



## **Regional Day of Practice**

August 13, 2019

Springfield College

### **Our Districts, Our Schools, Our Talent: Improving student performance through a diverse teacher workforce**

#### **Purpose of the meeting:**

To increase capacity in western Massachusetts school districts for development of a diverse teacher workforce

#### **Desired outcomes:**

- Increased knowledge and understanding of the importance of and strategies for developing a diverse teacher workforce
- Enhanced readiness and skills to support Black and Latinx para-educators to become teachers
- Next steps outlined for district action

#### **Program follows on next page**

Many thanks to Springfield College, Holyoke and Springfield Public School districts, Amherst Media, Kevin Kennedy, Ben Barnhart, Omar Acevedo, Nancy Eckert, and to the Day of Practice planning team: Suzanne Judson-Whitehouse, José Bou, Danielle Phillips, Tiffani Curtis, Katie O'Sullivan, Matthew Grimes, Linda Davis-Delano, Greta Shultz, Marla Solomon, and Curtis Ogden.



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**Program**

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Coffee, registration, meet and greet <i>7:45-8:30 am</i>	A light breakfast will be available.
Opening <i>8:30-9:00 am</i>	Welcome Dr. Calvin Hill, Vice President for Inclusion and Community Engagement, & Dr. Linda Davis-Delano, Director of Educator Preparation, Springfield College  What is Paradigm Shift? Desiree Robinson, Instructional Leadership Specialist, Springfield Public Schools, Paradigm Shift Leadership Team, & Marla Solomon, Paradigm Shift Director, Five College Consortium  Icebreaker & agenda review José Bou, Equity, Family and Community Engagement Manager, Holyoke Public Schools, & Suzanne Judson-Whitehouse, Director of Licensure Programs, Collaborative for Educational Services
Commissioner's address <i>9:00-9:20 am</i>	The State as a Partner: Diversifying the Educator Workforce Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Keynote address <i>9:20-10:20 am</i>	The Case for windows and mirrors: You can't be what you can't see Sharif El-Mekki, Director, The Center for Black Educators
Break <i>10:20-10:40 am</i>	Refreshments will be served.
Workshop <i>10:40 am-12:00 pm</i>	Hiring for equity: Disrupting bias in the interview and selection process Ramon De Jesus, Director of Diversity Development, Cambridge Public Schools
Lunch and panel discussion <i>12:00-1:00 pm</i>	Speakers, principals, and Paradigm Shift members respond to participants' reflection questions and discuss the para-educator to teacher pathway Ramon De Jesus, Sharif El-Mekki, Linda Davis-Delano, Desiree Robinson, Lisa Bakowski, Principal, Boland Elementary School, SPS, & Jeff Peterson, Director of Middle School Pathways, HPS Curtis Ogden, Moderator
District work time <i>1:00-2:00 pm</i>	Implications, actions, and commitments District leaders
Wrap-up <i>2:00-2:30 pm</i>	Final conversation, next steps, and evaluation

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**Speaker biographies**

**Jeffrey C. Riley** was appointed Massachusetts' 24<sup>th</sup> commissioner of elementary and secondary education in early 2018 and began serving as commissioner on April 5, 2018. A Massachusetts native, Mr. Riley's experience spans urban and suburban districts and includes teaching in Baltimore, Md., being principal of Tyngsboro Middle School, and being principal of Boston's Edwards Middle School. In January 2012, Commissioner Riley was appointed superintendent/receiver of the Lawrence Public Schools. During his more than six years there, he led a team that brought major improvements by shifting more resources and autonomy to the school level, expanding the school day, increasing enrichment opportunities, and ensuring all schools had great leaders and teachers. Commissioner Riley lives in Boston and holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Pomona College in California, a master's degree in counseling from Johns Hopkins University in Maryland and a master's degree in school administration, planning and social policy from Harvard University.

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**Sharif El-Mekki.** As the son of an educator and Black Panther Party activists and as a graduate of an elementary Pan-African Freedom School, Sharif El-Mekki had a strong desire to dive into a cause that would address issues relating to social justice, equity and educational opportunities. He became a teacher through an alternative certification program for African American men. For the past eleven years, El-Mekki has been the proud principal at Mastery Charter School-Shoemaker Campus. The school and El-Mekki's team have been recognized by President Obama and by the state of Pennsylvania for accelerating achievement levels of African American students. El-Mekki also completed a two-year fellowship as one of three Principal Ambassadors providing a principal's level perspective to the U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, and his senior cabinet. In 2014, El-Mekki founded The Fellowship – Black Male Educators for Social Justice in an effort to center, uplift, and improve the experiences of current and aspiring Black male educators. In 2019, he launched the Center for Black Educator Development to increase the number of Black teachers in our local and national public schools. El-Mekki holds a Bachelor's degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) and a Master's degree and Principal Certification from Cheyney University. El-Mekki is a member of Education Leaders of Color (EdLoC) and the 8 Black Hands podcast team. He blogs on [Phillys7thWard.org](http://Phillys7thWard.org).

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**Ramon De Jesus** currently serves as the Director of Diversity Development for the Cambridge Public Schools (CPSD). In this capacity, he leads the Dynamic Diversity Development Initiative for CPSD, with oversight of the recruitment and retention of educators of color across all 18 schools in the district. Prior to his current role, Ramon served as a Search Consultant at Commongood Careers (CGC) where he guided nonprofit leaders in the strategy and execution of C-Suite talent searches. While at CGC, he also led the firm's internal diversity, equity, and inclusion practice, developing ways to assess client commitment to racial equity and translating these commitments to prospective candidates. A recipient of the Posse Foundation Scholarship, Ramon studied Latin American and Latino Studies at Brandeis University and holds a Master's in Higher Education Administration from the Boston College Lynch School of Education. He believes in the capacity of education to transform lives and sees his work as honoring the investment of his teachers and mentors.



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**Paradigm Shift** is an initiative of the Diverse Teacher Workforce Coalition—a partnership of 25 organizations working to make the western Massachusetts teacher workforce reflect its diverse communities. This initiative is a project of the Five College Consortium generously supported by the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts Innovation Fund, the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation, the Beveridge Family Foundation, and the Five College Consortium. Current members of the **Diverse Teacher Workforce Coalition** are:

Workforce development areas:

MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board  
MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board  
MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center

Public school districts:

Springfield Public Schools  
Holyoke Public Schools  
Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools  
Northampton Public Schools

Educator unions:

Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals  
Holyoke Paraprofessionals Association  
Amherst-Pelham Education Association  
Northampton Association of School Employees

Educator preparation and support organizations:

Collaborative for Educational Services, Northampton  
Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative, Springfield  
Mount Holyoke College Master of Arts in Teaching, South Hadley  
Springfield College, Springfield  
Teach Western Mass, Holyoke & Springfield  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Westfield State University, Westfield

Community colleges:

Holyoke Community College, Holyoke  
Springfield Technical Community College, Springfield  
Greenfield Community College, Greenfield

Community organizations:

Community Education Project, Holyoke  
Holyoke-Chicopee-Springfield Headstart  
Home City Housing, Springfield  
New North Citizens' Council, Inc., Springfield  
Springfield Partners for Community Action, Springfield

Coordination:

The Five College Schools Partnership, Five College Consortium, Amherst

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## Groupings and Rooms for District Work Time

### Springfield

- Zone 1 - Main Room (Dodge)
- Zone 2 - Main Room (Dodge)
- Zone 3 - Main Room (Dodge)
- Empowerment Zone – Room 324 (inside Student Affairs area)
- Other administrators/guests – Main Room (Dodge)

### Holyoke

- Two zones – Room 311
- Other administrators/guests – Room 349 (conference room near main stairs)