

DR. NATALIE COLEMAN

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Policy Development Leader | Legislative Advocacy | Program Management | Community Outreach | Grant Writing & Management

An accomplished Policy Advocacy Leader with a proven track record in spearheading educational reforms and championing inclusive curriculum initiatives. Develops policy frameworks that enhance educational equity and access, utilizing a comprehensive understanding of the intersections between educational policy, community engagement, and legislative advocacy. Leverages strategic vision and robust history of building and leading cross-functional teams to advocate for policy changes that improve educational outcomes across diverse populations. Fosters partnerships with educational institutions, community leaders, and policymakers to drive sustainable impact.

KEY SKILLS

Educational Policy Development | Stakeholder Mapping | Public Speaking and Presentations | Impact Evaluation Techniques | Strategic Planning and Execution | Coalition Building | Government Funding Strategies | Lobbying and Government Relations | Policy Brief Writing | Program Evaluation and Reporting | Socioeconomic Research | Policy Documentation and Publication | Educational Reform Initiatives | Diversity and Inclusion Programs | Advocacy Campaign Metrics and KPIs

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Coordinator of Secondary Education, College of Arts and Science, Governors State University, IL

08/2023 – 08/2024

Directed a team of 7 professors. Spearheaded accreditation initiatives and managed disciplinary hearings that emphasized fairness and rigorous compliance. Enhanced practical training opportunities by managing collaborations between university micro-teachers and local high schools. Represented the department in key educational committees to push for systemic changes and advocate for increased recruitment and strategic educational enhancements. Mentored faculty and micro-teachers.

- **Reformed and systematized disciplinary procedures** to effectively manage both academic and behavioral issues, establishing a framework that upheld academic integrity and facilitated fair and transparent resolutions.
- **Advocated for and influenced equitable faculty workload policies** during contractual negotiations, ensuring that teaching credits were fairly allocated regardless of class size, which significantly impacted faculty satisfaction and workload management.
- **Enhanced diversity and inclusion initiatives** through strategic outreach and recruitment in minority-dense schools, significantly increasing the demographic diversity within the education program and promoting a more inclusive academic environment
- **Enhanced institutional compliance** by formulating clear policy frameworks that met state regulations, clarified administrative responsibilities, and promoted cohesive collaboration between faculty and leadership.

CEO, After the Peanut

12/2014 – Present

Advocated for multiple causes, including veterans, educations, women health among others. Established STEAM programs that targeted underrepresented youth, including those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, girls, and rural students. Successfully obtained grants and formed a non-profit subsidiary to provide scholarships, thereby making STEAM education accessible and affordable. Cultivated strategic partnerships with schools, community centers, and businesses to expand educational outreach and demonstrate the practical applications of STEAM subjects.

Advocacy Work

Ongoing

K-12 STEAM Advocacy

- **Advocated for enhanced STEM education policies at the state level**, successfully proposing a law to increase science graduation requirements from 2 to 3 years, ensuring students are better prepared for college admission and career opportunities.
- **Secured and managed over \$460,000 in grants from government and private organizations** to support educational programs and scholarships, enhancing access to STEAM education for underrepresented students.

Advocacy for Veterans and Policy Development

- **Championed veterans' rights and caregiver support** by securing county recognition under the 'Hidden Heroes' initiative, providing benefits and resources to military caregivers, including respite care and social networks.
- **Drafted policy proposals in Washington D.C.** to address unmet promises for Iraqi and Afghan interpreters, advocating for their safe relocation and protection due to their service to U.S. forces.
- **Influenced veteran legislation** to include mental health recognition for military sexual assault survivors, lobbying for their experiences to be classified as disabilities and ensuring access to necessary resources.
- **Collaborated with national organizations to advocate for veteran policies**, presenting proposals directly to federal legislators to address systemic issues like homelessness, caregiving, and support for returning veterans.
- **Drafted proposals included in national policy bundles**, focusing on workforce development, veteran support, and comprehensive protections for interpreters and their families who assisted U.S. troops.

Women’s Rights

- **Advocated for military women’s rights**, working to address and provide support for survivors of sexual assault within the armed forces, pushing for policy reforms to ensure justice and mental health support.
- **Fought against discriminatory practices like 'Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,'** lobbying to reverse dishonorable discharges and restore the honor and dignity of affected veterans.

Advocacy for Workers

- **Supported fair labor practices in local industries**, advocating against exploitative hiring cycles where companies terminated employees before providing benefits, influencing local policies to protect vulnerable workers.
- **Proposed agreements for incoming corporations**, urging local governments to require fair employment practices as a condition for establishing operations in the county.

Early Childhood Advocacy

- **Directed cannabis tax revenue toward early childhood education**, allocating 30% of funds to programs for children under five, supporting early learning initiatives and advocacy centers for at-risk children.
- **Enhanced family support systems** by funding CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocates) to assist children with incarcerated or absent parents in securing safe, stable homes.

Workforce Development for Returning Citizens

- **Spearheaded workforce development programs for returning citizens**, ensuring non-felony offenders receive job training and reintegration support to reduce recidivism and promote societal reintegration.

Previous Experiences: Visiting Assistant Professor, College of Arts and Science, Governors State University (08/2022 – 08/2023); Adjunct Professor of Education: Elementary Education, College of Education, Lewis University (08/2021 – 05/2023); Adjunct Professor of Chemistry, College of Arts and Science, University of St. Francis (01/2013 – 05/2020); Science and Social Studies Teacher, Joliet Public School District 86 (2011 – 2018); High School Chemistry and Physics Teacher, Bloom High School (2007 – 2011)

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

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| Doctor of Education in Educational Policy, Organization, and Leadership , University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana | 2021 |
| Master of Education in Educational Administration , Governors State University, University Park, IL | 2011 |
| Bachelor of Science in Chemistry with Honors , Governors State University, University Park, IL | 2007 |
| Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Science , University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, IL | 2002 |

PRESENTATIONS

- Coleman, N. (2024, October 29) Lead with Purpose: Building Belonging, Voice, and Impact. Presentation at Plainfield High School District 202.
- Coleman, N. (2024, October 29) Microaggressions Review. Presentation at Plainfield High School District 202.
- Coleman, N. (2024, April 23) Our Equity Journey. Presentation at Plainfield High School District 202.

Coleman, N. (2024, March 19) Women's Empowerment. Presentation at Plainfield High School District 202.

Coleman, N. (2024, March 1) Equitable Foundations. Presentation at Plainfield High School District 202.

Coleman, N. (2023, November 28) Microaggressions 2.0. Presentation at Plainfield High School District 202.

Coleman, N. (2023, October 3) Addressing and Reducing Microaggressions to Strengthen District Culture & Improve Relationships. Presentation at Plainfield High School District 202.

Coleman, N. (2023, August 10) Full STEAM Ahead. State of Black Learning, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Coleman, N. (2023, March 28) Microaggressions and Internal Bias. Presentation at Plainfield School District 202.

Coleman, N. (2022, December 6) Social Justice in K-12 Educational Systems-The 3R's. Presentation at Lincoln Alternative School.

Coleman, N. (2022, November 29) Microaggressions. Presentation at Plainfield School District 202.

Coleman, N. (2022, November 21) Attendance Matters: Reducing School Anxiety. Presentation at South Wilmington School District.

Coleman, N. (2022, August 22) Anxiety at School: The Struggle is Real. Presentation at Crete Monee High School.

Coleman, N. (2022, August 15) Designing Social Awareness Activities for High School Students. Presentation at Plainfield High School District 202.

Coleman, N. (2022, August 9) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Presentation at Plainfield High School District 202.

Coleman, N. (2022, April 19) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Planning. Presentation at Plainfield High School District 202.

Coleman, N. (2022, February 8) Microaggressions. Presentation at Plainfield School District 202.

Coleman, N. (2022, January 18) Microaggressions. Presentation at Plainfield School District 202.

INVITED TALKS

Coleman, N. (2023, October 26). *Live to Lead*. Panelist.

Coleman, N. (2022, November 19). *No One is Coming*. Presentation at 2022 Center for Community and Education Research, Lewis University, Romeoville, IL.

Coleman, N. (2022, October 23). *Black Women's Maternal Health Care*. Interviewer of Congresswoman Lauren Underwood.

Coleman, N. (2022, October 16). *Democracy and Government*. Presentation at Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana, Joliet, IL.

Coleman, N. (2020, March 3). *Destined for Greatness*. Guest Speaker at Glenbard School District, Glenbard, IL.

Coleman, N. (2020, January 20). *Fulfilling the Dream*. Keynote Speaker at Lewis University, Romeoville, IL.

Coleman, N. (2017, March 7). *Hidden Figures*. Panelist at South by Southwest Conference, Austin, TX.

DIGITAL MEDIA

Jean Charles, E., Thomas, J. (Hosts) (2021, November 11). After the Peanut [Audio podcast episode]. Anchor.

Sain, A. (2021, May 3). Dr. Natalie Coleman: The STEM Unicorn. Coffea Magazine.

Robinson, K. (Host) (2019, May 3). Listen to Listen and Be Present. (No. 31) [Audio podcast episode]. Cultivation Courage, Thrive Coaching Studio.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Chair of Secondary Education Committee at Governors State University

Advisor, Denise Winfrey, President of the National Association of Counties

Advisor, StatusPlaspace

Reviewer, Congressman Bill Foster Service Academy Board

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

Illinois Veterans for Change

National Science Teachers Association

Joliet Area Chamber of Commerce

AWARDS

African American Business Association Dream Big Award

Quad County Urban League Woman of the Month

National Hookup of Black Woman Educator of the Year

CKL Engineering Women in STEM

Generation Dance Hometown Hero

TEDEd Innovative Teacher

National Geographic Educator of the Month