COMMUNITY LITERACY SUMMIT 2020

READY TO READ, READY TO SUCCEED:
DEVELOPING LITERACY BIRTH TO FIVE

FRIDAY
02.28.20
Dr. Keisha Siriboe is a scholar, researcher, and international advocate of literacy education and student leadership development. It is her honor to share her insights on early childhood literacy and parent-child reading aloud with the leadership community of West Michigan.

Through Dr. Siriboe’s TEDx talks, international conference lectures, research, and programmatic work, she brings a diverse perspective to educational research and leadership development. As the first African-American to earn a master’s from Beijing Normal University in Beijing, China and the first African-American to earn a Ph.D. from the University of Hong Kong, Dr. Siriboe is a globally respected scholar with several academic awards to her name. She has served in leadership capacities with the American Education Research Association (AERA) and with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Education 2030 Project.

Professionally, Dr. Siriboe worked as the Director of Literacy Content and Programming at Reading is Fundamental in Washington DC and now serves as the inaugural Director of the ROX Institute in Columbus, Ohio. The ROX – Ruling Our eXperiences (ROX) – Institute is the world’s first multidisciplinary research and training institute focused on girls. The ROX Institute provides a research and training infrastructure to systematically educate adults who want to be more aware, empowering and supportive of the girls in their lives.
#literacysummit2020

7:30 AM  Registration and Light Breakfast

8:30 AM  Opening Remarks
Dr. Wendy V. Falb  
*Executive Director,  
Literacy Center of West Michigan*

Ms. Dawne Bell  
*Chief Executive Officer,  
Early Childhood Investment Corporation*

8:45 AM  Keynote Presentation  
underwritten by PNC Bank
Dr. Keisha Siriboe  
*Director, ROX Institute for Research and Training*

Introduced by  
Mr. Sean P. Welsh  
PNC Bank West Michigan Regional President

9:40–10:25 AM  Breakout Session I

10:40–11:25 AM  Breakout Session II

11:35 AM-12:10 PM  Facilitated Networking
Please sit at the table indicated on your name tag.  
Following the facilitated networking, guests will be dismissed by table to pick up boxed lunches.

12:15 PM  Lunch and Panel Discussion
Dr. Rebecca Brinks  
*Chair, Child Development and Education  
Department at Grand Rapids Community College*

Ms. Mina Hong  
*Senior Policy Manager, Ounce of Prevention Fund*

Dr. Iheoma U. Iruka  
*Chief Research Innovation Officer  
Director, The Center for Early Education Research and Evaluation  
HighScope Educational Research Foundation*

Ms. Denise L. Smith  
*Implementation Director, Hope Starts Here:  
Detroit Early Learning Partnership*

*Moderated by  
Ms. Latesha Lipscomb  
Engagement and Relationships Manager, Amplify GR*

1:30 PM  Call to Action and Closing Remarks
**Break Out Sessions**

**Courageous Literacy Teaching**

**MAIN ROOM**

Dr. Keisha Siriboe  
*Director*  
ROX Institute for Research and Training

In this session, Dr. Siriboe will provide suggestions for creating a literacy environment where adults and children feel safe to expose their vulnerabilities and highlight learning opportunities when using culturally competent picture books. Participants will have the opportunity to think critically about the barriers families face when engaging in early childhood literacy, and share successful techniques they have used to support parents/caregivers as the first teachers. Dr. Siriboe will discuss read aloud strategies for developing critical thinking skills during early childhood with a special emphasis on parent-child reading aloud. Attendees will also experience engaging read aloud activity suggestions to reinforce literacy learning objectives, with time set aside for audience Q&A.

**Advocating to Help Children Thrive**

**ROOM NUMBER: 201**

Jayme Vosovic  
*West Michigan Community Engagement Specialist*  
Michigan League for Public Policy

Dwayne Barnes  
*Detroit Metro Area Community Engagement Specialist*  
Michigan League for Public Policy

The Michigan League for Public Policy is a leader in the comprehensive analysis of poverty and the impact of state and federal budgets on residents with low incomes in Michigan. With a lens on racial equity and the use of data, this session will share the MLPP policy priorities that will support children’s success in school. Focus areas include resources for schools with the greatest disparities, creating a prenatal to third grade reading initiative, and increasing parental engagement and involvement. Finally, the session will include ideas on how the community can help advocate for policies that impact and improve the lives of children and families in Michigan.
Increasing the Odds for Literacy Success: Mobilizing Efforts Around What Matters Most

ROOM NUMBER: 215 A

Chana Edmond-Verley
CEO
Camp Fire West Michigan 4C

Madonna Princer
Executive Director
Head Start for Kent County

Abby D’Addario
Librarian/Early Literacy Specialist
KDL Wyoming Branch

Tomarra Richardson
Parent Liaison
Great Start Parent Coalition

Tequia Adams
Baby Scholars Supervisor
Spectrum Health

Getting all kids ready to read requires a targeted community effort. How do we activate all “change agents” inclusive of parents/caregivers? How do we surface what matters most in early literacy success and make that common knowledge to all? How do we mobilize the entire community for mutually reinforcing action? This session will share “Success Basics: The Kent County Way,” a community weaving and collective impact effort to cultivate the power of families to influence early literacy success. Learn about integrating common messaging, evidenced-informed strategies, and ecological saturation. Understand the powerful benefits to children and families as systems players in the early childhood sector team up with parent leaders in this cross-sector change effort.

Playing Your Way to Literacy and School Readiness

ROOM NUMBER: 215 H

Kathleen Neumann
Child Development Community Liaison
GRCC Early Childhood Learning Laboratory

Rebecca Keller
Early Learning Coach
GRCC Early Childhood Learning Laboratory

Parents and caregivers are a child’s first and best teacher—and playmate. This session will highlight the concept of “Play and Learn Groups” that are offered in eleven sites throughout the Grand Rapids community. These play based groups offer young children opportunities to engage in developmentally appropriate play activities that support literacy development and school readiness. They also incorporate the Success Basics and align activities with the State of Michigan Early Childhood standards. Presenters will demonstrate a Play and Learn session and share activities that are easily replicated in the home with materials that families likely already have.
Unite for Literacy: A Movement to Bring Books to Young Children in Multiple Languages

ROOM NUMBER: 421, Fourth Floor

Kathryn Ohle, Ph.D
Program Director, Early Childhood Education
Grand Valley State University

Research shows that homes with books that are used, enjoyed, and discussed are homes where children experience success in school and beyond. Research also validates the importance of providing books that are linguistically and culturally relevant to a child’s lived experience. This session will introduce participants to “Unite for Literacy,” a non-profit organization that provides hundreds of original books in 30 different languages through a free digital library. The books reinforce vocabulary and concepts that are traditionally addressed within the first five years of a child’s life. The presenter has first-hand experience using this program with native children in rural Alaska. Learn how families and children can engage with reading or listening to the text together.
Ensuring Excellence and Addressing Inequities in Early Childhood Education for Black Children

ROOM NUMBER: 201

Iheoma U. Iruka, Ph.D.
Chief Research Innovation Officer
Director, The Center for Early Education Research and Evaluation
HighScope Educational Research Foundation

As early as 24 months, Black children, especially boys, are likely to show lower literacy skills compared to their White peers. Concentrated attention is beginning to focus on how early childhood programs and services can best be strengthened to be more effective for these children. However, early education programs cannot address the gender/race/income gap without attending to systematic inequities like discrimination and racism often seen in the different familial and social challenges experienced by young Black children, their families and their communities. In addition to providing data on risk indicators, this presentation will look at how early education programs can use Black children’s assets to support their development and learning and eventually excellence and life success.

A Deep Dive into Kent ISD’s Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) Results and the Implications for Early Literacy Development

ROOM NUMBER: 215 A

Sunil Joy
Research Data Analyst
Kent ISD
—
Kelli Brockway
Director of Teaching and Learning
Kent ISD
—
Mark Raffler
Educational Consultant
Kent ISD

All public school districts are now required to administer the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) to incoming kindergarten students. The KRA is designed to measure a child’s preparedness for kindergarten using a whole child approach, including academic, social, motor, and executive functional skills. Never before has there been a standardized, district-wide assessment to gauge the readiness of incoming kindergarten students. This session will provide an overview of the 2018-19 KRA results for public schools within Kent ISD. Participants will learn more about the assessment and its broader implications for student learning, with a specific focus on supporting early literacy development.
Family Engagement Strategies Across Language and Culture

ROOM NUMBER: 215 H

Susan V. Piazza, Ph.D.
Professor of Literacy Studies
Western Michigan University

Selena Protacio, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Literacy Studies
Western Michigan University

Virginia David, Ph.D.
Faculty Specialist I, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
Western Michigan University

Magda Tigchelaar, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
Western Michigan University

Building on the knowledge a child already possesses is educational best practice, therefore it is essential that educators engage with a child’s culture and community. Presenters will share current findings from an in-progress federally funded study titled Project English Learners and Teacher Education (ELATE), which supports in-service teachers in their efforts to increase family and community engagement, specifically targeting English learners. A “funds of knowledge framework” will be used to examine the importance of integrating learners’ lived experiences in the design of curriculum and instruction and school-based decisions. Participants will learn to apply the funds of knowledge framework as they think about designing action plans that will authentically engage family members/caregivers in their schools.

Reach Out and Read, a Prescription for Potential

ROOM NUMBER: 421, Fourth Floor

Donna Lowry, MD
President/CEO
Ready for School

Jeran Culina
Education Research and Project Manager
Talent 2025

In Michigan, approximately 93% of children see a primary care provider at least once a year in the first five years of their lives, and most children participate in more than 10 well child visits (WCV) before they start school. This presentation will introduce the national Reach Out and Read (ROR) model, a program designed to provide children with free books during their WCVs. ROR is a cost-effective, evidence-based, and far-reaching program that engages health care providers in two-generation literacy strategy. Presenters will discuss the power of introducing a book into daily family routines, modeling simple early literacy tools, and affirming adult behaviors in promoting literacy rich homes.
Early intervention is the best way to address children’s reading difficulties, but this intervention will not succeed unless it also addresses appropriate language development. This session will examine a hierarchy of language development as well as the five components of reading in an effort to explain why some children are slower to respond to interventions. Attendees will learn concrete activities that will strengthen language development and early reading skills including phonological awareness through play. Finally, this session will cover early warning signs exhibited by children who are predisposed to dyslexia and will offer concrete recommendations for securing appropriate interventions and services.
Our panel will tackle the issue of kindergarten readiness and grade level reading from a variety of perspectives. Audience members will have an opportunity to ask questions during the discussion.

**Panel Members**

**Moderator: Ms. Latesha Lipscomb**
Latesha is a Grand Rapids native who has a passion for working hard to better the lives of underprivileged families in the city’s urban core. She is a single mom who understands the trials and triumphs that come along with parenthood. Latesha has been a dedicated Parent Representative in the state of Michigan for eight years and proudly describes herself as an early childhood champion. Latesha has served as an advisor for several organizations and initiatives including the Great Start Collaborative, Strong Beginnings, the Infant Heath Impact team and the Early Childhood Investment Corporation. She has become a strong advocate for parents in the city’s most vulnerable communities. Her goals in this process are derived out of the desire to lift up parent voices and help others build leadership capacity in the home first. Through these collaborations, Latesha’s body of work is a shining example of what authentic parent engagement looks like and what everyday people can achieve when parents are viewed as partners.

**Ms. Mina Hong**
Mina is Senior Policy Manager on the Ounce of Prevention Fund’s National Policy Team. The Ounce gives children in poverty the best chance for success in school and in life by advocating for and providing the highest-quality early care and education. The National Policy Team provides support to state and local early childhood leaders to bolster the policies and investments that create high-functioning, high-quality state and local cross-sector early childhood systems. Previously, Mina was a Senior Policy Associate at Michigan’s Children, a policy advocacy organization focused on children’s issues from cradle to career, where she played a key role in state budget and policy wins for families with young children.

**Dr. Iheoma U. Iruka**
Iheoma is the Chief Research Innovation Officer and Director of The Center for Early Education Research and Evaluation at HighScope, providing strategic direction and leading national and local projects. As a developmental psychologist, Iheoma is engaged in numerous projects and initiatives focused on how evidence-informed policies and systems can support the optimal development of young children of color and children from low-wealth households. Before joining HighScope, she was at FPG Child Development Institute at the University of UNC-Chapel Hill and the Buffett Institute at the University of Nebraska.
Ms. Denise L. Smith
Denise is the first implementation director of Hope Starts Here Detroit Early Childhood Partnership. Denise has a wealth of experience as an early childhood leader in Detroit and throughout the state of Michigan, rooted in her deep, personal commitment to children, families, and community. Her visionary leadership is propelling the implementation of Hope Starts Here to new levels of effectiveness. Denise is a native Detroiter, and for more than six years has focused her efforts on collaborative, community-based work to improve the early childhood education and care system for children and families in our most vulnerable communities. She also sits as a co-chair of the executive committee for Michigan’s Pritzker Prenatal-to-Age-Three grant and serves as one of 13 appointees to Michigan’s PreK-12 Literacy Commission.

Dr. Rebecca Brinks
Rebecca is the Director of the Education/Child Development Program at Grand Rapids Community College. She served as the Project Manager for two multimillion dollar Early Reading First grants that brought together Grand Rapids community partners including Grand Rapids Public Schools, Head Start, and faith based programs. These grants focused on using a coaching model to support a child centered approach to embed literacy in all aspects of the curriculum and classroom routines. Throughout her 34 years at GRCC she has had the opportunity to speak at many state, national and international conferences. She has visited and been inspired by many early childhood programs such as Reggio in Italy, the original Maria Montessori center in Rome, nature based programs in New Zealand, and other excellent programs here in the United States. Some of these inspirations are visible in the Fratzke Early Childhood Learning Laboratory building that opened three years ago on the GRCC campus.
Literacy Center of West Michigan

Founded in 1986, the Literacy Center of West Michigan is one of the largest community based organizations serving the English language literacy needs of adults. At the forefront of adult literacy education, our programs meet learners where they are, offering one-on-one tutoring, employment-focused classes, and family literacy opportunities at no cost to the learners. The Community Literacy Initiative is part of this work, convening literacy providers to align efforts and accelerate improvements of literacy levels in our community.

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