



## Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education: *Conversation Series*

### **“No Excuses” Schools and the Education of Impoverished Students of Color**

March 9, 2016  
Noon to 2 p.m.

#### **LEO E. CASEY**

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Leo Casey is the executive director of the Albert Shanker Institute, a think tank that focuses on issues of public education, unionism and democracy promotion. Before he assumed his current position at the Shanker Institute, Casey was elected vice president from academic high schools for the United Federation of Teachers in New York City, after serving as UFT special representative for high schools. As vice president, he taught a class in global studies at Bard High School Early College in Manhattan.

Casey began his teaching career in 1984 at Clara Barton High School in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, N.Y., where, for 15 years, he taught classes in civics, American history, African-American studies, ethical issues in medicine, and political science. For 10 consecutive years, his classes—entirely students of color, largely immigrant and largely female—won the New York City championship of the national We the People civics competition, winning the New York state championship four times and placing fourth in the nation twice. Casey’s union activism at Clara Barton began when he led an effort to have the school building closed to clean up major asbestos contamination caused by the New York City Department of Education’s renovations. He served as UFT chapter leader at Clara Barton for 10 years. Casey has won several awards for his teaching, and was named national Social Studies Teacher of the Year for the American Teacher Awards in 1992. Casey led the design team for the UFT’s Secondary Charter School, and led the UFT’s work with charter schools, including charter organizing. He has worked with teacher unions and teachers in Russia, Tanzania and China on the development of civics education. Casey attended Antioch College in Ohio, the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and the University of Toronto in Canada, where he earned a doctorate in political philosophy

*Sponsored by the Albert Shanker Institute and the American Federation of Teachers, this conversation series is designed to engender lively and informative discussions on important educational issues. We deliberately invite speakers with diverse perspectives, including views other than those of the Albert Shanker Institute and the AFT. What is important is that these participants are committed to genuine engagement with each other.*

## LESLIE T. FENWICK

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Leslie T. Fenwick, PhD is Dean of the Howard University School of Education and a professor of education policy. She was appointed dean in 2007. Dr. Fenwick has held consecutive terms as a presidentially-appointed visiting fellow and visiting scholar in education at Harvard University. For more than 20 years, Dr. Fenwick has been a University administrator and (tenured) faculty member. Fenwick was appointed to the National Academy of Sciences committee on the study of the impact of mayoral control on public schools and is called upon to testify about educational equity and teacher quality to the U.S. Senate, National Conference of State Legislatures, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Urban League, Congressional Black Caucus and Education Writers Association. Additionally, she was a program officer at the Southern Education Foundation (SEF) where she managed an \$11 million grant program supported by The Wallace Foundation. A former urban school teacher, school administrator and legislative aid to the State of Ohio Senate, Dr. Fenwick earned the PhD in educational policy and leadership at The Ohio State University where she was a Flesher Fellow and a bachelor's degree in education at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education.

Presently, Dr. Fenwick serves on the national advisory council for the George Lucas Education Foundation/EduTopia and is a past member of the board of directors of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and the Harvard University Principals Center Advisory Board. Dr. Fenwick also held a 3-year term as a member of NASA's Education and Public Outreach Committee. Currently, Dr. Fenwick is a member of the Scholarly Advisory Council for the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC).

Dr. Fenwick is a contributing author to *The Last Word: The Best Controversy and Commentary in American Education*, and she is author of the policy monograph, *The Principal Shortage: Who Will Lead* and numerous published research articles and book chapters. Selected as the WEB DuBois Distinguished Lecturer for the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and as recipient of the WEB DuBois Award for Higher Education Leadership from the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE), Dr. Fenwick has been honored for her advocacy of educational equity and access for minority and poor children. Her OP-ED articles have been published by the *Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, and *Education Week* and she has appeared on C-SPAN, CNN and local programs discussing educational equity.

## DAVID E. KIRKLAND

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David E. Kirkland, PhD, JD, is an associate professor of English and Urban Education in the Department of Teaching and Learning at New York University's (NYU) Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. He also serves as Executive Director of The Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and The Transformation of Schools. His transdisciplinary scholarship explores intersections among race, gender, and education. In so doing, he analyzes culture, language, and texts, and uses critical literary, ethnographic, and sociolinguistic research methods to answer complex questions at the center of equity in education. Dr. Kirkland taught middle and high school for several years in Michigan. He's also organized youth empowerment and youth mentoring programs for over a decade. Dr. Kirkland has received many awards for his groundbreaking work in urban education, including the 2008 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Division G Outstanding Dissertation Award. He was a 2009-10 Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow, a 2011-12 NAEd/Spencer Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow, and is a former fellow of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Research Foundation's "Cultivating New Voices among Scholars of Color" program. Dr. Kirkland has published widely. His

most recent publications include: *Black Skin, White Masks: Normalizing Whiteness and the Trouble with the Achievement Gap*, *English(es) in Urban Contexts: Politics, Pluralism, and Possibilities*, and *We Real Cool: Examining Black Males and Literacy. A Search Past Silence: The Literacy of Black Males*, the fifth book that Dr. Kirkland has authored, co-authored, edited, or co-edited, is a TC Press bestseller and winner of the 2014 AESA Critics Choice Award and the 2014 NCTE David H. Russell Award for Distinguished Research in the Teaching of English. He is also co-editor of the newly released *Students Right to Their Own Language*, a critical sourcebook published by Bedford/St. Martins Press.

## SHANTELE D. WRIGHT

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Shantelle D. Wright is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Achievement Prep, one of the highest performing charter school networks in the District of Columbia. Achievement Prep, now in its eighth year of service to the community, has two campuses (one elementary school and one middle school) located in SE DC. Achievement Prep exists to prepare students to excel as high-achieving scholars and leaders in high school, college and beyond. The DC Public Charter School Board has consistently ranked Achievement Prep as a top performing, Tier 1 charter school. Under Ms. Wright's leadership Achievement Prep is closing the achievement gap for more than 700 children east of the Anacostia River in Ward 8 of Washington, DC, and has plans to continue to grow and extend its impact in the District. Although Achievement Prep is located in one of the most underserved areas of the District and over 90% of Achievement Prep scholars come from economically disadvantaged homes, Achievement Prep scholars have routinely outperformed almost all other students across the city on DC standardized achievement tests.

Prior to opening Achievement Prep, Ms. Wright was selected as one of 13 outstanding leaders to complete the Building Excellent Schools (BES) fellowship program. BES is a highly competitive, rigorous, yearlong, full-time training program in urban charter school creation and leadership. Ms. Wright is also a licensed attorney having received a Juris Doctorate from The George Washington University School of Law, and prior to founding Achievement Prep, she practiced commercial real estate law for several years at a large, well-respected Washington, DC law firm. Ms. Wright is a proud "Hamptonian" and obtained her BA in Sociology from Hampton University. She is a member of the Board of Directors for Building Excellent Schools (BES), Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS), and the DC Association of Public Chartered Schools.

**Join Us for: "The Social Side of Education: How Social Aspects of Schools & Schools Systems Shape Teaching & Learning " | Friday, April 8, 2016 | 10:00 am to 5:30 pm | Washington Court Hotel | 525 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20001 | Register at: [www.shankerinstitute.org/event/socialside2016](http://www.shankerinstitute.org/event/socialside2016)**