

PRESENTER BIOS

Ridwanah Alladin	Ridwanah Alladin is an educator, mother of 3, and future author, God willing! She was born in Queens, NY and attended both private and public educational institutions throughout elementary, middle and high school in Florida, North Carolina and New York. Currently, Ms. Alladin teaches second grade at Bayaan Academy in Tampa. As an aspiring author, she hopes to one day see her children and other Guyanese and Muslim children represented more authentically in books and other literature- even if she must write it herself!
Amy Allman	Amy Allman is the Southwest Florida coordinator for the Office of Student Learning at Step Up for Students and has been working there since 2018. She has been in the field of education for 18 years. Amy also has experience as a 3rd grade classroom teacher, a Resource Teacher for Collier County Public Schools, a university instructor, and a Gifted Education Coordinator providing county wide professional development as well as gifted education services within the Montgomery County Public School District in Virginia. Amy holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and communications from Western Michigan University and received her teaching license and master's degree in Educational Leadership and Administration from Radford University in Virginia.
W. Drew Andrews, EdD.	Dr. W. Drew Andrews is the Technical Assistance Coordinator at the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities. His career includes teaching secondary special education, statewide transition technical assistance provider, Transition Coordinator in a large school district, and Special Education Director.
Laura Ansteatt	Laura Ansteatt, Elementary School Team Lead at Frameworks of Tampa Bay, has experience teaching preschool and VPK in Maryland and Florida and as a middle school elective teacher for 6th-, 7th-, and 8th-grade students in Hillsborough County. Laura has also served as both a family support coordinator and a case manager for programs providing resources for family and school support as well as parenting and early intervention support to families in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties. In her role at Frameworks, Laura leads a team supporting research-based SEL programming in elementary schools.
Dr. Lauren Barlis	Lauren Barlis has been at Step Up since 2013 and is currently working as the Director of Learning Management in their Office of Student Learning. Prior to joining the organization, Lauren Barlis taught English Language Arts and Theatre to high school students outside of Baltimore, MD. Lauren has a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, a M.Ed. in English Education, and a B.S. in Journalism, all from the University of Florida (Go Gators!).
Jamila Beckford	Jamila Beckford began working as a Student Learning Coordinator in the Office of Student Learning in October of 2018. Prior to joining the organization, Jamila taught elementary school for nine years, served as a Reading Coach for 2 years and ended her 16-year career with Miami-Dade County Public Schools as an Assistant Principal. Ms. Beckford grew up in Miami, Florida and attended school in the Miami-Dade County Public School District, graduating from Saint Andrew's School in Boca Raton, FL. She received her undergraduate degree

	from Rollins College in Elementary Education. Ms. Beckford earned her master's degree in Educational Administration from Nova Southeastern University.
Marie Bestman	Marie Bestman is the Broward County Coordinator for the Office of Student Learning at Step Up For Students. She started working for the organization in 2016. She has been in the field of education for over eight years. In her time in the field, she has worked as a 5th grade teacher with Miami Dade Public Schools, a general education 1st and 2nd grade teacher and a school principal at a private Christian school in Miami. Prior to working in the school system, Marie worked concurrently as an AmeriCorps member and a Site Director of an after care and summer enrichment literary program called Freedom Schools, serving over 2,500 scholars from Preschool through 8th grade, over the course of 5 years. Marie holds a Bachelors in Elementary Education and a master's in special education from Saint Thomas University.
Michael Bonner	Mr. Bonner is an inspiring teacher, known for his work at North Carolina's South Greenville Elementary, where most students have strenuous familial dynamics, and some are homeless. The school is 100% FRL (free and reduced lunch) and is in a marginalized neighborhood in Eastern North Carolina. With only six years in K-12 education, Mr. Bonner is consistently seen as a visionary leader who strives to create a positive mindset among all his students. He understands that his students come to class each day with diverse backgrounds, strengths, needs, and challenges, and seeks to identify strategies to ensure the growth of their social, emotional, academic, and psychological needs. Because of his approach to education, students leave feeling a little more hopeful, challenged, inspired, and forever a part of Bonnerville!
Selena Bowe	Principal Selena Bowe has over 20 years of experience in public and private schools, as a speech language pathologist, assistant principal, and principal. For the last five years, Ms. Bowe has been the principal of a preschool through eighth grade Orthodox Jewish School, located in Ormond Beach. Ms. Selena Bowe has been a sitting member of the Harvard University Advisory Board for the last seven years. Ms. Bowe also has served nine years as a group facilitator for the Principals' Center for the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. An advocate for children and a passion to grow teachers, she has worked tirelessly to be a change agent within the walls of schools and classrooms.
Siomara Bridges-Mata	Siomara Bridges-Mata works as Frameworks High School Team Lead, supporting the organization's high school partners with SEL program implementation. Her experience includes coordinating in-school and after-school programs for New York City Public Schools, facilitating professional development workshops, faculty advising, and teaching dance as a form of empowerment to adults and children both nationally and internationally.
Mollie Brown-Ferrier	Ms. Mollie Brown-Ferrier is a Supported Employer and Supported Living Liaison for the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. She is also a Certified Trainer and Certified Workforce Professional for the State of Florida. She has been with the State of Florida over 15 year as a Certified Trainer and Certified Workforce Professional at APD and the Department of Economic Opportunity (CareerSource). Much of her time is spent in the community educating individuals and families about the services APD can provide.
Michael A. Burroughs	Michael Burroughs is a staunch advocate of faith-based education and has served the educational community as an instructor, administrator, and consultant for over twenty-five years. Michael currently serves as the Executive

	Director of the League of Christian Schools, an accrediting agency that supports Christian schools worldwide.
Ryan Candler	We are Microsoft Innovative Educators empowering educators with the tools and resources to incorporate/strengthen the digital skills and digital learning in the classroom.
Franklin Coker	Franklin Coker has been part of Project 10 as a Regional Transition Representative for over two years, serving ten Florida districts. Born and raised in Central Florida, he attended University of Florida and University of Central Florida, earning his Educational Specialist degree in School Psychology at UCF in 2005. Franklin has been in education for over 17 years, having served as a high school math teacher, school psychologist and district administrator for special education prior to his current role with Project 10.
Anne Coughlin	Anne Coughlin is the coordinator of Potentia Academy's innovative Transitions Program named CCREST (College & Career Readiness for Students in Transition).
Stacy D'Angelo	As a classroom teacher, Stacy D'Angelo built relationships with her students by listening to and respecting their opinions and feelings. Stacy was able to utilize multiple teaching strategies to best meet the needs of all her students to develop their excitement for learning. As a Professional Development Specialist, Stacy holds fast to these ideals, promoting high levels of engagement through hands-on experiences and collaboration.
Mata Dennis	Mata Dennis is currently the Special Projects Coordinator for the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County where she implements the Artist in Residence program and LENA Grow. She has an M. Ed. in Education and holds a Florida teaching certificate in Pre-K/Primary and ESE. She spent eight years as the Executive Director for a non-profit private school and childcare facility.
Dianne Dickson-Fix	Dianne has over 30 years of elementary teaching experience, working with all ages, including 15 years of gifted instruction. Amongst many accolades, she was awarded Elementary Social Studies Teacher of the Year in Pinellas County. She has continued to develop and build the Winning Reading Program through over 15 cohorts and numerous pilot programs in both Pinellas and Alachua Counties. Utilizing her expertise, she spearheaded programs serving the lowest performing reading students in the lowest performing schools in the state.
LaNier Echols	LaNier Echols is the Center Director for the Lindamood-Bell Learning Center in Jacksonville, Florida. Throughout her career, LaNier has had the pleasure of serving students in a variety of positions, including teacher with Teach For America, dean, principal, and school board member. Ms. Echols received her bachelor's degree from Florida State University, her master's from Marian University, and is working on her Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership at Indiana State University. LaNier's passion for education has only grown with Lindamood-Bell, and she hopes to continue to help students experience the magic of learning for years to come.
Kerry Flanigan	Kerry Flanigan, M.Ed., Principal at Daniel Academy Michelle Joy Nixon, M.Ed., Lead Teacher at Daniel Academy
Lilah Foell	Lilah Foell has more than fourteen years' experience in Early Childhood and Elementary education in Massachusetts, Vermont, and Florida. She holds a

	<p>Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies and a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership; Administration and Supervision. Ms. Ross is certified by the Florida Department of Education as a school Principal as well by the Florida Department of Children and Families as a Level 2 Childcare Director. Mrs. Foell has led accreditation teams to achieve Gold Seal (Florida), APPLE (Florida), and NAEYC (National) accreditations in early childhood as well as NIPSA (national), AdvancED (national), and SACS (southern region national) accreditations for private schools. Mrs. Foell has authored grants to secure over two-million dollars in funding to provide high-quality educational programming in afterschool and summer camps to children in Miami-Dade County. Mrs. Foell specializes in creating learning environments which are family-centered and in which children feel most comfortable to express themselves. Among other certifications, Ms. Foell is a certified trainer in Developing a Culture of Parental Collaboration, which she believes to be an essential element missing from many educational settings.</p>
Jennifer Foor, MS	<p>Jennifer Foor earned an MS in Brain-Based Teaching from Nova University and has worked at Pace Brantley School since 2013, first as an English teacher and Curriculum Coordinator, and now as the Principal of Lower School.</p>
Anne Fouda	<p>Anne Fouda started as a paraprofessional in the classroom eventually earning her degree in Varying Exceptionalities. While in the classroom, she worked in the elementary setting providing support for students with disabilities. Over the last 8 years, she has been with the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) where her focus is professional development.</p>
Angela Fox	<p>Angela Fox has spent more than two decades working in both private and public education as a teacher, administrator, and Head of School. Angela became a certified cognitive trainer in 1999 and opened a LearningRx Cognitive Training Center in Pensacola, Florida in 2013. Her educational philosophy is based on her uncompromising belief that all people can learn. Angela has a B.S. in Education, Curriculum and Instruction and a Ed. D of Educational Leadership. Angela lives in beautiful Pensacola, Florida with her husband and her two daughters, Jasmine and Sophia Jewel.</p>
Carlo Franzblau	<p>Carlo Franzblau began experimenting in software development, eventually creating a program to teach people to sing in tune. Unexpectedly, this “learn to sing” computer program turned out to help kids who were behind in reading. In 2004, Carlo began a 7-year collaboration with leading literacy researchers at the University of South Florida’s College of Education, documenting gains of one full year in reading comprehension level after 3 months of program use. Carlo’s software has won the Tampa Bay Technology Forum’s Innovation of the Year Award and the Wall Street Journal’s Innovation of the year Award (in the software category). Suzette Dean is the principal of Bible Truth Academies in Tampa, and her students showed a year’s worth of gain (based on MAP Reading Growth data) after using TUNE into READING for just 4 months.</p>
Amber Frost, MA	<p>Amber Frost earned an MA in Mental Health Counseling from Rollins College and has worked at Pace Brantley School since 2011 as the Lower School Guidance Counselor and Testing Coordinator.</p>
Jason Generally	<p>As a former classroom teacher in the U.S. and a Chief Academic Officer for over 120 schools internationally, Jason brings passionate, wide-ranging viewpoints toward providing practical and effective educational solutions. For over 20 years, Jason has worked with academic leaders around the world. Throughout, he has maintained a firm belief that strong literacy skills significantly impact</p>

	academic success and life-long learning. Jason hopes to empower educators at all levels with critical resources and technological tools that will help engage and support every student, at every learning level.
Patrick Gibbons	Patrick Gibbons has worked in public relations for 12 years and has been with Step Up for Students for 6 years. Before coming to Step Up, Patrick worked in public relations for non-profits in Arizona and Nevada and worked as a public-school history teacher in Virginia. Patrick has bachelor's degrees in History and Political Science from Penn State and a master's degree in Political Science from the University of Oklahoma.
Silvia Gil	Silvia Gil is a case manager of family and support services at the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at the University of Miami. Silvia has a master's degree in Special Education with a specialization in Autism Spectrum Disorders. Silvia has over ten years of experience working with individuals with Autism across multiple settings and age groups.
Amy Gordon	Amy Gordon attended the University of Delaware, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Education; Master of Instruction; and Doctor of Education and worked on staff as an adjunct professor in the undergraduate and graduate programs. Amy has over 25 years in education as a teacher, coach, supervisor, and district administrator for grades K-12. She currently works as an NWEA Professional Learning Consultant and has been excited to work with Step Up since they started their partnership with NWEA.
Lana Israel, PhD.	Dr. Lana Israel is the Founder/CEO of Muzology, a music-based learning company that specializes in algebra-readiness. Dr. Israel is a globally recognized learning expert who began researching memory and published her first book on the topic at age 13. This launched her career, while a teenager, as an international speaker on memory, learning, and creativity. Dr. Israel is a Harvard and Oxford educated Rhodes Scholar whose scientific research on memory has been cited over 800 times. Prior to founding Muzology, Dr. Israel pioneered data analytics strategies and worked with global superstars in the music industry.
Keith Jacobs	Keith Jacobs is manager of the Charter School Initiative for Step Up for Students. He has more than 10 years of previous experience as a principal, assistant principal and teacher with Hillsborough County. He holds an B.B.A. in Business Administration and an M.Ed. in Educational Leadership.
Laura Joslin & Team	Laura Joslin CEO of Ability Plus Therapy and Co-Founder of No Limits Academy Roberta Neves, PT, NDT & COO of Ability Plus Therapy and Co-Founder of No Limits Academy Dr. Tally Foster, Occupational Therapist Cheyne LeCompte Joslin, M.A. Philosophy of Education Cristine Carey, M.A. CCC Speech Language Therapist Jodi Shea, Director of Education at No Limits Academy
Mathew Kirouac	Mat is a former Pasco County teacher where he taught economics for nearly a decade before coming to EVERFI. Mat is Director for K12 programs for EVERFI where he supports teachers, schools, and education organizations and EVERFI partners throughout the state. Mat and EVERFI have partnered with Step Up since 2016, providing access to critical skills programming to support all students.
Kaitlin Kizer	Kaitlin Kizer, Middle School Team Lead at Frameworks of Tampa Bay, has experience supporting students with developmental disabilities, emotional and

	behavioral disorders, communication delays, and traumatic experiences impacting their development. At Frameworks, she leads a team supporting SEL programming in 48 middle schools.
John Langan	John Langan is an ABLÉ United brand ambassador, a parent of an account holder and passionate about opportunities for individuals with disabilities. John's adult son has autism and Lennox-Gastaut syndrome. He founded Advocates for Adult Children with Intellectual Disabilities and serves as a Sumter County Special Olympics coach. Before retiring, John spent more than 40 years in application technologies and risk management.
Sydney House	Sydney House has eight years of teaching experience and is currently teaching 1st grade, though she spent the last several years teaching 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. She also has experience teaching at the high school level and in special education in both Boston and London. She holds a Bachelor of Science from Emory University in Atlanta and a master's degrees from Lesley University in Boston. She has completed two years of SUFS Master Leadership Academy programs, and over the last two years she has taken on leadership positions in her school. She is currently on the Our Lady of Lourdes leadership team in charge of grades 1 through 5. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, cooking and spending time with her family and has traveled and lived in many different countries in the world.
Eric Eversole & Joseph Limper	We are Joseph Limper and Eric Eversole, science teachers at Victory Christian Academy. We love teaching Biology, Chemistry, and Physics every day for elementary, middle, and High school students at Victory Christian Academy.
Steve Lindquist	Steve Lindquist was a classroom teacher and administrator for 18 years and has been the Director of Accreditation with ACTS since 2015. He has been married 22 years and has two teenage children. He also is a small group Bible Study leader.
Beth Lint	Beth Lint is the educational specialist at Livingstone Academy Autism Center and is a Certified Teacher and OTA with over 200 hours of additional training in the areas of sensory processing and autism.
Kristin Lisi	Kristin Lisi is the director of Livingstone Academy Autism Center and is a Certified ESE Teacher and licensed school guidance counselor with over 15 years of experience in the field of Special Education and autism.
Gina Lynch	Gina has been with Step Up For Students since December of 2013 serving in various roles such as Director of Project Management, Vice President of Operations and most recently; Chief Operating Officer. Gina has a bachelor's degree in Finance and a master's degree in Business Administration both from Bentley University in Boston, MA. She also holds her PMP (Project Management Professional) Certification. Gina Lynch is responsible for leading multiple teams whose primary focus is to serve Step Up For Student's scholarship families, schools and providers. Gina's priority is to make sure that the "voice of the customer" is heard and that it is used to drive improvements across the scholarship programs under administration.
Dr. Carol Macedonia	Carol Macedonia leads a team that oversees the process development intended to assist schools and families in establishing and maintaining collaborative partnerships that ensure the academic, social and emotional success of every child; while at the same time, upholding the belief that the ultimate responsibility

	<p>for the education of the child resides with the parent. Prior to joining the Step Up For Students team, Carol spent over 30 years in public school education as a teacher, principal, Director of Professional Development, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary and Exceptional Student Education, Area Superintendent, and university adjunct professor. She also co-authored and published A Districtwide Approach to Staff and Student Learning. Carol received her bachelor's degree from the University of Florida and her master's and doctoral degrees from the University of South Florida.</p>
<p>Lacey Mahoney</p>	<p>Lacey Mahoney has taught in a variety of school settings over the past 10 years including public, private, and charter schools. She has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a master's degree in Reading Literacy. Lacey was the Teacher of the Year for IDEA Public Schools Walzem in 2016. She is now in leadership, helping teachers to be the best version of themselves and growing students to be Christian leaders.</p>
<p>Lauren May</p>	<p>Lauren May is a life-long Catholic and former principal of a Jacksonville Catholic School for three years. She also opened a new private Christian school in Jacksonville. Lauren presented with faculty at the University of North Florida at the National Professional Development School Leaders conference in March 2018 about teacher retention. She has presented about Positive Parenting to churches and schools in Florida. Lauren started working at Step Up for Students in July 2018. Lauren leads Step Up's efforts to deepen our partnership with Florida's Catholic education community. As a former principal, she understands the many demands, challenges and opportunities facing our leaders in education and looks forward to working with Catholic school leaders.</p>
<p>Laura Mazyck</p>	<p>Laura Mazyck is the Director of Scholarship Programs with Florida's Department of Education. She has served in this role for ten years and has overseen both the growth of current programs as well as the addition of three new ones. She has served on numerous committees throughout the state and currently is in her fifth year of serving on the State Advisory Committee for Education of Exceptional Students. She received her B.A. in Education from Flagler College and her graduate degree in Political Science from Florida State University.</p>
<p>Jim McKenzie</p>	<p>Jim McKenzie holds an M.Ed. from the University of Florida. He has taught at the elementary, middle, and high school levels in both public and private school settings. He currently serves as the Headmaster of The Rock School, a K-12 Christian school in Gainesville, Florida, where he has been employed since 1999.</p>
<p>Dr. Kendra Merchant & Kacey Merchant</p>	<p>Dr. Kendra Merchant has been a strong advocate for science education and joyful learning throughout her life. After earning her doctorate, she taught at Barry University, Miami FL and Albany State University, Albany, GA. She currently works as an assistant professor of biology at Miami Dade College, Kendall, FL where she instructs biology courses in the associate's and bachelor's degree programs. Dr. Merchant and her husband Kacey, founded Magnobrain, where they have worked to inspire and encourage learning through play. They have developed a line of educational board games, card games and activity rugs that inspire the kids to become more intuitive and creative thinkers.</p>
<p>J. Duane Meeks</p>	<p>Dr. J. Duane Meeks serves as an academic dean at Palm Beach Atlantic University, while also serving as President and Chairman of the Board at Potentia Academy.</p>

<p>Janice Meeks</p>	<p>Janice Meeks has worked with individuals with intellectual challenges since 1980. She has taught unique learners since 2004. She has served as Principal since the founding of Potentia Academy in 2009.</p>
<p>Carol Miller L.C.S.W.</p>	<p>Carol T. Miller is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and is the Director of Social Bridges. She holds a master's degree in Social Work, and a bachelor's degree in Education/Drama Therapy. Ms. Miller has worked with children for over 30 years in a variety of therapeutic settings. Collaborating with Dr. Judy Levin, Ms. Miller developed the curriculum for both the Social Bridges clinic and school - based programs. She currently facilitates groups for children in the Orlando area and provides professional development for educators and mental health professionals and social coaching throughout Florida.</p>
<p>Alexander Morris-Wood, M.S.</p>	<p>Alexander is the Assistant Director of Admissions and Pre-Enrollment Transition Coordinator. A member of Florida AHEAD, his goal at Beacon is to help students with learning differences and their parents prepare for the monumental transition to college life. At Beacon, he is charged with developing innovative transition programming to help students and their parents successfully bridge the skill gap from high school to college. Alex earned a bachelor's degree in History and American Studies from Connecticut College and a master's degree in Mental Health Counseling from Post University. While obtaining his degree, he specialized on post-secondary transitions for students with various learning and development disabilities, honing in on how non-academic skills impact the student experience across various college environments.</p>
<p>Joanie Musser</p>	<p>Joanie Musser holds her Florida Teachers Certificate in Exceptional Student Education, (ESOL) and English. She holds a National Board Certification in Early and Middle Childhood Literacy. Joanie received her Education degree at the University of Central Florida. Joanie's 15 years of educator experience for Orange County Public Schools includes: individual educational plan development, language arts department chair, reading coach, professional development presenter. Before joining the Educational Endeavors team, Joanie facilitated Reading Plus with students who scored level 1 and 2 on FCAT. She oversaw sitewide implementation of Reading Plus with students in intensive, regular, and advanced language arts classes.</p>
<p>Michael Nathan</p>	<p>Michael Nathan is a Senior Account Executive at NWEA. Mr. Nathan has over 10 years of account management experience. In his current role, he provides support for NWEA partner schools across Florida, as well as several other states. He began his professional career as an elementary school teacher in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1999. After moving to Portland, Oregon, in 2001, Mr. Nathan worked in the tech industry for several years before returning to education by joining NWEA in 2005. Mr. Nathan has worked with the NWEA / Step Up for Students project since its inception.</p>
<p>Dr. Mercy Nyman</p>	<p>Dr. Nyman has a B.A. in Elementary Education, a M.A. in both Early Childhood & Curriculum/Instruction and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership. She is a registered Behavior Technician and the principal and founder of The Key to Learning with Dr. Nyman in Clermont, FL.</p>
<p>Mark Oliver</p>	<p>Mark Oliver was a college football player for USF, personal trainer for 8+ years with several personal training certifications and professional cross-fitter for 5 years.</p>

<p>Dr. William E. Olsen</p>	<p>Dr. William Olsen taught high school English for ten years in Chicago before becoming the principal of Noble Street College Prep, known nationally as one of the top urban high schools in the country. Additionally, Bill has served as a Senior Director for the University of Chicago's Urban Education Institute and as the Executive Director for KIPP in Kansas City, Missouri. In 2014, Bill completed his Doctorate in Education at National Louis University. At the Drexel Fund, Bill identifies and mentors' entrepreneurs starting new private schools in Florida, Indiana, and Wisconsin.</p>
<p>Michelle Olson</p>	<p>Mrs. Olson and Mrs. Steinmetz have been grade-level teammates at Victory Christian Academy for four years. They love working together to create exciting ways to support student success and promote learning gains. Both teachers have experience in both the public and private school system, and they each have experience in exceptional student education.</p>
<p>Wayne Olson</p>	<p>Wayne Olson is the Area Director for Vocational Rehabilitation in Area 3. Mr. Olson has been with Vocational Rehabilitation for 39 years and has worked in both counseling and management positions in Orlando. From 2009 to 2011, Area 3 piloted the Discovery Program in conjunction with Marc Gold and Associates, a nationwide expert in customized employment. The program has become a statewide success and gives Florida VR a head start toward implementation of WIOA mandates for Customized Employment. Mr. Olson has a master's degree in Counseling from James Madison University and is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.</p>
<p>Jamie Onorato</p>	<p>Jamie Onorato is the Step Up For Students Coordinator for the Northeast Florida region. Prior to joining the organization, Jamie worked extensively in the field of Special Education. She worked in a private school setting for students with unique abilities in the capacity of a teacher & administrator, an adjunct professor at UNF and an Academic Coach for UTRGV. Jamie received her bachelor's and master's degree at UNF, both in the field of Special Education with a specific concentration in Disability Services and Autism.</p>
<p>Bernadette Pello</p>	<p>Bernadette Pello is currently, the President/Founder of Livingstone Schools, Inc., an organization with four school locations serving over 300 students with special needs. Livingstone Academy was named 2014 Small Business of the Year by the Brandon Chamber of Commerce. Prior to starting the schools, Bernadette was the Regional Operations Manager for a Fortune 500 company. Bernadette also serves on the Executive Committee, Board of Directors with the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce.</p>
<p>Jennifer Portilla</p>	<p>Jennifer Portilla has been a special education teacher for 13 years serving students with vast and varying needs at both the middle and high school level. Jennifer is a Google Certified Educator- Level 1 and 2, certified in Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment- Standard 1, Basic 1, and Tactile, has extensive training in Mediated Learning, and is trained in the Orton-Gillingham Approach to reading/ language instruction. Since the inception of Pace Brantley's 1-1 iPad program, Jennifer has been a teacher leader in integrating technology into the daily workings of her classroom. She has presented at FETC on multiple occasions and at FCIS.</p>
<p>Julie B. Ravenell, M.S. & Donald Ravenell</p>	<p>Mr. Donald Ravenell, Sr. and Mrs. Julie B. Ravenell are Co-Principals and Co-Owners of Avant School of Excellence. Mr. Ravenell has been an educator since 1994. He obtained his Bachelor of Science degree from Voorhees College, one of America's 107 Historical Black Colleges and Universities, located in</p>

	<p>Denmark, SC. Upon graduation, Mr. Ravenell worked with Miami-Dade Public schools for seven years in several capacities, including Educational Administrator. Mr. Ravenell attended Nova Southeastern University for graduate work in Educational Leadership. The bulk of Mr. Ravenell's working career has been with the United States Military; he earned several awards and commendations during his military career, before officially retiring from the U.S. Military in 2016 as Major Donald Ravenell, Sr. Mrs. Julie Ravenell began her career as an educator in 1995. This first year of teaching, she worked as a middle school teacher for Miami-Dade County Public Schools and won the Sallie Mae Beginning Teacher of the Year Award. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Florida and a Master of Science degree in School Guidance & Counseling. Mrs. Ravenell worked as a school guidance counselor with Miami-Dade County Public Schools before embarking upon a career in early childhood education. For over 11 years, she owned and operated a chain of preschools in the South Florida area. Upon leaving the early childhood arena of education, Mrs. Ravenell founded Avant School of Excellence in 2014, to serve students in Kindergarten through Grade 12.</p>
Kristen Redding	<p>Kristen is the Project Manager for Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) for Pasco, Pinellas and Hernando Counties.</p>
Sherry Rhodes	<p>Sherry Rhodes has been teaching for over twenty-five years. She holds a M.A. in Counseling and has been teaching at Bethany Christian School for five years. She is married and has four children and ten grandchildren. Ms. Rhodes has previous experience presenting at educational conferences on the topics of ADHD and classroom management.</p>
Audie Rubin	<p>BloomBoard's Director of Strategic Partnership, Audie is responsible for leading partnership strategy across a diverse set of partners in K-12 and higher education. Prior to joining BloomBoard, he was the Director of National Accounts and then the Director of K12 Channel Programs at Pearson North American. Before moving into the industry side of education, Audie spent 15 years as an elementary teacher in both brick-and-mortar and online charter settings, an administrator at two state-wide virtual charter schools, Director of Online Learning for a large district, and a member of a state-level online learning advisory board. Audie resides in Colorado.</p>
Andrew Ernest Rumbaugh	<p>Andrew Rumbaugh has been the Administrator at Faith Christian Academy in Orlando, Florida for 8 years. He and his family have been missionaries in the Middle East for 9 years, serving in Christian schools as a teacher, administrator, and educational consultant. These experiences have helped shape his view on curriculum and design in the Christian school. He has more than 25 years of experience as an educator and administrator and enjoys learning.</p>
Magda Saleh	<p>Magda Elkadi Saleh is the Head of School of Bayaan Academy, a PreK-8 school in Tampa, FL. She is currently in her 27th year as a school administrator, at her third school. She has a non-traditional educational background with a M.A. in Public Health from USF, and a B.A. from East Tennessee State University, where she majored in Biology and minored in French. Magda was always an outside-the-box student and was easily bored in classes with in-the-box teachers. It is her goal to always provide an educational experience for her students that is engaging, challenging, and inspiring.</p>
Natasha Sherwood	<p>Natasha Sherwood is the Head of School at and former student of Tampa Bay Christian Academy. Passionate is one word many would use to describe Natasha. She is passionate about giving every student the opportunity to</p>

	<p>succeed. She is passionate about trying new things - even if that means failing at first. She is passionate about the University of Florida where she earned her B.S. and M.A. She is passionate about her family - her three biological children - Bella (15), Mackenzie (12) and Royce (6) and the hundreds of students that she has had the opportunity to impact and who often call her mom too. And she is passionate about learning!</p>
<p>Julie Spent</p>	<p>Julie Spent is the Step Up for Students Regional Coordinator for Orange and Osceola counties. She began working for Step Up for Students in August of 2017. Prior to joining the organization, Julie taught at the high school level for ten years in both public and private schools. She has experience working as a teacher, tutoring program coordinator, and coach. Julie holds a B.A. in History with certification in Secondary and Middle School Education from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.</p>
<p>JaDean Stricker</p>	<p>JaDean Stricker is passionate about people and education. With 28 years' experience in education, she has successfully been a part of training thousands of educators and students to be academically strong and ethically excellent. Though she has received many awards and accolades over the years, she would say her greatest rewards are the successes of those she has led. She has a B.A. in Christian Education and loves to travel and speak into the lives of educators and students as much as possible.</p>
<p>Jose Suarez</p>	<p>Mr. Suarez has over 20 years of experience in national and international business management focusing on system optimization and problem solving. In school safety, he has obtained the following credentials: Florida licensing for Armed Security Officer, Instructor Level of Armed Solo Engagement Tactics with the Texas Police Department and is a certified Armed School Guardian through the Pasco County Sheriff's Office.</p>
<p>Katie Swingle</p>	<p>Katie Swingle is the mother of four young boys from Central Florida. Her oldest son, age 11, is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Mrs. Swingle has spoken at many events and to varied audiences about the value of school choice and the positive ways that the Gardiner Scholarship has changed her family's life and her sons track for academic and social success in his life.</p>
<p>Andrea Thoermer, PhD.</p>	<p>Andrea Thoermer, PhD, is the Director of Professional Development at Step Up For Students. She has been with Step Up for six years and enjoys helping employees and teams grow professionally and personally by creating and delivering meaningful learning opportunities focused on their specific needs. She especially enjoys the challenge of improving organizational effectiveness in the areas of interdepartmental communications, processes and structures, which is only made possibly with the support of her amazing team!</p>
<p>Judith Thomas</p>	<p>Judith Thomas is the social media manager for Step Up For Students. She has worked in marketing for over nine years, and social media is a passion of hers. In less than two years at Step Up, she has grown the organization's Facebook page likes by 50%. Judith is originally from Germany where she studied at the University of Tuebingen.</p>
<p>Shayna Bianca Torres</p>	<p>Shayna Torres is an Instructional Coach for the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County. She works with teachers who serve children in Orlando's most vulnerable communities. She holds a master's degree in Early Childhood Development from the University of Central Florida and has been working in her field for seven years. Her passion is working with those who fall victim to poverty, including children, their families, and educational providers. Her</p>

	<p>passion is the building of trainings and workshops for teachers. Much of her research and instruction is based around trauma, social-emotional development, and family engagement.</p>
<p>Tommy Trujillo</p>	<p>Tommy Trujillo, CPA, is a manager at Verdeja, De Armas & Trujillo, LLP, Certified Public Accountants. He is a graduate of Hannibal LaGrange University in Hannibal, Missouri with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 2011. Tommy has specialized in schools and Step-Up Agreed Upon Procedures. He has managed the reports and procedures for over 350 Step Up Agreed Upon Procedure engagements from 2012-present, including 80 engagements in the year 2018. He has managed financial reviews for all entities of the Archdiocese of Miami from 2014-present and has managed audit fieldwork for over 30 charter schools from 2014-2018.</p>
<p>Lynn Wade</p>	<p>Lynn Wade has been in education for 44 years in both public and private education. He has served as an administrator in both public and private school. During the time he was in public education he spent years in staff development with his target audience being the leadership development of administrators. He has conducted trainings for District Administrators, School Administrators, teachers and faculties across the country. He has also received numerous awards for school leadership.</p>
<p>Tanekka Watt</p>	<p>Tanekka Watt holds a Master of Arts in Education and is a current educator at Achieve Academy for Scholars LLC.</p>
<p>Joanna Welch</p>	<p>Joanna Welch has been a Catholic school educator for the past seven years. Her experience has been in the primary grades, including four years teaching in a multi-age K/1st classroom. She has been the lead teacher of her school's kindergarten and first grade team for the past three years and was honored with a Distinguished Catholic Educator Award by the Diocese of Orlando in August of 2018. Her passion for education and helping others has encouraged her to go back to school in 2019 to obtain a master's degree in Educational Leadership with goals of one day teaching at the collegiate level and inspiring the next generation of educators to change the world.</p>
<p>Jane E. Meliah-Zona</p>	<p>Jane E. Meliah-Zona has been the Media Specialist/Librarian at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, in Dunedin, Florida for the last three years. In her position of Media Specialist, she has focused on S.T.R.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) challenges, mainly using the Engineering Design Process. This year she took the MLA2 course offered by Step Up, and it opened her eyes to finding a way to answer questions about her teaching! Prior to receiving her teacher certification, she did social work mainly with families in the Foster Care system. She is currently active in Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts as a leader. She loves nature, photography and being creative. She's originally from Washington State and has 3 children; her youngest will be a Senior in high school next year.</p>