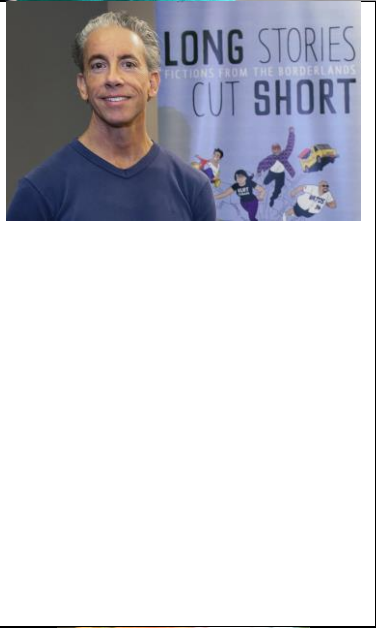

**Session Title: Believe it or not: Inside perspectives of religious and non-religious diversity among our students**




**Room: 1526**

**Description of Session:** Participants in this session will have the opportunity to hear from our students and learn how their religious, as well as non-religious, identities influence school routines, success in the classroom, and relationships with peers.

**Presenter:** Keith Frase, Science Teacher at Olentangy High School

## Workshop Presenters

	<p><b>Lulu Abdun: Miami University</b></p> <p>Lulu Abdun is junior at Miami University (OH) majoring in psychology and minoring in linguistics and Black world studies. Born and raised in Memphis, TN, Lulu is passionate about social justice/reform, identity studies, human rights, criminal justice, and interfaith work. Last fall, Lulu was in Kigali, Rwanda studying post-genocide restoration and peacebuilding. In her free time, Lulu enjoys reading, drawing, traveling, and yoga. She also loves the color purple and chocolate!</p>
	<p><b>Frederick Luis Aldama: Arts &amp; Humanities Distinguished Professor at The Ohio State University</b></p> <p>Dr. Aldama was born in Mexico City to a Guatemalan/Irish American mother from Los Angeles and a Mexican father from Mexico City. When he was a child, his mother moved the family to California. She literally gave her life to education. After years of working in public elementary schools with Latinx children in California where she was exposed to constant pesticides from crop dusting, she developed an autoimmune deficiency and eventually died young of cancer. Inspired by his mother's tireless drive to make a difference in the Latinx community and with a mentor's guidance, Aldama gained entrance to University of California, Berkeley. He graduated summa cum laude in 1992 then went on to obtain his Ph.D. from Stanford University in 1999.</p> <p>Dr. Aldama is the author, co-author, and editor of over 30 books. He is founder and director of the Ohio Education Summit Award and White House Hispanic Bright Spot winning LASER/Latinx Space for Enrichment &amp; Research. He is founder of the Humanities &amp; Cognitive Sciences High School Summer Institute. He has been honored with the 2016 American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education's Outstanding Latino/a Faculty in Higher Education Award. In 2017 he was inducted into the Academy of Teaching.</p>
	<p><b>Dr. Kristin Bourdage &amp; Dr. Beverly Good: Otterbein University</b></p> <p>Dr. Bourdage serves as the Chair of the Department of Education at Otterbein University. She is an expert in literacy, and has extensive experience teaching English as a Second Language.</p> <p>Retired from Westerville City Schools administration, Dr. Good is an adjunct at Otterbein University. For the last five years she served as the Director of the Central Ohio English Learners Education Collaborative (COELEC), a U.S. Department of Education grant.</p> <p>During the COELEC grant, Kristin and Bev worked with over 120 Central Ohio teachers, over 200 middle and high school English learners and their parents, and the Otterbein education faculty to further the academic achievement of ELs and raise awareness of linguistic and cultural influences in education.</p>

	
	<p><b>Cathryn Brenner: Educator</b></p> <p>Cathryn Brenner is an Early Childhood and Elementary Educator with over 30 years of experience. She recently retired from Olentangy Local Schools. Since retirement she has been pursuing professional development in the areas of neuroscience of mindfulness and learning.</p>
	<p><b>Joanie Calem: Singer, Songwriter, Musician, Story Teller and Inclusion Advocate</b></p> <p>Joanie Calem is a parent, teacher, songwriter and inclusion advocate. Joanie has been a music teacher since 1983, teaching music in every possible learning modality in order to reach all of her students and allow them to access music in whatever learning style they do best. She has a BA in <u>Music in Community Building</u> from DePaul University, and invites her audiences – young and old – on an adventure of community building with interactive songs and stories, sharing successful strategies to create classroom communities that work for everyone. As the parent of a young adult with autism, Joanie wears the double hat of being an educator in inclusive classrooms, and being an advocate for her own son. She shares her years of experience through concert-conversations for parents and teachers, using her original songs as starting points for discussions on how to build welcoming communities that allow room for the increasing “neurodiversity” in our world. (Neurodiversity is the term that recognizes the tremendous variance in people’s neurological make-up.)</p>





**Megan Chawansky, Ph.D. and Marcy Kuehl Freed, M.A: Co-Founders and Directors of the International Sports Film Festival in Ohio (ISFFO)**

Dr. Megan Chawansky is a lecturer and also serves as the Assistant Director of the Global Center for Sport Diplomacy. Her teaching and research interests lie in the use of sport for social change, and she has worked with a number of organizations in the 'Sport for Development and Peace' (SDP) sector. Her research and consultancy experiences in the area of SDP include work with partners in South Africa, India, Zambia, Kenya, Sri Lanka, and the Caribbean. She also served as a Programme Coordinator for PeacePlayers International-Cyprus. *Chawansky also played college basketball for Northwestern.*

*Marcy Freed has two master of arts degrees from The Ohio State University.* Freed is an entrepreneur, a seeker of wisdom, a thinker and a creator. She opened her first business, Marcy's Clayground, a paint-your-own pottery studio in Powell in 2003. There she enjoyed offering educational programming, assisting in the creative process and building community. She is a lifelong runner who has coached for the Marathon in Training group in Columbus, Ohio since 2008. She is also a meditation teacher and yoga instructor who works with local runners, corporations, healthcare facilities and individuals. In addition to Co-Founding and Directing ISFFO, her most important position is currently as the mother of two boys ages 14 and 11.



**Diona L. Clark: Social Worker with Franklin County Children Services**

Diona Clark is a motivational speaker, Author and Domestic Violence Survivor. Ms. Clark is the Founder and CEO of Liv Out Loud Enterprises a nonprofit organization where their mission is to inspire women and youth to be the best version of themselves. The organization helps raise the awareness of Domestic Violence in the community and promotes healthy self-esteem through events and workshops. Diona works closely with House Representatives and policy makers to get stricter laws amended for victims of Domestic Violence in dating relationships. Diona has a degree from Howard University and is currently a Social Worker with Franklin County Children Services.





### **Dr. Melissa Crum: Mosaic Education Network**

Dr. Melissa Crum is an artist, author, researcher, and founder of Mosaic Education Network, LLC. She leads a consulting company that infuses the arts, research, storytelling and critical thinking into professional development, community building and curriculum development. Dr. Crum works with her team of experts to act as engaging and collaborative resources for schools, nonprofits, and companies.

With her team, she facilitates and encourages thought-provoking conversations addressing difficult topics on supporting, interacting, and partnering with diverse communities. She works hard to help you become informed of and feel secure about using everyday practical applications of diversity and inclusion strategies to positively impact your environment. To make this happen she creates a "brave space" where you can ask the tough questions, admit faults and celebrate successes. Her experiences working with educators, museums, and businesses has allowed her to help you make social change from your desk, to your living room and beyond.



### **Rachel Dobney: OLSD High School Gifted Coordinator**



Rachel has been with the district for three years as the High School Gifted Coordinator and Global Scholars Diploma Program Coordinator. Prior to that, she taught middle school English and served as a district literacy and instructional coach in Licking Heights Local Schools. She fancies herself a skittles enthusiast, loves a good road trip, and watches Jeopardy and Wheel of Fortune every night. Her husband, son, and dogs keep her life active.



### **Jason Durell - OLSD School Counselor; Chip Merkle - Child & Youth Educational Outreach Specialist, Ohio National Guard Family Readiness and Warrior Support**

Jason is married to his wife Amy of 13 years and they have one son, Dexter. Jason joined the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve upon graduating high school and completed his Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education at Mount Union College. Jason was a teacher in the Akron and Columbus City school systems and then earned his Master's Degree in Counselor Education from THE Ohio State University. Jason has worked at Liberty Middle School for 10 years and re-enlisted in the Army National Guard 3 years ago. He enjoys working with the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission advisory board as well as the Purple Star Award advisory board with the Ohio Department of Education.

Chip has been married to Jill for 39 years, 3 children and loves the outdoors. Chip is a graduate of The Ohio State University in Industrial Technology Education and received a Masters of Education from Ashland University. Chip retired after 28 years of teaching in the Westerville City Schools. He served 21 years as a middle school educator and seven years in the High School Credit Recovery Program. Chip has been working with the Ohio National Guard since October 2013 as a Youth Program/Education Outreach Specialist. During his time with the Youth Program he has provided more than 250 schools in the

	<p>State of Ohio with information on Educational Resources and Programs for Military Connected Youth.</p>
	<p><b>Keith Frase: Olentangy High School</b></p> <p>Keith Frase is a parent of two Olentangy students and is a teacher in Olentangy Local Schools. He earned a BA in biology and science comprehensive from Malone University, a MEd in administration from Ashland University, a MA in religious education from St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (where he met his wife, Elizabeth), and a Master of Divinity degree from St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary. Keith began teaching science in 1997 and has been with Olentangy Local since 2004. In addition to teaching primarily chemistry at OHS, Keith is an ordained Orthodox Christian priest. He serves as the Associate pastor at St. Gregory of Nyssa parish in Columbus and administers St. Ephraim the Syrian chapel in Athens where he serves as the spiritual adviser for the campus ministry groups at the Ohio State University and Ohio University respectively.</p>
	<p><b>Fran Gardner: Parent Mentor for Preschool and Elementary Families</b></p> <p>Fran Gardner is the mother of three children in the Olentangy Local School District. She has been a member of her son's IEP Team starting in the Olentangy Preschool program in 2006 and moving to elementary school and middle school in later years. In 2012, she worked with the district to start the Parent Mentor Program in Olentangy and has been the Parent Mentor for the Preschool and Elementary families since then.</p> <p>A Parent Mentor is a free support to parents of children with special needs or children who are suspected of having special needs. They are the parent of a child with special needs who acts as a bridge between home and school to support meaningful collaboration. The mission of our Parent Mentors program is to provide support and resources to families of children with special needs and the professionals who serve them.</p>
	<p><b>Lauren Heitkamp: OLSD Supervisor of Gifted Services &amp; Federal Programs</b></p> <p>Lauren is a part of the Olentangy curriculum team and works as supervisor of gifted and talented services. She enjoys sharing her passion for teaching and learning with teachers and parents throughout the district. Previously, she worked as a classroom teacher and instructional coach at Valley View Local Schools. She views herself as a lifelong learner and is eager to collaborate with others in order to achieve our goals and live the mission of Olentangy to facilitate maximum learning for every student.</p>



**Mr. Travis Irvan and Dr. Heather Lane: Disease Prevention Program Manager, Epidemiologist, Delaware General Health District**

Travis Irvan joined the Delaware General Health District in 2006 as an Epidemiologist after a brief stint working at the Ohio Dept. of Health as an Epidemiologist in HIV Surveillance. Travis received his Bachelor's of Science in Exercise Science and his Masters in Public Health with a concentration in Epidemiology, both from the University of Toledo. Travis is currently the Disease Prevention Program Manager at the Delaware General Health District, where he and his team are responsible for communicable disease investigation, surveillance, and education. In addition he works with community and environmental health staff on a number of public health topics including vector borne disease and community assessment/evaluation. He also serves as chair of the Central Ohio Regional Epidemiology Workgroup.

Dr. Heather Lane joined the Delaware General Health District in 2017 as an Epidemiologist. Heather received her Bachelor of Arts in Biochemistry at Hiram College and her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Master of Public Health at The Ohio State University. She currently works with Disease Prevention Team as well as the Community Health Division. In Disease Prevention her role primarily deals with disease surveillance, investigation and control. In Community Health she works on community assessments/surveys as well as data collection, analysis, and mapping.



**Hasan Kwame Jeffries: Associate Professor of History, The Ohio State University**

Hasan Kwame Jeffries is Associate Professor of History at The Ohio State University where he teaches graduate and undergraduate seminars on the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement, and surveys in African American and American history.

He was born in Brooklyn, New York, and graduated summa cum laude from Morehouse with a BA in history in 1994. He earned a MA in American history in 1997 and a PhD in American history with a specialization in African American history in 2002 from Duke University. He taught for a year at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa before joining the faculty at The Ohio State University in 2003.

In 2009, Hasan published his first book, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt* (NYU Press). He is also the editor of *Understanding and Teaching the Civil Rights Movement* (University of Wisconsin Press), a collection of essays on how to teach the Civil Rights Movement written by leading civil rights scholars and teachers. The book will be released in 2017.

Hasan has worked on several public history projects. Most recently, he served as the lead historian and primary scriptwriter for the five-year, \$25 million renovation of the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee, the site of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



**Emily Karst: OLSD Music Teacher**

Emily Karst is a second year music teacher and 2016 graduate from Capital University. She is a member of the Accelerated Educational Administration graduate cohort and Summer Music Program Coordinator at Columbus School for Girls. She and her husband Ben live in Grove City. In her free time she loves to get coffee with friends, try to get through her “to-be-read” stack, and travel as much as possible.



**Jennifer Franklin Kearns: Inclusion Advocate, Board Member for the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities**

Jen resides in the Olentangy Local Schools district. As a parent in the disability community, she advocates tirelessly for her son with Down syndrome, in terms of inclusion and equal rights. Jen is an accomplished fundraiser for the Columbus Buddy Walk, benefiting the Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio, and sits on several local boards, including the Advisory Committee for Special Olympics of Delaware County and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities.



**Katie Kikta: Visual Arts Teacher, Olentangy Orange High School**

Katie Kikta has taught visual art in Ohio for the last 12 years. She holds a Bachelors and Masters degree in Art Education from The Ohio State University. Katie has written and received numerous grants which have funded student projects during her time with Westerville City Schools and Olentangy Local Schools. She has written Visual Arts curriculum for the State of Ohio, and presented at multiple educational conferences. Katie prides herself as a lifelong learner, teacher, and professional artist.



**Dee Knoblauch Ph.D.: Otterbein University Associate Professor**

Dr. Dee Knoblauch, former high school teacher and collegiate coach. Dee is currently at Otterbein University, where she primarily teaches educational psychology, multicultural education, and 21st Century technology and curriculum. Her research interests include motivation, multicultural education, children/adolescent literature, and creativity.





**Amy Lewis: Olentangy Meadows Elementary Teacher & Diversity Liaison**  
**Cheryl Agranoff: First Grade Teacher at Freedom Trail Elementary School, Diversity Liaison**

Amy teaches second grade at Olentangy Meadows Elementary School currently. She has also taught third grade at Arrowhead Elementary School. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Ohio University and a Master's Degree in Elementary Reading and Math from Walden University. She lives in Lewis Center with her husband Andrew, son Crosby, and black Labrador named Honeybadger.



Cheryl teaches first grade at Freedom Trail Elementary School currently. She has also taught second and third grades in OLSD. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Ohio State and a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instructional Design from Ashland University. Cheryl just completed the classes to obtain her license to teach English as a Second Language at Otterbein. She lives in Gahanna where she and her husband, Jay, have raised their three children- Max, Sam, and Mindy. Her passions include multicultural literature, inclusion for all, traveling, reading, and guacamole!






**Jared Mills: Teacher and Coach at Olentangy Local Schools**




Coach Jared Mills has completed 11 seasons as head coach of the Liberty XC team. Coach Mills and his staff have guided the Liberty XC team to 10 consecutive Regional Meet appearances and 5 State Meet appearances during his tenure. He is also a teacher at Olentangy Liberty Middle School earning Olentangy Middle School teacher of the year honors in 2005 and 2011 as well as being nominated for Ohio Teacher of the Year in 2017. Additionally, Jared advises the OLMS Fellowship of Christian Athletes and partners with the OLMS service club. Coach Mills and his wife are the proud parents of a beautiful daughter.



**Michelle Mimna: OLSD AP Language Teacher**

Michelle has been a high school teacher for 17 years, 12 with OLSD. She holds a Bachelors and Masters degree in English Literature and has taught English at the college level. At OHS, she teaches Honors Interdisciplinary Studies and AP Language and Composition. Michelle is pursuing her Gifted Endorsement for grades 7-12 through the University of Cincinnati.

	<p><b>LeRae Nesbitt: Parent Mentor for Middle and High School Families</b></p> <p>LeRae and her family moved to Lewis Center from Syracuse, NY in 2009. She is a mother of three children, two of which graduated from Olentangy High School; one utilizing a 504 plan and the other an IEP. Her third child will graduate in 2019. Her personal experience as a member of her children's IEP teams from 2002-2015 gave her the desire to help other parents through the sometimes overwhelming and often confusion process.</p> <p>A Parent Mentor is a free support to parents of children with special needs or children who are suspected of having special needs. They are the parent of a child with special needs who acts as a bridge between home and school to support meaningful collaboration. The mission of our Parent Mentors program is to provide support and resources to families of children with special needs and the professionals who serve them.</p>
	<p><b>Geetha Nori: Community Activist</b></p> <p>I have over eight years of experience working with Indian American non-profit organizations in the Columbus community. After leading the nonprofit, Vindhya Cultural Association (VCA), a registered 501(C)(3) for two years, I continue to be on its advisory committee. VCA was established to promote Indian arts and culture by showcasing the talents of the younger generation. I also have a passion for film and theatre, and have been directing Indian mythological plays with the youth in the community. My interaction with young adults in the Indian American community sheds light on the cultural issues and challenges that I feel should be brought into public eye. I stand for these children's well being, I am their advocate, it is what I believe in. I am currently on the post-production stage of a short film, which is inspired by true stories and aims to raise awareness in the Indian American community of the LGBTQ+ community.</p>
	<p><b>Sheronda Palmore LISW-S: Program Director</b></p> <p>Sheronda Palmore is an independently licensed social worker who currently serves as a program director for a local non profit agency. Sheronda's background includes providing trauma informed care to children with behavioral health needs and to women/families impacted by addiction and violence. Sheronda has provided education related to domestic violence and response to medical and social works students. She is passionate about equal access to mental health care and helping others in their holistic development.</p>
	<p><b>ODN</b></p> <p>ODN is an parent-based organization in Olentangy that provides resources and support on learning differences to students and their families</p>

	<p><b>Thomas G. Reed, Ph.D.: Executive Director, ESC of Central Ohio</b></p> <p>Upon graduating from The Ohio State University, Tom Reed began his education career as a junior high teacher in the Jackson Center Local Schools in 1985 and was named Superintendent of the district in 2001. He was later awarded a Fawcett Scholar Fellowship at The Ohio State University and completed his Ph.D in 2005 studying the effects of emotional intelligence on leadership and perceived principal effectiveness. Currently, Dr. Reed serves as Executive Director of the Center for Achievement and Leadership Services at the ESC of Central Ohio in Columbus and teaches graduate level leadership courses at Ohio Dominican and Ohio State.</p>
	<p><b>Drew Rock: Teacher, OOHS; School &amp; Clinical Counselor in Training, University of Dayton</b></p> <p>Drew has been a teacher for twelve years, earning his undergraduate degree in Spanish Languages, Literatures, Linguistics &amp; Cultures, and Secondary Education from the University of Maryland, College Park. After teaching in Maryland for two years, he began teaching with Olentangy Local Schools, during which he earned a Master's degree in Curriculum &amp; Instruction and Educational Technology from Ohio Dominican University. Now in his tenth year as a teacher with our district, in May he will finish his Master's degree in school counseling from the University of Dayton, and continue his studies for licensure as a professional clinical counselor thereafter. Drew's research interests have been focused on LGBTQ+ students, their academic needs, and how educators can create a more inclusive environment to maximize their learning, and hopes to eventually pursue a Ph.D. in the field of counseling, with a concentration on LGBTQ+ issues. Within the past few years, he has offered professional development sessions to educators, and recently presented at the All Ohio School Counselors Conference on the topic of supporting LGBTQ+ students. Currently, he resides in New Albany with his husband and six-year-old twins.</p>
	<p><b>Ziyan Sears: Olentangy High School Senior</b></p>
	<p><b>Kelly Silwani: Teacher-Librarian at Olentangy Orange Middle School</b></p> <p>Kelly Silwani is the Teacher-Librarian at Olentangy Orange Middle School in Lewis Center, Ohio. She has an MLIS from Kent State University and a BsEd from The Ohio State University. In 2010, she was selected as Orange Middle School's Teacher of the Year. Currently, she is Immediate Past President of the Ohio Educational Library Media Association and is a council member on the Buckeye Children's and Teen Book Awards committee. She is also a member of the American Library Association and the American Association of School Librarians.</p>



**Candice P Simpson: CEO and Founder of Be Free Enterprises, LLC, Criminal Justice Regional Coordinator for Care Source**

Candice P Simpson is the CEO and Founder of Be Free Enterprises, LLC where she provides consultant work and life coaching to individuals, faith based and community organizations. She is also employed at Care Source as the Criminal Justice Regional Coordinator. She has more than 10 years of experience providing treatment to individuals incarcerated in the criminal justice system. She is a Licensed Independent Chemical Dependency Counselor. She obtained her Master's Degree in Criminal Justice with a concentration in Forensic Psychology and Justice Administration.

She is a proud mother to one teenage daughter and one grandson named Oliver (daughter's guinea pig). She also enjoys reading, dancing, traveling and spending time with family and friends.



**Mindy Skinner & Kileen Sprouse: Liberty Tree Elementary Teacher**

Kileen Sprouse and Mindy Skinner are Early Childhood and Elementary Educators each with 11 years of experience. Over the last 3 years they have been working to embed mindfulness and self-regulation practices within their classrooms.



**Jenna Srivastava: Berkshire Middle School Teacher /Diversity Liaison  
Brian Barkhurst: Orange Middle School French Teacher/Diversity Liaison**

Jenna Srivastava works at Olentangy Berkshire Middle School where she teaches grade 6 science. She completed her undergraduate degree (math and science, grades 4-9) and graduate degree (Higher Education Administration) at the University of Dayton. Jenna taught two years of high school in Eastern North Carolina as a Teach for America (TFA) corps member, five years with the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) and is in her fourth year with Olentangy. Jenna's passions include spending time with her family, educational equity, acceptance and inclusion, traveling, red pandas and tacos.

Jenna Srivastava works at Olentangy Berkshire Middle School where she teaches grade 6 science. She completed her undergraduate degree (math and science, grades 4-9)





and graduate degree (Higher Education Administration) at the University of Dayton. Jenna taught two years of high school in Eastern North Carolina as a Teach for America (TFA) corps member, five years with the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) and is in her third year with Olentangy. Jenna's passions include educational equity, acceptance and inclusion, traveling, red pandas and tacos.



**Dr. Donja Thomas: Creator of African American Voice Black Studies/Black, Literature Curriculum at GLHS, Veteran English Teacher at Gahanna Lincoln High School**

Donja Thomas is a recent Ph.D. graduate from the Department of Teaching and Learning at The Ohio State University and a full-time English/language arts teacher at Gahanna-Lincoln High School. She is also the recipient of the Ohio State University Dr. Alivia Bozeman Critical Educator Award. Her work as an activist-scholar centers Black studies as a pedagogical practice towards building critical consciousness and equity perspectives in education. Central to Dr. Thomas' research and teaching agenda is the goal of employing theories and practices that are culturally relevant, sustaining, and rooted in the visibility of cultural and literary contributions. In so doing, her work seeks to make available racial, social, and educational opportunities that support the academic advancement and community upliftment of students, teachers, and families. Her advocacy seeks to develop a model for infusing black cultural studies into public school curricula while emphasizing the significance of critical literacy.



**Amy Walliser, LPCC: LGBTQ+ Program Coordinator, Syntero**

Amy L. Walliser, LPCC is the LGBTQ+ Program Coordinator for Syntero; a behavioral health agency in central Ohio. Amy's background spans from early childhood education, to management, to clinical counseling and program development. She has been in the Mental Health field since 2014 when she received her Master's of Science in Mental Health Counseling from Capella University. Amy specializes in working with sex and gender minority individuals as well as trauma survivors. Since starting her current position in June of 2016, she has had the opportunity to work in several large school districts and enjoys teaching professionals how to work better with individuals that identify within the sex and gender minority spectrums.



**Kay Wilson: Executive Director, LeaderSpark**

Kay is an author, as well as the Executive Director for a Central Ohio non-profit organization; LeaderSpark; a 30 year old nonprofit that serves youth 14-24 on leadership and workforce development in Central Ohio. She currently manages teams to empower, educate and drive conversation about the importance of youth voice. She is a noted speaker on topics related to blogging, branding, communications, and activism.

Prior to joining LeaderSpark, Kay aligned her passion to help organizations advance their missions with her skill to strengthen brands. This resolve stuck with her while living overseas as the regional director for Sub-Saharan Africa with the Ford Foundation, leading her to work on international platforms in the areas of human rights and social justice. Kay holds a BS in Marketing Communications from The Ohio State University, a Master's Degree in Mass Communications from University of Enugu, Nigeria and an MBA in Leadership & Community Development from Ohio Dominican University. Kay lives, loves and laughs in Gahanna with her family and is a published author of two books; HOLDING ON TO SOMEWHERE and EAT TO LOVE both available on Amazon. *"I am a product of God's grace in that there's a lot of people who are gifted and there's a lot of people who are talented who haven't manifested their power because they think making their light shine may dim someone else's. Shine cos it will help them find their way."*



**Sarah Zettler: Educator and Infinite Possibilities Certified Trainer**

Sarah Zettler has been teaching, coaching, mentoring, and inspiring students in the Ohio public school system for 13 years as a Theater and English teacher at both the middle and high school levels. She is currently a 7th grade teacher at Olentangy Shanahan Middle School. As a lover of diversity, she advocates for our glorious differences in and out of the school system, and has spoken at several conferences and events about the power of inclusion and diversity. Her favorite seeking-of-happiness moments have occurred at various Omega conferences, including one where Christopher Reeve was the keynote speaker. She is an avid intender, writer, reader, and world traveler. Her favorite authors include Mike Dooley, Wayne Dyer, Christine Northrup M.D., Oprah Winfrey, Louise Hay, and anyone who shows others their power. Sarah is a certified Infinite Possibilities Trainer.

**Student Panelists**

**Trevin Ecker: Olentangy Liberty High School Student**

Trevin Ecker - Senior, Liberty High School with Dyslexia. Despite Trevin's learning disability, he thrives socially and aspires to have a career in politics. Trevin currently works on Mike DeWine for Governor campaign and will be interning with the Delaware County Prosecutor's Office. Trevin plans to pursue a degree in political science.

**Michael Fernandes: Otterbein University Student**

Michael Fernandes, an OHS graduate and currently a Sophomore at Otterbein University studying for a B.A. in Engineering Physics. He hopes to pursue a design career in Fuel Technology and/or Electric Car Design. Michael was born in Johannesburg, South Africa. He moved to the United States when he was three and has lived in Ohio ever since where he attended Olentangy schools. Michael was retained in the 2nd grade due to struggles with reading and writing but was not diagnosed with dyslexia until the end of his 8th grade year. He received structured literacy instruction in Orton-Gillingham throughout high school.

**Bryce Houston: Olentangy Orange High School Student**

Bryce Houston, a Senior at Olentangy Orange High School diagnosed with dyslexia his freshman year. Despite his learning disability he completed college prep courses and has a 3.1 GPA. He is a proud Orange Pioneer varsity athlete that attained all-state honors in both football and wrestling and served as team captain his football team. Bryce will be attending Ohio University on a football scholarship next fall.

## **Special Acknowledgements**

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Heather Cole, Diversity Coordinator  
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Olentangy Orange High School Administrative Staff  
Olentangy Orange High School Diversity Liaison: Stephen Lewis  
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“Unity is strength...when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved.”  
Mattie Stepanek