



Diedre Nyota Dawkins

Biography

Diedre Nyota Dawkins is a 2003 Bessie Award winner, a 2016 recipient of the President Obama Lifetime Achievement Award for National and Community Service, and a 2020 Evidence Award recipient for Artistic Expression. She is the founder of a mentorship program for middle school girls, and was voted 2016 Teacher of the Year at ConneXions Arts School. Diedre graduated from The N.Y.C. High School of the Performing Arts, received her B.F.A. from N.Y.U. and her M.F.A. from The University of Maryland College Park. She was a member of Ronald K. Brown /Evidence Dance Company, is a member of the Screen Actors Guild and has toured/worked with prominent artists in her field. Diedre directs dance at ConneXions, was as an adjunct professor in dance at Coppin State, is an Assistant Professor in dance at The Peabody Conservatory and is the Camp Director for AileyCamp Baltimore.

Statement of interest and intent

I would like to apply for the position of MDEA Understudy for the K-12 Public School constituency as a way to support a cause that I care deeply about, and one that I have dedicated my life to; the betterment of children. I have worked tirelessly to cultivate and decolonize the minds of inner city Black children, by exposing them to African Tradition and Culture, for the past 15 years. I am certain that through collective decision making, the inner city arts community and organizations like MDEA can do the work to prevent further cases of racist trauma that has plagued the underrepresented communities of Baltimore City. Working closely with MDEA can be a powerful way to reinforce my skills and expertise as I continue to instill confidence in our children. They must trust that they have what it takes to protect, restore and prioritize themselves inside of this systemically racist educational structure that they have inherited.

If chosen, my charge would be to build a bridge between Baltimore City Schools and MDEA and to work with the current K-12 representative to broaden the network and programming of city educators who may not know what beneficial opportunities MDEA can provide. With my background and knowledge, I believe I would serve as an excellent Understudy for the organization.