

# APEC Center Quarterly Newsletter

## A LETTER FROM OUR PROGRAM MANAGER:

It is my great pleasure to introduce myself again to some and for the first time to others. My name is Mr. Ashton Peterson and I have been fortunate enough to assume the role of Program Manager for the APEC Center. My journey in education has taken me through the classroom, then to adult learning, and now to supporting the crucial work of alternative certification. As an alternatively certified educator myself, I am excited to have the opportunity to support work that I personally know to be impactful.

This school year has been another year fraught with new obstacles, but I have had the joy of witnessing APEC Fellows rise to the occasion every time - it is because of the Fellows' resolve that I am inspired to do my work to the best of my ability. Hearing of Fellows stepping in as substitutes when a teacher could not make it in for the day, serving as coaches for sports teams despite their rigorous academic schedule, or mentoring students when they feel like they have nothing left to give have demonstrated the caliber of professional the APEC Center is seeking. I am proud to work with educators who are this committed to their craft, their community, and the education of young people.

The APEC Center has developed a program that aims to meet the needs of our state by recruiting, training, and most importantly retaining high quality educators who have already demonstrated commitment to the schools in their community. I am honored to have the opportunity to work with such a high-quality program and excited to see how we can expand the work of preparing teachers.

Mr. Ashton Peterson, M.S.  
Program Manager



## APEC CENTER ADVISORY BOARD

**Melanie Cohen** - Lexington & Richland  
School District 5

**Alice Colbert** - Educational Consultant

**Bill Dieckmann** - Executive Coach

**Christine Hait** - Columbia College

**Breanna Jackson** - City Year

**Frances Keller** - Sumter School District

**Suzanne Koty** - CERRA

**Jim Lane** - Columbia College

**Christine LeBlanc** - Columbia College

**Marie McGehee** - Colonial Life

**Alana Stroker** - Colonial Life

**Tammy Pawloski** - Francis Marion  
University

**Francis Schodowski** - Columbia  
College

**Kimberly Scott** - Lexington County  
School District One

**Lisa Shannon** - Kershaw County School  
District

**Denise Solwell** - Fairfield County School  
District

**Katherine Templeton** - Richland School  
District Two

**Felicia Richardson** - Richland County  
School District One

*"Education is our passport to the future, for  
tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it  
today".*

*Malcolm X*

## A LETTER FROM OUR BEI LEADERS:

Dr. Janice Kitchings, Dr. Cheryl Stover, Mukkaramah Smith, and Jelisa Collins

This year, the APEC Center was fortunate to secure grant funding from the National Center for Teacher Residencies to develop a Black Educator Initiative Program that aims to: build community amongst Black educators where they can commune with one another; and provide Black educators with professional development opportunities and affinity spaces to explore topics in education through rich conversation with peers. Not only were we able to produce these learning opportunities for Black educators, but we were also granted funding to pilot a Mentor Development Academy in which we worked with APEC Mentor Teachers on developing culturally relevant pedagogical practices and mentoring through an equity lens.

The BEI Leadership Team has thoroughly enjoyed developing this program this semester and is looking forward to continuing to lead this work in the spring semester. We have observed the forming of a tightknit community amongst our Black educators where they are able to share best practices, seek solace from their peers, garner support, and discover thought partners whom they can align themselves with in their work. Because we know that community is one of the strongest tools, we can use to retain educators, it is our hope that all these connections will provide the support that an educator needs to remain in the profession. Additionally, we hope our work with this cohort of Mentor Teachers will proliferate through other teachers and educational leaders who have the opportunity to mentor and coach pre-service and induction teachers.

We are thankful to the APEC Center for choosing us to lead this work and we are excited to see how far we are able to take the Black educators and Mentor Teachers whom we work with in the spring.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The APEC Center is excited to announce that we have received another \$25,000 grant from Colonial Life Unum's Equitable Pathways grant program. This funding will continue to support APEC Center activities and provide scholarship funding for participants to pursue their master's degrees. We want to thank our partners at Colonial Life Unum for their continued support of the APEC Center and public education in South Carolina.

# Cohort 4 Fellow Highlights

**Mr. Terrian Gillette**  
*St. Andrews Middle School*



Mr. Gillette teaches 7<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies with his Mentor Teacher, Ms. Stephanie Roberts, at St. Andrews Middle School. Mr. Gillette has enjoyed his experience at St. Andrews and with the APEC program. Mr. Gillette recognizes the need for a Black male presence at St. Andrews and appreciates the relationships he has been able to build with the students who are looking for a positive role model like him.

*"I want to be Teacher of the Year my first year."  
- Mr. Gillette*

Mr. Willis teaches kindergarten with his Mentor Teacher, Ms. Maylena Garcia, at Arden Elementary School. Mr. Willis feels that, while the expectations for APEC Fellows are high, they are worth the effort because he feels like he is growing as an educator. This semester, Mr. Willis felt that he made the most growth in the area of classroom management and has a better understanding of how effective classroom leadership is important for his students to be able to learn and grow. Though an Atlanta, GA native, Mr. Willis has found a home in Columbia following his graduation from Benedict College. He is hoping to continue his professional journey at Arden Elementary upon completing his certification requirements.

**Mr. Shomari Willis**  
*Arden Elementary School*



*"I chose Early Childhood Education because I wanted to be able to impact students at an early age and set them on the right path. I chose a school like Arden because I also wanted to show young people that you do not have to be a statistic but can be anything you want."  
- Mr. Shomari Willis*

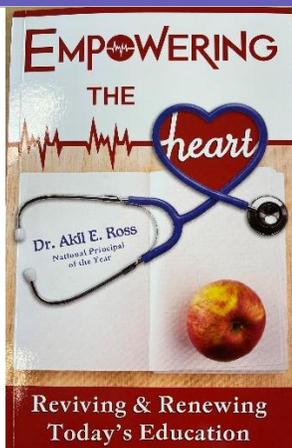
**Ms. Antionette Freeman**  
*John P. Thomas Elementary School*



Ms. Freeman and her Mentor Teacher, Mrs. Marjorie Whitaker, lead a kindergarten classroom at John P. Thomas Elementary School. Ms. Freeman's students had plenty to say about how much they have enjoyed having both Ms. Freeman and Mrs. Whitaker as their teachers. Ms. Freeman's students enjoy her energy and think she is a great teacher!

*"Ms. Freeman is a good teacher; she is fun but also makes sure we are always learning."  
- Kindergarten student*

## APEC Summit on Teaching and Mentoring



We were excited to welcome Dr. Akil E. Ross to campus in June 2020 as our keynote speaker for the APEC Center's annual Summit on Teaching and Mentoring. Dr. Ross's presentation centered our hearts and minds on the "Why" behind our work in schools. Dr. Ross inspired Fellows to pour their hearts into their work so they could transform school culture and enrich the student experience.

Each Fellow in Cohorts 3 and 4 received a copy of Dr. Ross's book, *Empowering the Heart*.

## FALL 2021 GRADUATES

We congratulate the following Cohort 3 Fellows on completing their graduate coursework in Innovation and Divergent Learning this semester:

Jessica Bagwell  
Charline Binder  
Rhoda Bowers  
Kimberly Carroll  
Amanda Curfman  
Schantain Ellis-Robinson  
Octavia Greene  
Cherish Jenkins  
Erial Maple  
Elizabeth Mills  
Teon Petree  
Stacey Richardson  
Cheryl Rowe  
Greer Seay  
Brenda Shultz  
Marietta Wider



We are excited to witness how our educators continue to innovate in the classroom and create learning opportunities that are accessible and enriching for all students.

Congratulations to our APEC Fellows! We are so proud of you!



We are currently recruiting for our next cohort of APEC Fellows!  
The application deadline is January 15, 2022.

[Apply Now](#)

# Cohort 3 Graduates Presenting Their Applied Learning Experience (ALE)





## SHARING THE GOOD NEWS...

In the summer of 2018, the APEC program began with a cohort of 16 Fellows. Since then, we have worked with more than 90 APEC Fellows, 48 of whom are teaching in South Carolina public schools. The others, including our cohort 4 fellows, are completing the course modules and certification requirements. We are proud to be growing the next generation of teacher leaders!



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES POLISHING YOUR PERFORMANCE SERIES

We are excited to continue our Polishing Your Performance (PYP) Series this year. This fall, we welcomed Dr. Jessica Berry from SC State University, Mrs. Esther Clervaud with Heritage AcceptED, and Ms. Laresha McDaniel, Sumter County School District. These educators shared their expertise and experiences with our Fellows and mentor teachers. They were inspiring and informative! Join us for more PYP sessions this spring:

January 21: Mindfulness for Educators with Todd Scholl

February 10: Cultural sensitivity for LGBTQIA+ students with Suzanne Snyder

March 15: We Expect Great Things... with Robert Lominack

Looking for an inspiring, empowering professional development opportunity...

Join us on March 26, 2021 for the APEC Center's Professional Development Day

Keynote speaker: Dr. James Ellerbe



**“Empowering Environments to Grow - Oh the Places You Will GO!”**  
*Don't Underestimate the Power of Culture and Climate during Transformation*

Dr. James Ellerbe is an experienced teacher and educational leader. He most recently served as the Superintendent of the Innovative School District and the Director of Alternative Learning Programs & Schools for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Dr. Ellerbe has a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership from North Carolina State University. He also completed the Harvard University Turnaround District and School Leaders Academy and was recognized with the Excellence in Education Leadership Award from the University Council on Education Administration (UCEA).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- January 8: First BEI Spring workshop
- January 15: Application deadline for Cohort 5
- January 17: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service
- March 26: Spring Professional Development Day

*Need help with the Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) Exam?*

*Register for our next workshop!*

[Click here to learn more](#)