



## 2022 Grant Cycle: Education

### A Panel of Community Experts

February 1, 2022



**Amanda Boomershine** is an Associate Professor at UNCW, where she teaches courses in Hispanic linguistics, service-learning, and seminars on topics such as immigration and linguistic variation. She is active in the community, developing service-learning opportunities for students of Spanish at all levels. She serves as the co-leader of UNCW's Latino Alliance and is the president of the local chapter of the United Nations Association. In addition, she is on the board of the Mountain Interstate Foreign Language Conference and the Cape Fear HealthNet Board. She holds a master's degree and a Ph.D. in Hispanic linguistics from Ohio State University.



**Susan Harrell** is the Director of The Hill School of Wilmington. She has been in education for 44 years and specializes in working with students with learning differences; she is an outspoken advocate for these students and has presented at conferences addressing dyslexia. Moreover, she was a founding board member of the North Carolina Chapter of The International Dyslexia Association. Ms. Harrell has presided over the growth of The Hill School and hopes to be able to address the needs of many more children in the future. In 1977, Susan graduated from Salem College with a B.A. in Psychology/Exceptional Children/Learning Disabilities. Upon graduation and until 1988, when she became a teacher, she was in Private Practice as a Dyslexia Therapist in both Raleigh and Wilmington.



**Sabrina Hill-Black** serves as Principal of D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy, the University of North Carolina Wilmington's public K-8 laboratory school, where she is dedicated to the inclusive commitments of the school staff.

She taught within the New Hanover County School system for 23 years in the middle school environment. During that time she held many leadership roles, participated in various professional development opportunities, and extended herself to district initiatives designed to maximize student learning experiences. She earned her B.A. in English with a concentration in secondary education at North Carolina Central University and a M.A. in Educational Leadership at Gardner-Webb University. Sabrina has co-authored articles in journals such as *ASCD Express* (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) and *NAPDS* (National Association for Professional Development Schools) while continuing to engage in opportunities to maximize experiential learning for students within the school, university, and community.



**Tracey Newkirk**, is the Co-founder and President of Genesis Block. She has 20 plus years of experience in corporate America as a Human Resources executive. After leaving corporate America, Tracey started her own Boutique Consulting Firm, UNEXO, where she builds high performance teams and is a Certified Personal Resilience Practitioner. Tracey has worked tirelessly toward her goal of building a vibrant African American business class in Wilmington. In 2019 she married Girard Newkirk and together they co-founded Genesis Block, a coworking business development center to build the entrepreneur class. Genesis Block is the Anchor Institution for Minority and Women-Owned Business Development in the Southeast Region. Tracey holds a Bachelor's degree in Human Services (Sociology) from UNC Charlotte.



**Nick Rhodes, Jr.** has given freely of his time and resources to the New Hanover County community: serving on numerous boards and committees including the New Hanover County Board of Education, Smart Start, Communities in Schools of Cape Fear and Kids Making It. Nick is currently a member of 100 Black Men of Coastal North Carolina where he and other black men with diverse backgrounds are dedicated to improving the quality of life of African American youth. He received his BS degree in Economics from North Carolina A&T State University and a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. He received an MA degree in Education from Pepperdine University and an MBA in Business from Western New England University.



**Laura Szech** is an Assistant Professor in the Language and Literacy Education graduate program and the Elementary Education undergraduate program in the Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle, Literacy and Special Education at UNCW. Laura will be serving as Faculty in Residence at D.C. Virgo in the spring, teaching classes and giving students an opportunity for hands-on learning. She holds an M.A. in Reading from the University of Northern Colorado and a Ph.D. in Teaching and Learning from the University of Iowa. Her interests include culturally sustaining literacy pedagogy and teacher family partnerships.



**Yasmin Tomkinson** is the Executive Director of Cape Fear Literacy Council. The mission of CFLC is to provide personalized education so adults can transform their lives and contribute to a stronger community. It has two main programs: Adult Literacy, which focuses on reading, writing, and math skills; and English as a Second Language, which helps adults improve their English proficiency. CFLC supports nearly 500 students annually with a small staff and over 200 volunteers. Yasmin holds an MBA with a concentration in Nonprofit Management from Boston University. She worked for educationally focused nonprofits in Utah, Los Angeles, Baltimore, and Boston before moving to Wilmington.

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**Rachel Keith, Moderator** is a reporter and host for All Things Considered at WHQR Public Media – and previously served as WHQR's News Fellow and CoastLine Producer from 2017-2019. She is a graduate of UNCW's Master of Public Administration program, specializing in Urban and Regional Policy and Planning. She also received a Master of Education and two Bachelor of Arts degrees in Political Science and French Language & Literature from NC State University. Prior to her career in journalism, she worked as a teacher for seven years. She's been employed in New Hanover County Schools, Onslow County Schools, and Wake County Schools. And in 2007, she spent a year as an English teaching assistant for the French Embassy in La Réunion, France.