

# WOMEN LEADERS of Culturally Responsive Education

2024  
WOMEN'S  
HerSTORY  
MONTH

## What is Culturally Responsive Education (CRE)?

In honor of Women's HERstory (History) Month this March, Northwest Education Services' Culturally Responsive Education Group (CREG) is taking time to recognize the women in our schools who are making positive impacts in their classrooms and workplaces.

With a focus on building relationships and improving understanding among both student and adult populations, Culturally Responsive Education embraces diversity, strives for equity and

inclusion, and supports a sense of belonging for all.

Women are a traditionally marginalized group in our society. While some 75% of all teachers are women, fewer than one-third of the superintendent jobs are held by women, indicating a preferential bias toward men in leadership positions.

Nominated by their peers, these women serve as leaders of CRE in their communities, and we are proud to recognize them.

~North Ed CREG



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[www.NorthwestEd.org](http://www.NorthwestEd.org)



*Need support or want to learn more?*

Email us: [CREG@NorthwestEd.org](mailto:CREG@NorthwestEd.org)

Visit our website: [www.NorthwestEd.org/services/cre/](http://www.NorthwestEd.org/services/cre/)

# Women Leaders of Culturally Responsive Education



**Jen Amin**  
Early Childhood Specialist  
Northwest Education Services

Jen has worked diligently for our region's students and families by examining their experience through their unique cultural, familial and ethnic lenses. She focuses on student needs and identifies solutions while celebrating each student's individual circumstances.

Jen is continually learning and growing within CRE, and keeps this focus at the forefront of all Early Childhood work, including submitting pieces for the regional Great Start Readiness Program newsletter, training her colleagues, regularly attending professional developments to deepen her learning and understanding, and having challenging conversations to ensure we are honoring histories and recognizing our current biases.

Jen encourages the entire Early Childhood team to not only be advocates, but to be a catalyst for social justice and reform for the littlest of learners through education and by challenging the norms in a relationship-centered approach.



**Meghan Arbury**  
Elementary Literacy Consultant  
Northwest Education Services

Meghan was recently hired at North Ed, and was immediately recognized as a teaching professional who lives and strives to learn all that she can about Culturally Responsive Education.

As an Elementary Literacy Consultant, Meghan consistently keeps all learners from diverse races, genders, ethnicities, and other backgrounds at the forefront of her mind while consulting and coaching teams in our region's elementary school buildings. She also works cohesively with principals and teachers to provide just practices to support all students.

Meghan regularly participates in deep learning and discussions centered around Culturally Responsive Education and passionately continues to bring that learning with her in everything she does at North Ed and for the schools she supports.

# Women Leaders of Culturally Responsive Education



**Summer Baldwin**  
Indigenous Education Coordinator  
Traverse City Area Public Schools

Summer's dedication to TCAPS Indigenous Education Program and passion for supporting Indigenous students has empowered students to embrace their cultural identities and given them the support and tools they need to reach their goals.

Summer hosts a monthly educational series called "Anishinaabe Expressive Culture Series". This series focuses on highlighting a variety of cultural educational topics that includes language, art, music, dance and regalia. She writes a monthly newsletter and has developed a Facebook page to bridge the gap between school and home providing calendar updates, community events, volunteer opportunities, health resources and much more.

Summer's professional contributions toward education, coupled with her vision for improved cultural programming, have provided countless improvements to TCAPS and the Northern Michigan region.



**Dr. Victoria Derks**  
Principal, Cherry Knoll Elementary  
Traverse City Area Public Schools

Dr. Victoria Derks is an exemplary principal who treats every student and staff member in her building as family.

Every single morning, no matter the weather, she can be found outside Cherry Knoll Elementary School smiling, dancing and personally greeting each student as they enter the building, passing out high-fives, fist bumps and hugs.

She greets parents and staff with a heartfelt smile and sincere wishes for a great day, and maintains strong lines of communication with her school community with an open-door policy and frequent check-ins to gauge staff and student well-being. She knows every student by name, and she can often be found in the hallways, chatting and connecting with students.

Her work to connect with individuals on a personal level supports a welcoming school culture built on strong relationships.

# Women Leaders of Culturally Responsive Education



**Cecelia Galatioto**

Special Education & Resource Program Teacher  
Traverse City Area Public Schools

As a special education teacher at Traverse City Area Public Schools, Cecelia strives to meet the needs of all students with an energetic dedication to seeing them succeed.

A tireless advocate for students, Cecilia works to serve the emotional, physical and academic needs of a diverse group of students with various disabilities at Courtade Elementary School. By establishing strong relationships with fellow educators, she has contributed to a supportive and understanding school culture.

As a relatively new special education teacher, she has worked extremely hard to establish herself in a field that can be difficult for any seasoned educator without losing sight of what is best for students.



**Laurie Glass**

Interventionist & School Improvement Team  
Leland Public School

Laurie has integrated her social justice training and work with restorative and trauma-informed practices to lead Leland Public School in rethinking classroom management, discipline and whole-child learning. She has incorporated social and emotional learning models into an approach that honors and validates individual students' experiences and backgrounds.

Laurie challenges traditional management practices that have historically created inequities and disproportionate discipline and exclusionary habits. Laurie also facilitates restorative conversations and circles, and poses questions that require participants to consider and honor actions from a marginalized population orientation, where appropriate, to deepen understanding and foster an appreciation among our students, families and staff for a wide and full range of viewpoints including racial, socioeconomic, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other marginalized identities, while also coaching teachers and staff in the moment from a student-centered lens.

# Women Leaders of Culturally Responsive Education



**Lisa Klepper**  
Supervisor, Creekside School  
Northwest Education Services

Lisa's relentless dedication to students' best interests is admired by her staff at colleagues throughout the region. Lisa always strives to ensure that student needs are met first, and students' best interests remain the highest priority.

She demonstrates steadfast reliability and flexibility, focusing continuous improvement at every level of the center-based program she supervises. Under Lisa's leadership, her team uses research and best practices to ensure students are provided the support they need to succeed.

Lisa inspires her staff every day to view each student as an individual with unique needs and to provide them with a supportive and welcoming environment.

Lisa is also dedicated to increasing staff competency and to helping develop strong leaders and a sense of community within her program that fosters teamwork and collective growth.



**Amy Moore**  
School Social Worker, Life Skills Center  
Northwest Education Services

As a social worker within Northwest Education Services' Life Skills Center, Amy continually endeavors to identify ways to engage students, colleagues and the community in CRE initiatives and learning, such as organizing a student march for Martin Luther King Jr. Day and supporting the creation of a Photovoice project centering disabilities.

Amy values each person for who they are, and has an exceptional ability to connect deeply with students and colleagues.

Known for her commitment to upholding the values of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in both her professional and personal life, Amy has frequently shared her learning with others and has been a strong advocate for additional professional development opportunities for colleagues.

# Women Leaders of Culturally Responsive Education



**Stefanie Murphy**

Coordinator for Leelanau Investing For Teens (LIFT)  
Glen Lake Community Schools

Stefanie Murphy is the Leelanau Investing For Teens (LIFT) Coordinator for Glen Lake Community Schools. LIFT is a nonprofit after-school program dedicated to empowering Leelanau County youth.

Stefanie's continuous passion, love and dedication to young people shines through in her day-to-day interactions with students and staff. She addresses any and all needs of ALL students at Glen Lake Community Schools, using her training in Restorative Practices, ASIST and SafeTalk.

Her philosophy is meeting teens where they are in their journey of growth, and she often tells them she has a "license to listen," emphasizing her commitment to understanding and supporting teens in every possible way.

Stefanie is an amazing role model for social justice and change, as evidenced by how she cares for the well-being of each and every student she works with.



**Deb Neddo**

Migrant Coordinator  
Northwest Education Services

Deb Neddo is the Supervisor of the Migrant Education and English Learner Services programs with Northwest Education Services.

Deb works to ensure equity for minority migrant students and English language learners. She empowers her team to advocate for these students daily by highlighting students' critical needs, and by providing training and resources to help her teachers best meet these needs. Her door is always open when teachers have questions and concerns. She leads a summer school program to address gaps in student learning while celebrating their individual cultures.

Deb serves on several state-level committees and frequently presents to administrators and staff, sharing best practices for addressing the needs of students from a variety of cultural backgrounds.



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**Alison Sullivan**  
Instructional Coach  
Traverse City Area Public Schools

Alison started the Trojan Culture Council at East Middle School. The group of students she leads has made a positive impact on the school. She empowers the students and gives them a voice.

Alison also works closely with administration in leading restorative conversations with students who have made culturally insensitive comments, creating opportunities for learning and relationship-building.

Additionally, Alison is an integral member of the district Culture and Climate team, which is instrumental in providing all employees with professional development related to culturally responsive education.

The conversations Alison facilitates often create action and policy, serving to guide educators and the district toward socially just educational approaches.



**Ashley Troy**  
Director of Teaching and Learning  
Northwest Education Services

Committed to her own professional growth within CRE, Ashley also champions bringing learning to her team and colleagues at Northwest Education Services and the region.

Ashley has extended and applied this knowledge to support districts in their own conversations, and reviews curricular resources and structures to ensure all students and staff are supported.

Whenever difficult conversations need to happen, Ashley's understanding of Culturally Responsive Education and her ability to network and support local students and staff in a positive and productive way makes her one of the first people called upon for support.

Ashley exemplifies North Ed's mission of how educators can work together to develop learners with purpose, strong schools, and engaged communities.