

Dr. Kara H. Ahmed has spent the last 16 years as a leader in New York City Public Schools, the nation's largest school system. As Deputy Chancellor of Early Childhood Education since 2022, Dr. Ahmed led a comprehensive birth to five mixed-delivery portfolio that included approximately 140,000 children, over 8000 classrooms and family childcare providers, and thousands of school/program leaders, educators, and multi-disciplinary staff. She instituted the necessary systems and structures to ensure continuous quality improvement across all programs and schools, including coaching and professional learning for leaders, teaching teams, and families. Dr. Ahmed managed the finance and operational systems that supported thousands of early childhood contracted programs, including community-based organizations, Early Head Start and Head Start, charter schools, and non-public schools, implemented data-driven portfolio planning to ensure families have access to high-quality early childhood programming, based on their needs and preferences, across all five New York City boroughs, and has developed the early childhood workforce by establishing university partnerships to support teachers in earning degrees and obtaining credentials so all children have access to excellence and educators have opportunities for economic mobility. Dr. Ahmed has a distinguished record of engaging diverse and multiple stakeholders, including but not limited to families, educators, superintendents, researchers, elected officials, the Mayor's office, the NYC City Council, and higher education, in partnering on a collective early childhood mission and vision for New York City.

Prior to being Deputy Chancellor, Dr. Ahmed served as Principal of *Living for the Young Family through Education (LYFE)* – a New York City Public Schools' program that provides high-quality early childhood education to the young children of student parents, making it possible for student parents to obtain a diploma while parenting. As Principal, Dr. Ahmed oversaw all operational and programmatic aspects of LYFE for over 30 locations across the five boroughs. Dr. Ahmed led the work that ensured all aspects of LYFE's comprehensive programming were informed by the strengths, interests, and needs of student parents, their young children, and their families. She implemented a research-based early childhood curriculum and assessment system, an extensive professional learning system for the entire LYFE community, and expanded child age-eligibility from six weeks old through three years-old fostering continuity of care and education for children and seamless transitions for families. Dr. Ahmed's leadership resulted in LYFE being recognized as a national model by the *Environment Rating Scales Institute* and *Teaching Strategies*®. Dr. Ahmed developed wide-scale reforms, ensuring that LYFE is inclusive of both student mothers and fathers and is laser-focused on improved educational options and outcomes for student parents and their children. In this role, Dr. Ahmed actively participated in City agency and Mayoral workgroups and committees, related to education, human services, and social advocacy, to influence policy and enhance coordination of services in LYFE and across New York City.

Dr. Ahmed has taught in Madrid, Spain and nationally at both the middle school and early childhood education level. Dr. Ahmed began her career in education as an early childhood teacher and received the *New Jersey Governor's Teacher of the Year Award* in her second year of teaching. She later became the Early Childhood Supervisor for New Brunswick Public Schools in which she managed and maintained the quality and fiscal aspects related to the public school and private provider preschool programs, and led the implementation of preschool inclusion for children with identified disabilities. Following her role as a school leader in New Jersey, Dr. Ahmed worked with William Paterson University to support the implementation of the New Jersey State Department of Education's preschool education policy and programming in over 25 public school districts across the state. She has served as a consultant to a diverse group of school districts supporting their development and sustainment of high-quality early childhood programs through capacity building for both school leaders and classroom teachers.

Dr. Ahmed has taught graduate courses at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her publications include *26 and counting: Examining the Early Launch to Learning Initiative (ELLI), New Jersey's effort towards creating a universal preschool system* (Ed.D. Dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, United States - New York, 2009).

Dr. Ahmed received the 2015 Champions for Children Organizational Leadership Award from the Center for Children's Initiatives (CCI) and she was presented with the 2011 Outstanding Dissertation Award by the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE)/Pearson. Dr. Ahmed co-presented a Featured Session at the 2016 National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development. She delivered the keynote address at the 2017 NYC Infant Toddler Conference

and at Brooklyn College's 2019 Early Childhood Conference. Dr Ahmed was a 2019 NYC Daily News Hometown Hero nominee and in 2020 she was a featured speaker for a webinar on engaging young learners in a pandemic, reaching over 1000 school leaders and educators nationally and internationally. Dr. Ahmed was a key panelist for the 2023 National Association of State Leaders in Early Education (NASLEE) Roundtable and was the featured Speaker for the No Silly Questions live podcast at the 2024 SXSW EDU.

Dr. Ahmed has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Fordham University, as well as a Master of Arts degree in Education Leadership and a Doctor of Education in Education Policy, both from Teachers College, Columbia University.