

Speaker abstracts:

- 1) **Speaker:** Dr Jennie Weiner Associate Professor of Educational Leadership, University of Connecticut.

Title: A Study of Black Female Principals Leading through Twin Pandemics

Description: In 2020, the U.S. experienced twin pandemics disproportionately impacting BIPOC communities and their schools and school systems— one new, COVID-19 and, one longstanding –white supremacy and anti-Black racism. This phenomenological study of 20 Black, female principals in two states provides insights into how these leaders, who so often center racial justice and caring for BIPOC children and communities in their leadership practice, grappled with these pandemics and how doing so impacted their understanding of their leadership and work. Findings suggest diverse and nuanced responses spanning from hopefulness to resignation as well as the urge to fight in new and more powerful ways. These findings have implications regarding how to best prepare, support, and sustain Black, female leaders and their work and to dismantle discriminatory structures responsible for these pandemics' and their disproportionate results.

- 2) **Speaker;** Audrey Johnson, Director of Early Help and Children's Health London Borough of Newham

Title: Leading from pain and trauma to an emerging future.

My journey as a black senior leader, was powerful both professionally and personally. As a senior leader I worked to provide services to young people who were exploited. Who rather than afforded the protection of safeguarding legislation faced criminal justice sanctions. Fighting the tolerance of the poor educational outcomes, social exclusion, deaths and *incarnation* of black boys. The week following the death of George Floyd, in the middle of lockdown, I joined a new organisation. I became a senior leader of frontline health and social care services in area of London ravished by COVID at a time when black staff were no longer able to ignore the strength of the feelings they had, but rarely raised in relation to their own experience. Disproportionate numbers of black people were catching and dying of COVID causing the escalating feelings of anxiety and fear. Now I listened to staff who, had fought tirelessly to give disenfranchised children a voice began to express their own pain. The Black Lives Matter movement gave voice to pain and trauma of racism, racial inequalities and disproportionately that COVID amplified and gave rise to the potential for change. The tolerances of old are being challenged and change in our organisation's support of structural racism have started to be dismantled. Moving beyond a reliance on unconscious bias training as the only mechanism for change to a dogged pursuit of ...

- 3) **Speakers:** Juliet Perumal & Felicia Williams, University of Johannesburg, Department of Education Leadership & Management

Title: Female Principals Leading Education in the time of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Description

Drawing on critical feminist theoretical insights, this qualitative study recruits women principals in South Africa, who are currently leading their schools during the COVID -19 pandemic. Employing various online data generation strategies the study explores the experiences of South African women principals to determine what personal and professional challenges they experience during the COVID-19 crises; how contextual factors such as geographical location, the socio-economic status of parents, parental involvement and

resource availability influenced/influence their leadership effectiveness during COVID-19. The study further aimed to determine how COVID-19 affected their leadership styles: philosophies; and responses during the reintegration of staff and learners into the school post the national lockdown.