



# BEST PRACTICES CLEARINGHOUSE

- Lessons from the Field -

## Enhancing Student Nutrition and Physical Movement in America’s Schools

*Wednesday, April 12, 2023 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET*

*SPEAKER BIOS*

### Carlette KyserPegram

Education Specialist, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education



Ms. Carlette KyserPegram is an Education Program Specialist at the US Department of Education in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), Office of Safe and Supportive Schools where she serves as the lead for the School Climate Transformation (SCT) group. The work of the SCT groups embraces a variety of topics relative to student health, safety, and overall student well-being including school based mental health, violence prevention, school climate, emergency preparedness, environmental health, and human trafficking. Prior to working in OESE, Ms. KyserPegram worked in the Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education and prior to then was a high school English, Language and Linguistics, and Literary Studies teacher.

### Dr. Sarah Sliwa

Health Scientist, CDC Healthy Schools, Division of Population Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



Dr. Sarah Sliwa is a health scientist with CDC Healthy Schools in the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion where her portfolio includes conducting research, nurturing partnerships, and providing technical assistance to support physical activity and healthy eating in out-of-school time (OST) settings. In this role, she also serves as a scientific consultant for a demonstration project that applies a mentoring model to integrate physical activity, mindful eating, and SEL skill development into an afterschool program

for middle school students. She earned a PhD in Food Policy and Applied Nutrition from Tufts University.

## Katey Halasz

Nutritionist, Nutrition Education and Promotion Branch, Food and Nutrition Service, Child Nutrition Programs, United States Department of Agriculture



Ms. Katey Halasz is currently a Registered Dietitian with the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. In this role, she has worked on the development of resources and training materials for USDA Child Nutrition Programs, including the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the National School Lunch Program.

Prior to joining USDA, Ms. Halasz served as a Content Specialist for Nemours Children's Health System on a childhood obesity prevention project that assisted early care and education sites in adopting best practices related to nutrition, physical activity, screen time, and breastfeeding support within their programs. She has also conducted nutrition workshops for children and families participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program as an Extension Agent with the Cooperative Extension Service in Washington, DC. Ms. Halasz completed her Bachelors of Science and dietetic internship through Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and received her Masters of Public Health from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

## Jeffery Murrie

Farm to School Coordinator, Florence One Schools, Briggs Elementary School, Florence, SC



Mr. Jeffery Murrie attended The Matthew Whaley School in Williamsburg, Virginia and moved to Florence in the 5th grade and attended schools in Florence School District One. After high school, he traveled "far away" to attend Francis Marion College. He left FMC with a deep love and respect for the study and research associated with the field of history. In 2015, Briggs was awarded a grant from the South Carolina Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture to establish a farm at Briggs. Over the past few years, they have been fortunate to expand the Farm at Briggs to include an additional garden, chicken coop, and recently, a satellite garden at Lucas Park, as well as the only classroom observation beehive in the Pee Dee region.

Mr. Murrie holds a BA in History from Francis Marion, and he is actively involved in social and community organizations. He is a graduate of the South Carolina Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom Institute, a certificate in GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) from Clemson University and the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, School Gardening for South Carolina Educators from

Clemson Extension, 2017-2018 Florence County 4H Volunteer Service Award, and recently returned from Shelburne Farm in Vermont where I completed the course Cultivating Joy and Wonder for Early Learners.

Mr. Murrie never witnessed students become as excited and engaged in a subject as he has seen in Farm to School. Many parents have said, "My child comes home every week excited about all the amazing things they have learned in Ag Ed!" Students are able to use all five senses as they explore and learn about agriculture. Hopefully, we can influence children to engage with the environment around them more than a handheld device!

## Laura Beckmann

Consultant for Training and Technical Assistance, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, MO



Mrs. Laura Beckmann brings experience and leadership from diverse levels of education. Followed by 28 years of educational service in public schools as a teacher and K-12 curriculum coordinator, Mrs. Beckmann performed duties as an adjunct professor for the University of Missouri St. Louis and most recently acted as the Director of Missouri Healthy Schools for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MO DESE). She continues to be heavily involved in the fields of Health, Physical Education, and Wellness consulting at the local, state, and national levels.

Among the many contributions during her career, Mrs. Beckmann has been awarded numerous local, state, and federal grants to improve wellness within schools and the communities they served. The documented success in data-based project outcomes of multiple projects that have served as models across the state, has contributed to many publications, the delivery of various workshops and the attraction of consultant services in the development of curriculum, grant and data programming and reporting, and school health and wellness initiatives. Due to the positive results of this work, Mrs. Beckmann has received many awards for her achievements and involvement in the areas of Health, Physical Education and Wellness.

Mrs. Beckmann completed her undergraduate education at Missouri State University in Springfield, MO, her M.A in Curriculum and Instruction at University of Saint Mary in Kansas, and her M.A. in School Administration from Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri.

## Audra Walters

Senior Manager, Healthy Schools, SHAPE America



Ms. Audra Walters currently serves as the Senior Manager of Healthy Schools for SHAPE America (Society of Health and Physical Educators). Ms. Walters previously led SHAPE America's cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention focusing on physical education and physical activity and now supports administrator-capacity building efforts. She works to promote K-12 school health programming and policies, specifically by supporting standards-based health education and physical education and works with the task force to revise the National Health Education Standards and supports content development through multiple program councils through SHAPE America.

Previously, Audra was the Director of Coordinated School Health at the Arkansas Department of Education; Injury Prevention Coordinator at Arkansas Children's Hospital; and the School Health Advisor at the Arkansas Department of Health. Audra holds a bachelor's degree in Exercise Science and a Master of Science degree in Health Science, both from the University of Central Arkansas, and is a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES).

## Dr. Ellen Essick

Section Chief, NC Healthy Schools, NC Department of Public Instruction, NC



Dr. Ellen Essick, PhD, is the Section Chief for the NC Healthy Schools Section at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, where she oversees health, physical education, middle school athletics, school counseling, school social work and three federal grants. She has extensive experience working with K-12 schools on a variety of topics, including non-academic drivers of student success, community partnerships, staff wellness, and educator training. She earned her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations from the University of North Carolina Greensboro and holds teaching licenses in biology and school health. Before coming to DPI, she served as the National School Employee Wellness manager for the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. Prior to that role she was on the faculty at the University of North Carolina Greensboro and prepared teachers for careers in health.

## Demetrius Napolitano

Founder, Fostering Meditation, NY



Mr. Demetrius Napolitano was placed in New York City’s foster care system when he was two years old, and after experiencing 30 different placements, he transitioned from the system when he was 22 years old. He was adopted at the age of ten and then placed back into foster care three years later before getting adopted again at the age of 20. During his time in care, he was physically, mentally, and sexually abused; placed on psychotropic medications to treat depression and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and experienced a short stay inside a juvenile detention for a few months before deciding to take charge of his life.

After graduating from St. John’s University with his associates in business management, he graduated from New York University with his bachelor’s in political science. In 2019, he started a GoFundMe, raised over \$17,000, and traveled to India to study how to use Meditation and Yoga to help him heal from the complex trauma he incurred from the foster and criminal justice system. Once Mr. Napolitano returned from his sojourn in June 2020, he founded Fostering Meditation (FM) to help youth in foster care learn the same tools he would later call “The Five Steps 2 Wellness”: Meditation, Yoga, Expressive Writing, Community, & Nutrition. Demetrius envisions bringing FM to youth in foster care throughout the country, creating more communities of people who are breathing, meditating, and healing together!