



THE NEW YORK STATE FOUNDATIONS
OF EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
53rd ANNUAL CONFERENCE
March 27-31, 2026



The Beautiful Struggle: Recommitting to Democracy (or something else) in Education

On-site at Rutgers Graduate School of Education, Room 124
10 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, New Jersey

9:00 AM REGISTRATION & REFRESHMENTS

9:15 AM WELCOME

FRIDAY

9:30 - 10:40 AM

Rhema Stradford-Dai: *Black Women's Educational Leadership in PK-12 Schools: Democratic, Justice-oriented, Opportunity-creating.* College of Staten Island/CUNY.

Tim Monreal: *"It's like they don't care at all": Latinx Teachers, COVID, and the Need for Just, Collective, and Relational Care For Democratic (Re)Imaginations.* The University at Buffalo (SUNY).

Sarah A. Robert, Heather McEntarfer, and Moza Coote: *Conceptualizing Teachers' Care Work: Lessons from Black Women and Trans- and Non-binary Teachers.* The University at Buffalo (SUNY), SUNY Fredonia, and NYC Public Schools.

10:50 - 11:40 PM

Ana Juliana (AJ) Borja and Amanda M. Kingston: *Possibilities and Constraints: Meaning-making and Barriers in Pre-service Teacher Education.* Syracuse University.

Abby Emerson: *Practicing Democracy: Critical Professional Development.* Touro University.

11:40 - 12:50 LUNCH

1:00 - 2:50 PM

Mark Garrison: *Democratic and Authoritarian Technologies: A Framework for Evaluating Artificial Intelligence in Education.* West Texas A&M University.

Samantha Chung: *Developing Humanizing Approaches to Data-Driven Decision Making: How Leadership Preparation*

Programs Can Cultivate Democratic Data Practices. CUNY Lehman College.

3:00 - 4:10 PM

Yudelka Garcia and Edward Lehner: *The Beautiful Struggle? Or the Degeneration of the Classroom: Democracy in the Age of Infinite Scroll.* Bronx Community College. CUNY.

Zahra Khodaverdi: *Dissenting to Transform: Iranian Female Students and the Beautiful Struggle for Educational Democracy.* Washington State University.

Michelle Macchia, Robert Zisk, Maqueda Randall-Weeks, Leslie Calabrese: *Supporting Pre-Service Teachers' Agency: Developing Educators as Change Agents.* Rutgers University.

4:20 - 4:40 PM

Gillian Ober: New Jersey State Teacher of the Year, Freehold Borough School District.

4:50 - 6:00 PM KEYNOTE

Greg Seals: *Committing to Elegant Schooling by Adopting a Theory of Educational Energy Development.* Rides Over Mountains Consultants.

SATURDAY

9:00 AM REGISTRATION & REFRESHMENTS

9:15 AM WELCOME

9:30 - 10:40 AM

Rhema Dai: *Thriving Against the Democratic Backdrop: Black Women's Leadership, Racial Justice, and the Reimagining of PK–12 Schooling.* University of Southern California.

Dalia Hassan: *Making Sense of Systemic Racism in a High School Biology Classroom: the 'Just Genetics' Unit.* Rutgers University.

Calder Beasley and Jaime Del Razo: *Everyone is Community': A district's community schools model response to changing migrant demographics in the northeast.* Vassar College.

10:50 - 12:00 PM

Calissa Brown: *Afterlives of the Plantation: Black Women's Narratives and the Geography of Academic Violence.* Syracuse University.

Vik Joshi and Amra Sabic-El-Rayess: *Reaffirming Non-Violence as the Heart of a Democratic Way of Life: Reimagining Violence Prevention Frameworks in American Classrooms.* Columbia University.

Etije Mehdori Walker and Amanda M. Kingston: *Multimodal expansions of dialogue: Gallery walks in an intergroup dialogue classroom.* Syracuse University.

12:00 - 1:30 LUNCH

1:40 - 2:50 PM

Plenary Session: *On the Social Foundations of Education.* Benjamin Justice (Rutgers University), Krystal Strong (Rutgers

University), Tim Monreal (University of Buffalo), and Briana Bivens (University of Florida).

3:00 - 4:10 PM

Carolyn Santangelo, Honora Lehner, and Edward Lehner: *A Beautiful Struggle? The Meaningful Challenge of Democratic Education: Engaged Literacy, Curriculum Narrowing, and Civic Dialogue in Middle School Classrooms.* The Visitation Program at Fontbonne Hall Academy and Bronx Community College, CUNY.

Brett Grant and Monica Torres: *Thriving Together: A Vision for Experiential, Project-Based, and Place-Based Approaches to Contribute to Workforce Development.* City University of New York, College of Staten Island and Rutgers University.

Julianne Park: *From Invisibility to the Center: Reimagining Culturally Relevant Education through AsianCrit.* New York University.

4:10 - 4:30 PM BREAK

4:40 - 5:50 PM

Vanessa McClowry: *Reimagining Kindergarten Content Blocks: Mindfulness Instruction as a Foundation for Learning.* Syracuse University.

Zeynep Can: *The American Scholar's Paradox.* Teachers College, Columbia University.

Briana Bivens: *Women, Children, and Movement-Building in Appalachia: The Struggle for Community-Controlled Childcare.* University of Florida.

VIRTUAL SESSIONS

SUNDAY, MARCH 29

6:00 - 7:00 PM

Jeonghee Choi: *Negotiating Gender in Childhood: Insights from Third Graders' Classroom Experiences.* Arkansas State University.

Dennis Assiam: *Enhancing Belonging: How Multicultural Centers Support Black Male Student Success at Predominantly White Institutions.* Florida International University.

Adele Weiner: *Social Justice and Equity: Development of an Advocacy Plan in Community Health.* Metropolitan College of New York.

7:15 - 8:30 PM

Isabella Trezza: *Reinterpreting Neuromyths as Epistemic Artifacts: Democracy, Knowledge and Meaning Making within Education.* Teachers College, Columbia University.

Fiona Myers Kanemura and Dania Dwyer: *Cultivating Democratic Dialogue: COIL Exchanges Between Texan and Japanese Students.* Shimonoseki City University (Japan) and Austin Community College.

Sarah A. Robert and Holly E. Marcolina: *Teachers' Workforce Knowledge.* University of Buffalo and SUNY-Potsdam.

Vi Trinh: *The Multiple Spaces of International Universities in Vietnam.* University of Buffalo.

Conference proceedings will be published in *Educational Abundance*, the journal of the New York State Foundations of Education Association. Contact: Greg Seals, Editor gbdseals2@yahoo.com
<https://nysfeajournal.org/>

MONDAY, MARCH 30

6:00 - 7:10 PM

Ritchy Hitoto: *Becoming Before Belonging: Personal Growth as the Hidden Curriculum of Democratic Education.* Concordia University Chicago.

Sarah A. Robert and Jennifer E. Gaddis: *Teaching School Food Politics for Intersectional Justice: A Social Foundations Approach.* University at Buffalo (SUNY) and University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Casey Jakubowski and Katie Spires: *Invisible fences: Privatizing Public Education.* Utica University.

Folakemi Williams: *Confidence, Competence, and Connection: Reality Pedagogy in Urban Classrooms.* The City College of New York.

7:15 - 8:30 PM

Lola-Dillon Cahill and Christina Wright Fields: *Critical Consciousness in the Age of AI.* Marist University.

Easton Davis: *Central New York's Educator of Color Dialogues: Co-Creating Online Community and Advancing Racial Equity.* Syracuse University.

Laura Shelton and Mikayla Keryc: *How are disaster studies, climate change, and K-12 teaching connected in the U.S.? Mapping interdisciplinary literature.* Marist University.

Meryem Mekouar: *Graduate Assistant Labor Concerns: Social Justice Perspectives.* Florida International University.

To register, scan the QR code or use this form:

<https://forms.gle/SyxrjvSZdSEBNTdZ8>

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