



2021 MPPI Advocacy Conference

All Times Eastern

Friday, October 1

2:00-5:00 pm Pre-Conference (Advocacy 101 with MPPI Staff)

Saturday, October 2

9:00-9:30 AM – **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

9:30-10:45 AM – **Media and Messaging for Advocacy** ([*Ellen Roche*](#), *Executive Director, Trust for Learning*)

Join Trust for Learning Executive Director Ellen Roche for a session to help you increase your knowledge and comfort level with getting your message out to and through the media. Learn how to create media ready messages and how to ride the media waves as they come. Find out why you need core values in your messaging and how to develop a communications strategy...and more! As always, hands on activities will help build your skills.

10:45-11:15 AM – Break

11:15-12:15 – **Practicing Testimony** ([*Wendy Shenk-Evans*](#), *Executive Director, MPPI*)

You never know when you may need to testify in support or against a proposed rule or legislation, and we want you to be prepared. Last year MPPI provided a session on the essentials of giving testimony and we are back this year with some more practical advice and opportunities to hone your skills. First, attendees will hear a quick recap from last year's conference session on the essentials for giving testimony at a legislative or public hearing. Then we will all take a stab at developing and delivering some testimony and get real time feedback.

12:15-1:15 PM – Lunch

1:15 PM-2:30 PM –**Equity Issues in the Early Childhood Landscape** ([*Albert Wat*](#), *Senior Policy Director, Alliance for Early Success*, [*Maati Wafford*](#), *Director of Equity and Engagement, American Montessori Society*)

There's lots of talk about advancing equity and increasing access in early childhood education. What exactly is the early childhood landscape as it relates to accessing high quality early childhood programs and how does lack of access perpetuate lifelong

inequities? Our panelists will explore these questions and discuss initiatives that are working to solve inequities in early childhood.

2:30-3:00 PM – Break

3:00-4:00 PM – **Keynote** ([*Monique O’Grady*](#), *Arlington School Board, Co-Founder Arlington Montessori Action Committee*)

4:15-5:30 PM –

Demystifying the Legislative Process ([*Maryland State Del. Julian Ivey, MD, Chris Peusch*](#), *Maryland State Child-Care Association*)

Do a deep dive into the legislative process so you’ll be prepared to navigate it when the time comes. Hear from Delegate Julian Ivey, a current Maryland state legislator, and Chris Peusch, a veteran early childhood advocate, as they share their perspectives and recommendations for successfully walking through the legislative process from beginning to end.

5:45-6:45 PM – **Reception**

Dinner on your own

Sunday, October 3rd

9:00-10:15 AM – **Community Engagement** (*Denise Monnier, Director of State Advocacy, MPPI*)

Building relationships is a cornerstone of advocacy work, and community engagement is both a process and an outcome that will enhance and solidify those relationships to help you reach your advocacy goals. This session will explore how community engagement can support your organization and goals by establishing your community of support, and how to start engaging your community right away with simple tools and processes. Join us and dive in with hands on activities as you experience this important aspect of relationship building.

10:15-10:30 – **Break**

10:30-11:30 – **Universal Pre-K** (*Dr. Mayra Parada, Policy Associate MPPI*)

Universal Pre-K is increasingly becoming a hot topic in the world of early education and care. Join us to learn more about the history of Universal Pre-K, current policies at the state and federal levels, and how to advocate for Montessori education within the Universal Pre-K system. The session is led by Dr. Mayra Parada, current Policy Associate at MPPI and former Early Childhood State Fellow for the Virginia Preschool Initiative.

11:30 AM-12:00 PM – **Closing**



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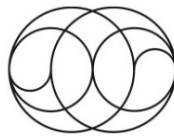
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Guest Speakers

Julian Ivey



Maryland State Delegate Julian Ivey is a lifelong resident of Prince George's County and District 47. He was the first African American to represent the second ward of Cheverly on its Town Council, and is a proud product of the Prince George's County Public School System which included attending a public Montessori school. In his first term on Council, Julian Ivey proposed and passed Sanctuary City legislation while lowering property taxes for working families.

As a State Delegate in Annapolis, Julian has been a fierce advocate for workers rights, expanding social safety-nets, and especially for Prince George's County. In addition to serving on the influential Ways & Means Committee, Julian was unanimously elected Vice-Chair of the Prince George's County House Delegation. In addition he is the Maryland House sponsor of the bill to create a pathway to teacher licensure for Montessori teachers.

Monique O'Grady



Monique O'Grady is a longtime passionate community advocate, and an experienced communications professional currently serving on the Arlington, VA School Board.

Monique's experience as a parent of 3 children who attended a public Montessori program spurred her to found the Arlington Montessori Action Committee (AMAC) which has driven successful efforts to expand public Montessori offerings in her school district. Monique and AMAC have also been instrumental in advocating for a Virginia teacher licensure pathway for Montessori credentialed teachers.

Monique holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Broadcast Journalism, with a minor in Business, from American University. She worked as a television reporter in Lafayette, Indiana and New Orleans, Louisiana before opening a Washington Bureau for three TV stations in the Midwest, where she served as bureau chief. During her nine-year tenure as bureau chief, Monique covered three presidents and many members of Congress. She went on to become the Capitol Hill Correspondent for Black Entertainment Television, where she interviewed First Lady Laura Bush, then-Senator Barack Obama, and many cabinet-level officials.

Monique is the recipient of the Arlington Public Schools Honored Citizen award and has been recognized by her church and neighborhood for her volunteer efforts. She now works as a PR professional and has experience in the non-profit arena promoting Rosslyn's business community, energy efficiency, aging issues, national parks, and flood mitigation.

Christina Peusch

Christina Peusch is the Executive Director of Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA), a non-profit organization representing over 5000 members working in the field of early care and education. MSCCA's mission is the advancement of childcare/early learning schools/centers in Maryland. MSCCA believes our members educate and care for Maryland's most important natural resource, our children. Chris is a powerful force as an experienced, active advocate and lobbyist with ten years of experience at the state and federal level on behalf of early education, small businesses, childcare issues, children and families. She has been a strong voice for an equitable mixed delivery system for prekindergarten, investments in childcare and ECE workforce and has impacted positive legislative change to benefit the childcare/ early education field.

Chris is the co-chair of the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care Advisory Council and an active member or Commissioner of the following:

- Family Engagement Coalition

- P-20 Leadership Council
- Governor appointed on State Early Childhood Advisory Council
- Governor appointed Commissioner for Lead Prevention and Awareness
- Workforce Industry Advisory Committee, Montgomery College
- Maryland Family Network Public Policy Committee
- Project Act Advisory Council
- State Early Childhood Workforce Education Workgroup
- Maryland State Department of Education Early Childhood Research Advisory Council
- WIDA Early Years
- Child Care and Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Framework Committee

Chris was previously a center Director and then a regional Coordinator for six early childhood programs and state accredited, non-public preschools across Maryland for over 10 years. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education and Women's Studies.

Chris's proudest accomplishments are her two children and she loves spending time with her precious grandchildren!

Ellen Roche



Ellen joined Trust for Learning in 2018 after graduating from a Montessori preschool and with many years of experience with schools, nonprofits, and foundations since.

Prior to recent leadership roles at two strategy firms, Ellen taught music, English, and humanities to children and teenagers and discovered a passion for civic ed and the history of progressive schools while earning a master's in education. She has been lucky

to teach and develop curricula across ages, settings, and approaches and is fascinated by the dynamic relationships between American schools, democracy, and culture.

Outside of schools, she has developed and led workshops around the country on racial equity, political storytelling, progressive education history, and the hidden literature of American women. Over eight years as a strategist and researcher for various progressive efforts, she became more and more oriented toward root-cause problems and structural solutions, most recently supporting a midterm voter turnout campaign and the launch of a national racial equity platform: [Racial Equity Here](#). Ellen serves as an advisory board member for New Haven ChILD and is grateful to participate in the racial equity committee of the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative. She also serves as a volunteer research assistant in Dr. Rachel Barr's Early Learning Project lab at Georgetown University, where she is thrilled to be immersed in the science of early learning. Outside of work, Ellen participates in racial justice, mindfulness, democracy-building and environmental efforts, and has recently taken up birdwatching in the beautiful forests of D.C.

Maati Wafford



Maati Wafford serves as the Director of Equity and Engagement for the American Montessori Society. She advocates for equity by creating avenues for the coexistence of science, spirit & social justice in Montessori education. Her leadership focuses on building trust for engaging in direct, honest, and productive conversations about rooting the complex art and science of teaching in equity and justice.

She is a masters level social worker, equity practitioner and spirit-led credentialed Montessori educator (Early Childhood, Lower EL, Upper EL, Administrator).

She fiercely infuses critical consciousness and a sincere love of learning into her interactions with children, parents, and fellow educators. For nearly two decades Maati has created brave spaces for Montessorians to expand, build, and create more justice in the world. She is a firm believer in divine intelligence and understands that we all sit at the very center of that space!

Albert Wat



Albert Wat is a Senior Policy Director at the Alliance for Early Success, where he supports the organization's strategy and goals for early education, including increasing access to high-quality pre-k and child care, improving the early learning workforce, and enhancing alignment with K-12 policies. Before joining the Alliance, Albert was a Senior Policy Analyst in the Education Division of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, where he helped governors' staff and advisors improve their early care and education policies, from early childhood through third grade. Before NGA, Albert was the Research Manager at Pre-K Now, an advocacy campaign at the Pew Center on the States, where he authored a number of policy reports, managed research activities for the

initiative, and provided analysis and information about the latest pre-k and early education research and policy developments to Pre-K Now staff and its network of state partners. Albert has served on two National Academies committees: *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* and *Vibrant and Healthy Kids: Aligning Science, Practice, and Policy to Advance Health Equity*. He also serves on the board of the Council for Professional Recognition.

Albert has worked with schools, school reform nonprofits, and community-based organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area, southeastern Michigan, and Washington, DC. He holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in education from Stanford University and a master's in education policy from George Washington University.