

Human and Civil Rights Award Winner

◆ Dr. Mia Williams ◆

Mary Hatwood Futrell Human and Civil Rights Award



On her commitment to fostering an environment where young people thrive, Dr. Williams once said: "I would like you to know that it's my moral obligation to be a part of eliminating the education gap and that I am truly committed to public education. It's my belief that outstanding public middle schools will enable us as a society to move closer to achieving social justice."

Dr. Mia Williams continues to build in a community where she cemented a strong foundation dedicated to quality public education.

Since 2008 Dr. Mia Williams has been the principal of Aki Kurose middle school in Seattle Washington, serving as a school leader and an institutional leader working to make sure that girls and young women are learning in an education system that values their voice at the highest level. Under Williams' leadership, Aki Kurose has been recognized for fostering student growth and achievement and closing opportunity gaps for all of her students; and particularly young girls and girls of color. She has received several awards, including being named the 2016 Washington State Middle-Level Principal of the Year by the Association of Washington School Principals.

Understanding the importance of decreasing the gender gap in leadership roles, Dr. Williams has worked to develop young women leaders in the greater Seattle Community. She sits on the advisory board for a local chapter of the International Order of the Rainbow Girls, a Masonic youth service organization which teaches leadership to young women through personal development and community service. Through this organization, Dr. Williams supports the goals of all young women working towards better life outcomes.

As a school principal, Dr. Williams invests in developing critical programs that support young women scholars gain access to equitable educational opportunities through mentorship, not only within their school, but in partnership with the community. Two of these mentorship programs include My Sister's Keeper for young black women and Hermana Unidas for Latina young women. Dr. Williams actively recruits women mentors at Aki Kurose Middle School to ensure that all young women at the school have the necessary resources and support to achieve their educational and life goals.

Always leading the example of excellence in education, in 2018 Dr. Williams completed her doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Washington where she further developed her skills as a transformational leader. Dr. Williams completed her dissertational research on gender and racial inequities in systems-level leadership roles and the collective action required to improve these inequities.

Dr. Williams was accepted as a presenter at the 2018 University Council of Educational Administration in Houston, TX where she moderated a discussion on the application of research with systems-level educational leaders across the country. The networking session was titled "Radical Nurturing: Supporting Women of Color and White Women in System-Level Roles".

It is through this work that Dr. Williams has continued to advocate for eliminating barriers and creating formal support networks for women, so they are empowered to rise to leadership roles at the highest levels.