

Member Spotlight – Afrika Afeni Mills

Afrika Afeni Mills asked us to reconsider required reading at our 2019 conference. We caught up with her to learn more about her work to create more inclusive and considerate experiences for students.

The Bio: I've been an educator for over 20 years. I started out as a Teaching Assistant while I completed my M.Ed. in Elementary Teaching. After I earned my degree, I taught fourth and then fifth grade. I became an Instructional Coach, Teacher Developer, and Administrator. I'm now the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for BetterLesson. We provide student-centered professional development for educators across the United States.

An Influence: Paul Gorski, founder of the Equity Literacy Institute because he takes on deficit narratives about students, families, and communities, and focuses on helping educators to develop the skill and will to dismantle systemic injustices and oppression. He asks us to consider, "What are the knowledge and skills I need to become a threat to the existence of inequity in my sphere of influence?", and also to fix injustice, not kids.

A Go-to Strategy: Windows and Mirrors because it helps teachers to focus on ensuring that all students have opportunities to both see reflections of themselves in learning spaces and to learn about others, and I Wish My Teacher Knew because it helps teachers to focus on centering the voices of their students in the classroom.



A Favorite Book: If I were still in the classroom, I would want to engage students with books like Stamped: Antiracism, Racism and You, Just Mercy (Adapted for Young Adults): A True Story of the Fight for Justice, We Are Not Yet Equal: Understanding Our Racial Divide, and This Book is Antiracist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work. Our young people of all races need opportunities to develop a critical consciousness. I also love Elizabeth Acevedo's The Poet X, With the Fire on High and Clap When You Land.

Something Personal: I enjoy listening to audiobooks, and spending time with my husband and our two teens, especially as our daughter graduates from high school and is about to begin college. I've also been binge-watching Schitt's Creek. David Rose is my favorite :).