

**TASK FORCE ON BLACK AND LATINA YOUNG
WOMEN AND GIRLS**



COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS

Task Force on Black and Latina Young Women and Girls 2025-2026

Task Force Goals

To assist urban public-school systems in improving college and career readiness and the life outcomes of Black and Latina young women and girls by supporting the implementation of evidence-based strategies to educate girls from diverse racial, cultural, national, and linguistic backgrounds.

To improve the learning environment and climate in urban schools by addressing the racism and bias that contributes to the epidemic of violence, harassment, discrimination and bullying that hinders the progress of Black and Latina young women and girls.

To improve access to health information and comprehensive health care, including physical and mental health, to reduce teen pregnancy, premature parenting, and ultimately economic insecurity for Black and Latina young women and girls.

To improve the quality of professional learning that fosters a deeper understanding of educators' role in dismantling systemic and structural barriers and creating support systems needed for Black and Latina young women and girls' academic and life-long success.

To ensure data collection, as well as the establishment of accountability and protocols, in order to monitor the progress of Black and Latina young women and girls across their diverse student groups in our member districts.

Task Force Chair

Sharon Contreras, North Carolina A & T State University, College of Education

Task Force Members

Stephanie Elizalde, Dallas Superintendent
Shavonna Holman, Omaha School Board
Aleesia Johnson, Indianapolis Superintendent

TASK FORCE MEETING



Council of the Great City Schools

THE NATION'S VOICE FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Black and Latina Young Women and Girls Task Force Meeting

March 22, 2025

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Meeting Agenda



I. Introduction of Task Force Chair and Members

- Dr. Sharon Contreras, North Carolina Central University, Taskforce Chair
- Stephanie Elizalde, Superintendent, Dallas Independent School District
- Kelly Gonez, Board Member, Los Angeles Unified School District
- Shavonna Holman, Board Member, Omaha Public Schools

II. Chair Opening Remarks

- Dr. Sharon Contreras, North Carolina Central University, Taskforce Chair

III. Empowering Black and Brown Female Youth Through Camp Akili followed by Q/A

This presentation will highlight Camp Akili, a transformative residential summer program dedicated to fostering healing, leadership, and personal growth among Black and Brown youth (ages 14-18). Grounded in Healing-Centered Engagement (HCE), Camp Akili creates a safe, affirming space where young people can navigate the effects of racism, sexism, and systemic barriers, while building resilience and cultural pride. Participants engage in strategies to manage stress and trauma, cultivate supportive networks, and enhance social-emotional well-being, all of which contribute to their academic and personal success. Through reflection, group dialogue, and goal-setting exercises, they gain tools to pursue their educational and career aspirations while deepening their connection to self and community. This session will explore how Camp Akili inspires critical thinking, nurtures leadership development, and promotes long-term empowerment, ensuring that Black and Brown girls have the confidence, skills, and support needed to thrive in school, relationships, and beyond.

- **Dr. Jayme Banks**, Chief of Student Support Services, The School District of Philadelphia
- **Meghan Smith**, Deputy Chief of Prevention and Intervention, The School District of Philadelphia

IV. Q&A

CGCS Staff:

Tonya Harris, Director of Communications



March 22, 2025

Empowering Black and Brown Female Youth Through Camp Akili



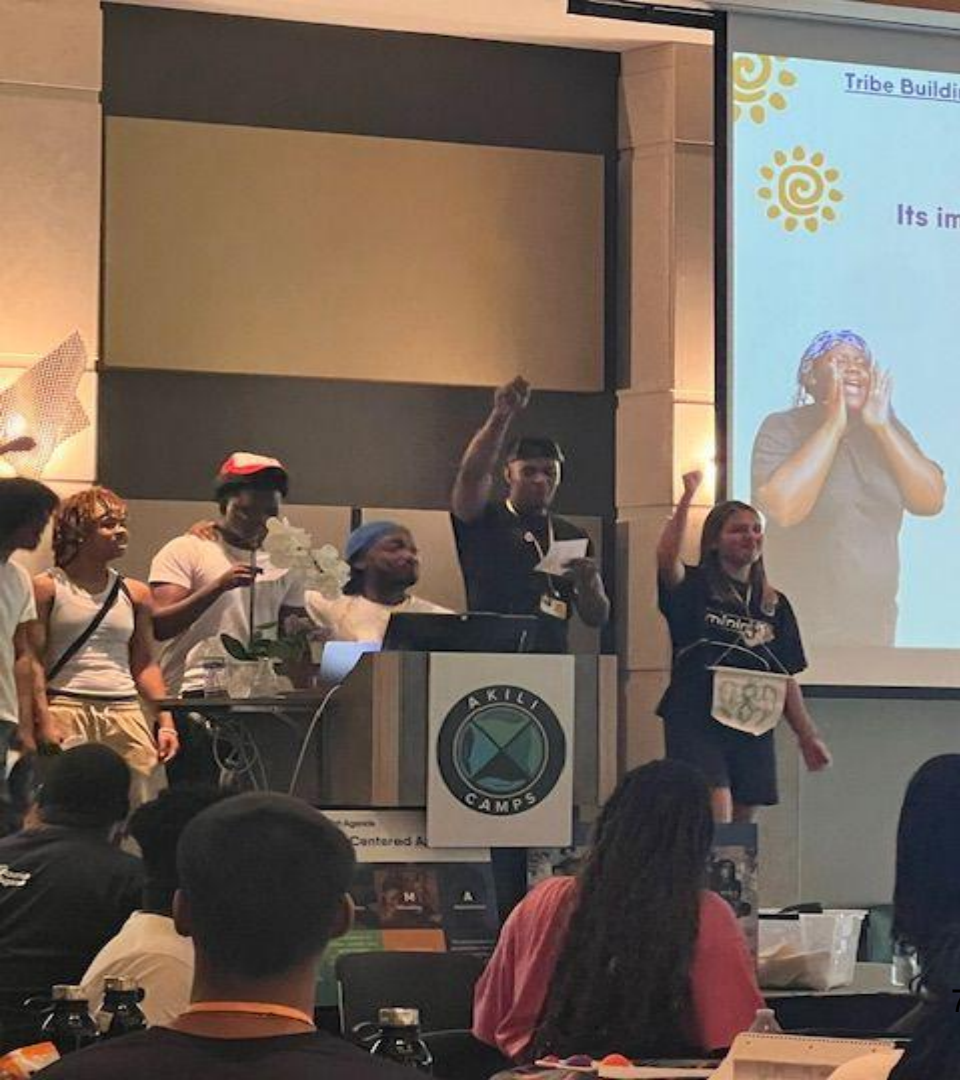


Dr. Jayme Banks

Chief of Student Support Services

Meghan Smith

Interim Deputy Chief
Office of Prevention, Intervention &
Trauma



Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Camp Highlights Video
3. Healing Centered Engagement
4. Implementation Plan
5. What is Camp Akili?
6. Outcome Data
7. Q&A

Welcome to Camp Akili



“Camp made me feel hopeful about life”

2023 Camp Participant

Healing Centered Engagement

Created by co-founders, Dr. Shawn Ginwright and Nedra Ginwright, Healing Centered Engagement (HCE) is a non-clinical trauma approach that involves culture and identity, non-religious spirituality and connection, civic action and collective healing.

HCE transforms individual practices, advances healthy interpersonal connections and improves institutional culture, to create healthy outcomes for youth and the adults who serve them.

HCE comes from the idea that people are not harmed in a vacuum, and wellbeing comes from participating in transforming the root causes of the harm at each level.

Most approaches view trauma as an individual problem though most trauma stems from social oppression that impacts us at individual, interpersonal and institutional levels. Healing Centered Engagement offers an asset driven approach aimed at the holistic restoration of wellbeing.

Healing Centered Engagement

Healing Centered Engagement approach is operationalized through five CARMA Principles

C	Culture	The values and norms that connect us to a shared identity and community.
A	Agency	The individual and collective power to act, create, and change personal conditions and external systems.
R	Relationships	The capacity to create, sustain, and grow healthy connections with others.
M	Meaning	The profound discovery of who we are, why we are, and what purpose we were born to serve
A	Aspirations	the capacity to imagine, set, and accomplish goals for personal and collective livelihood and advancement.



Implementation



Holistic HCE Implementation Plan



HCE Training for Adults

Adults Within A School Building Engage In Healing Centered Engagement Certification Program



Students Attend Camp Akili

Students from the same school are selected to participate in the Akili Summer Camp.

12



Integrated HCE School Community

Adults and students who have experienced HCE share a common language, can identify key areas of focus for their school community, and collaboratively develop a healing-centered plan for their environment.

HCE Implementation Timeline



CAMP AKILI



What is Camp Akili?



Camp Akili, created by Dr. Shawn and Nedra Ginwright, has empowered Black youth and youth of color for over 30 years through healing-centered, transformative experiences.

- The camp provides a safe space to explore identity, confront challenges like community violence and self-doubt, and build racial and self-esteem through cultural pride and collective healing.
- Originally founded in Oakland, California, Camp Akili expanded to Philadelphia through a partnership with the School District of Philadelphia—marking its first launch outside of Oakland.

CAMP AKILI COMPONENTS

IDENTITY

CULTURE

RELATIONSHIPS

HEALING

Camp Akili provides youth with space to reflect, infuse wellness with activism, and envision new possibilities for themselves and their families through a healing approach rooted in African and indigenous ways of knowing.



Data



Student Data: 2023 Camp Akili Participants

Students reported that they agree or strongly agree that Camp Akili helped them:

- Make new friends (95%)
- Understand how racism impacts communities (92%)
- Feel more connected to others at camp (90%)
- Feel more connected to their culture and background (87%)
- Understand how sexism and misogyny impact communities (86%)
- Gain skills that help make positive change in their communities (85%)
- Feel hopeful about their lives (81%)



Student Data: 2023 Camp Akili Participants

Attendance

17%-points



17 percentage point **increase** in number of students that attended 95% or more days.

Discipline

6%-points



6 percentage point **increase** in the number of students that **Did Not** receive an out-of-school suspension.

School Leader Feedback: Camp Akili Impact on Female Youth

01

Three students (2 females, 1 male) started a Haitian club after camp. They meet biweekly, plan activities, and have fundraised through Haitian food sales. They've become a welcoming team for new Haitian students.

02

One female youth who attended camp last summer and is now at GWHS had previously needed summer school between 7th and 8th grade. Today, she's flourishing—earning 80s and 90s in her high school classes.

03

Another young woman was elected International Baccalaureate class president and has led with dignity, challenging our team to improve how we support diversity within the program.


04

Another young lady who attended is taking multiple IB and AP exams because she wants to do the best she can in school while it is still "free".

05

One female participant, now serving as president of the Social Justice Club since returning from camp, has actively reached out to numerous politicians to support the club's mission of creating a safe and welcoming school environment.

Students inspired by Camp Akili
are now leaders in their schools and communities.



“Essentially, many of these female students who attended have returned to our building doing well academically and taking on multiple leadership roles”

– Dr. Thompson, George Washington High School



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

Thank you and questions?

Dr. Jayme Banks

Chief of Student Support Services

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Meghan Smith

Interim Deputy Chief of Prevention,
Intervention and Trauma

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