

Needham Diversity Summit 5.0 Panelists and Presenters

Jamele Adams is Dean of Student Life at Brandeis University. He has responsibility for the quality of undergraduate and graduate student life outside the classroom, and he is the senior advocate for students and the programs and services provided to them. He is also a celebrated poet, well known in New York and Boston area for his work leading workshops dealing with issues of diversity.

Tracy McKay lives in Needham with her husband and three children, two of whom are transgender. She is a former social worker and is currently a KASE teacher here in town.

Manuel J Fernandez is Head of School at Cambridge Street Upper School in Cambridge, MA. He was the METCO Director in Wayland for 12 years and served as President of the METCO Directors Association. Manuel also works as a Cultural Proficiency Consultant for ManDez Group.

Michelle Dhanda is an attorney and a real estate agent. Michelle has had the opportunity to live in and visit many places around the world, including Ethiopia, Egypt, France, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Greece. She is white and has two Black children. She and her family recently moved to Boston from Needham to live in a more diverse area.

LaToya Rivers is a Needham METCO Graduate and lifelong Dorchester Resident. She now serves as the Weston METCO Program Director and High School Academic Liaison. Before coming to Weston in September 2013, she served as the METCO Academic Advisor for Grades 5-8 in the Lincoln Public Schools. Ms. Rivers earned an MA in Education and a BA in Ethic, Social and Political Philosophy from UMass, Boston. She is currently enrolled in the Principal and Supervisor Licensure Program at Curry College.

Dr. Joanne Allen-Willoughby became the Director of the Needham Public Schools METCO Program in 2009. As a graduate of Needham Public Schools, Dr. Allen-Willoughby brings over twenty years of experience and commitment to the

education and social/emotional wellbeing of students in grades K-12. Through her past work as Director of the Victory Generation After School Program, and founding Partner of the WAVE Institute, she continues to dedicate herself to creating culturally proficient environments, which prepare students for a global society.

Cary Weir-Lytle is Associate Director of Employee Relations at Brandeis University. He has developed institutional partnerships and programs that created access to jobs, internships and scholarships for underrepresented students and professionals as vice president of student affairs for the Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting (ALPFA) and assistant director of graduate admission for Bentley University's McCallum Graduate School of Business. Cary has also served as co-chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee, Community Service Committee and Professional Exchange Committee.

Zerinee Depina is a senior at Needham High School, and has been enrolled in Needham public schools as a METCO student since kindergarten. She is one of the captains of Bomb Squad this year and is hoping to pursue a career in nursing after attending college.