



Melissa Brookens

Principal Resident at Aspire APEX Academy in Stockton, CA
Mentor Principal: Kat Ellison

Educational Background:

I attended CSU Stanislaus and received my BA in Liberal Studies with an emphasis in ethnic studies. I also have my Master of Arts degree in teaching from Grand Canyon University.

Professional Experience:

I started my teaching in Stockton Unified as a 4th grade teacher in 2008 and the following year did a long term subbing position in 1st grade. In 2010 I joined APEX as a founding 3rd grade educator and move the following year into teaching the 4/5 multiage class and lead teacher for the next three years. During my time as an educator, I was a TCRP certified peer observer, coordinated ROPES and our school-wide post office system.

Why Aspire Principal Residency?

Becoming a principal has always been my dream and I love that I get the opportunity to learn from a current Aspire Principal.

What I do for fun?

I love spending time with my 10 year old son, 5 year old daughter and husband. My daughter is a competitive cheerleader, so we spend a lot of time in the gym with her. In addition, reading is my passion and love to read Nicholas Sparks.



Monique Cincore

Principal Resident at Aspire Hanley Elementary School #2 in Memphis, TN
Mentor Principal: Nickalous Manning

Educational Background:

I received my Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Dillard University and obtained a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from Walden University. I am also an ELA certified Common Core state coach.

Professional Experience:

I began my teaching career in New Orleans, Louisiana where I taught grades 1-6, served as a math facilitator, served as a summer school principal and after school coordinator. In 2000, I moved to Memphis, TN where I worked as a 4th grade teacher and an instructional facilitator.

What I do for fun?

When not working, I enjoy spending time with my family, nature hikes, traveling to basketball games around the country, and relaxing on the beach.

My favorite quote is, "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, and working together is success." ~Henry Ford



Amy Coventry

Principal Resident at Aspire Firestone Academy in South Gate, CA
Mentor Principal: Marcie Swan

Professional Experience:

I began my career in education in LAUSD teaching 3rd-5th grade for 5 years, followed by one year as a Language/CLR coach. I left LAUSD to return to the classroom for the inaugural year of Culture and Language Academy of Success (CLAS), a small K-8 charter school focused on meeting the needs of historically under-served students through culturally and linguistically responsive instruction. As a national model CLR classroom during my 5 years of teaching 3rd-4th grade at CLAS, I also began consulting with the Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning. I left the classroom in 2008 to consult full-time with CCRTL where I had an opportunity to help teachers across the country to infuse CLR pedagogy and strategies into their classrooms. In 2013, I also began consulting with Math Solutions/Scholastic to support 6th-12th math teachers implement intervention programs for their struggling students.

Why Aspire Principal Residency?

During my field-based project at an Aspire school, I was sincerely impressed with the preparedness of the teachers who had completed the teacher residency program. After further research, I was convinced that Aspire would provide me with high quality preparation as a school leader.

What I do for fun?

- ❖ Volleyball player (beach and indoor)
- ❖ Reader (career and entertainment)
- ❖ Movie goer (action, adventure, suspense, epics, historical)
- ❖ Exercise enthusiast (gym, running, tennis, etc.)
- ❖ Proud Auntie of the cutest nephew in the world



Sha Fanion

Principal Resident at Aspire Hanley Elementary School #1 in Memphis, TN
Mentor Principal: Megan McGrail

Professional Experience:

Sha Fanion is a resident at Hanley One. Prior to Aspire she, she taught students with disabilities at the elementary and middle school levels in Atlanta, Georgia. She also served as a special education administrator for four years with the DeKalb County School System. In this role, she supervised the special education programs at the elementary level, where she focused on instruction and compliance. Sha relocated to Little Rock, AR in 2012 to serve as a Title I administrator for the Arkansas Department of Education, where she: managed schools with school-wide and targeted assistance programs; ensured paraprofessionals working in Title I schools were highly qualified; selected National Blue Ribbon Schools for Arkansas, and ensured schools allocated their Title I funds appropriately. Sha also worked as a Program Director for Renaissance Learning in the Mississippi Delta, where she oversaw the implementation of STAR Reading and Math, Accelerated Reader, Accelerated Math, and other Renaissance Programs.



Arlena Ford

Principal Resident at Aspire East Palo Alto Charter School in East Palo Alto, CA
Mentor Principal: Sharon Johnson

Educational Background:

I have a Bachelor of Art in Interdisciplinary Field Studies from the University of California, Berkeley; as well as, a Master of Arts Degree in Organizational Leadership from Columbia University, Teachers College.

Professional Experiences:

Prior to becoming a resident, I was an administrative intern and middle school science teacher at KIPP Academy of Opportunity in South Los Angeles. I began my teaching career in education, in 2008, as a Teach for America corps member in the Bay Area. As a corps member, I taught 4th grade at Hubbard Elementary in east San Jose, California; I worked to improve the reading and writing skills of my ELL and low performing students and served as chair for several committees—science fair, SSC, SES, and step-up to writing. In 2010, I relocated to Los Angeles, where I taught at two high-performing charter schools. During my six years as a teacher, I taught a range of grades— fourth, first, and middle school science. I also engaged in numerous leadership capacities ranging from Lead Teacher to Enrichment Director.

Why Aspire Principal Residency?

I joined the Aspire team as Principal Resident at East Palo Alto Charter School (EPACS). One component that attracted me to the APR program was having the opportunity to work with a mentor principal in a sheltered environment for a year. I have the privilege of working with Sharon Johnson, my principal mentor, who is a phenomenal leader! Sharon has provided me with great feedback, insight, and opportunities to grow and develop as a leader.

What I do For Fun:

- ❖ Trying to cook new pescetarian recipes
- ❖ Working out outdoors (i.e. going for a hike, bike riding, horseback riding, etc.)



Kelly Lofgren

Principal Resident at Aspire Gateway Academy in South Gate, CA
Mentor Principal: Stefan Bean

Educational Background:

I graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Arts in English in 2003 and a Masters of Education in 2005.

Professional Experience:

After graduating, I worked as a behavioral therapist for students with autism. I then spent a year teaching a combined class of hearing and deaf or hard-of-hearing students in Burbank Unified. I then found Aspire! Since starting my career I have taught all elementary grades, with the exception of 2nd, and spent two years as an intervention specialist. I have taken on roles such as lead teacher, mentor teacher, peer observer, data driver, common core driver, leaders lead presenter and new teacher trainer. I've also represented Aspire in the All-America City Awards and in a roundtable discussion on teacher effectiveness with Melinda Gates.

Why Aspire Teacher Residency?

I have been so lucky to work with Stefan Bean the last few years. He has been such an inspirational leader that I wanted to follow in his footsteps.

What I Do for Fun:

I love, love, love playing with my baby girl! My ideal weekend includes going to church and then sipping tea outside a coffee shop and reading the newspaper with my little family.



Steph Sanders

Principal Resident at Aspire Vincent Shalvey Academy in Stockton, CA
Mentor Principal: Karla Fachner

Educational Background:

I began my college career at West Point with a career in Politics in mind. After a detour in professional sports, I received my B.S. in History/Economics, 2 Teaching Credentials, an M.A. in Education, and am currently on my way to finishing my Doctorate in Educational Leadership (CSU Sacramento).

Professionally:

After a stint at a Fortune 100 company in Executive Management, I have taught grade levels 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 8th, & High School.

Why Aspire?

The best training and a mission, strategies, and people I believe in.

Personally:

I am a foodie, love sports, concerts, amusement parks, playing golf, traveling, movies, Disneyland, being a Cheer Dad, and did I mention FOOD!