

**Dana G. Nickson, Ph.D.**

University of Washington Seattle  
College of Education  
Education Foundations, Leadership, & Policy  
Miller Hall, M213  
2012 Skagit Lane  
Seattle, WA 98105  
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**EDUCATION**

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University of Michigan

Ph.D. in Educational Studies, 2020

Concentration in Foundations of Education & Policy

Dissertation Title: *Black Movement, Black Striving: Examining Perceptions of Place and School Choice Decision-Making Across Metropolitan Detroit*

University of Pennsylvania

M.Ed. in Education, Culture and Society

Northwestern University

B.A. in African American Studies, Minor in Cultural Anthropology

School for International Training

Origins of African Identity in Ghana, West Africa

**RESEARCH INTERESTS**

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- Black students and families' educational agency, advocacy, and placemaking practices in communal contexts and PK-12 schooling
- Education policy and practice in U.S. metropolitan regions experiencing demographic change
- Black Studies and Black Geographies theoretical and methodological approaches in education research
- Community-based and participatory research

**HONORS AND AWARDS**

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**2022** Art of Leadership Teaching Award, Danforth Educational Leadership Program, University of Washington

**2021** AERA Division L Education Policy & Politics Outstanding Dissertation Award

**2021** Stanley E. and Ruth B. Dimond Best Dissertation Award, University of Michigan School of Education

- 2019** Engaged Pedagogy Initiative Fellow, Office of Community Engaged Academic Learning, University of Michigan
- 2017** Barbara Jackson Scholar, University Council for Educational Administration (2017-2019)
- 2015** Rackham Merit Fellow, Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan (2015-2020)
- 2014** Dean’s Centennial Scholar, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education
- 2013** Princeton in Africa Fellowship, Equal Education in Khayelitsha, South Africa
- 2009** Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, Northwestern University (2009-2011)

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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### **University**

- 2020- Present      Assistant Professor of Educational Equity and Justice in Leadership, Policy, & Politics  
University of Washington, Seattle  
Area: Educational Foundations, Leadership, & Policy
- 2018-2019        Project Coordinator  
Sustaining Transformative Educational Leadership, Learning, and Research  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- 2015-2017        Research Coordinator & Research Assistant  
Community-Based Research on Equity & Activism for Transformative Education  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- 2012-2013        Research Coordinator  
South Side Health & Vitality Studies  
University of Chicago

## **AFFILIATIONS**

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Faculty Affiliate, Banks Center for Educational Justice, University of Washington College of Education, 2022-Present.

Research Affiliate, Community Based Research on Equity, Activism, & Transformative Education (CREATE) Center, University of Michigan School of Education, 2022-Present.

## **REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES**

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Rodriguez, G. & **Nickson, D.** (2025). Placemaking and contesting the spatial politics of suburbia: A Black and Latinx geographies perspective. *Educational Studies*.

\***Nickson, D.**, Habtom, S., Ngongi-Lukula, S., Beyene, Y., & Ishimaru, A. M. (2025). Partnering to make a homeplace for Black families: Black women’s systemic leadership in an era of

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\* Publication co-authored with graduate student(s).

retrenchment. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 33.  
<https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.33.9009>

**Nickson, D.** (2024). “Livonia is just all racism”: Locating Black families’ racial and spatial experiences, school choices, and educational agency in metropolitan Detroit. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2024.2419131>

Germinaro, K., & **Nickson, D.** (2024). Black Spatial Storylines: Connections of Black space, sound and story as Pedagogy. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 23.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069241279499>

**Nickson, D.** (2022). Embracing the city: Black families’ place attachments and (re)imaginings of the city and suburb in search of educational opportunity. *AERA Open*, 8(1), 1-14.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584221126479>

Wilson, C., **Nickson, D.**, Hetrick, C., Wilson-Clark, D. (2022). “Nothing about us without us”: Tending to the emancipatory ideologies and transformative goals of participatory action research partnerships. *Qualitative Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941221087869>

**Nickson, D.** (2021). The democratization of educational care: Spatial imaginaries, demographic change, and Black families continued educational advocacy. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 5(3), 303-316. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2021.2021613>

Wilson, C., **Nickson, D.**, Ransom, K. (2021). Spiriting urban educational justice: The leadership of African American mothers organizing for increased school access and local control. *Journal of Educational Change*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-021-09443-1>

## BOOK CHAPTERS

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\***Nickson, D.**, Washington, S., Smith, K., Habtom, S. (2026). Storying Black and Indigenous Communities’ Place/ Land Relations in Educational Engagement and Advocacy. In M. Antony-Newman (Ed.), *The role of social inequality in parent engagement: From inequality to social justice in education*.

**Nickson, D.** & Mae W., N. (Conditional Acceptance). Home embodied: Two Black womxn’s exploration of educational justice in the African diaspora. In D.C. Andrews, O. Furman, & R. Wilmot (Eds.), *Freedom Teachers, Freedom Dreamers: Black Girls’ and Womxn’s Embodiments of Healing and Liberation*.

## WORKS UNDER REVIEW

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**Nickson, D.**, Wilson, C., Kneff-Chang, T., Bragg, J. (In Revision). Sustaining education justice organizations: Lessons on leading, leaving, and growing from community organizers.

Habtom, S., **Nickson, D.**, Ishimaru, A. (Under Review). “He is especially smart and has wisdom”: Codesigning intergenerational literacies with Black families.

## REPORTS, PRACTITIONER PUBLICATIONS

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Habtom, S., Ishimaru, A., Nickson, D., Williams, M., Butler, B. LeClair, Z., Page, N., Rasmussen, E. (2025). "He is especially smart and has wisdom": A guide to co-designing critical literacies with Black Families. University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

### **NEWSLETTERS, VIDEO SERIES, MISC.**

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"Kings of Literacy: Celebrating Black Boy Joy through Storytelling" (2024-2025). Advancing Educational Justice. University of Washington College of Education.

<https://buff.ly/3WnWVwQ>

"Urban Scholar Highlight: Dana Nickson" (May 2023). Urban@UW.

<https://urban.uw.edu/news/urban-scholar-highlight-dana-nickson/>

"Publishing your first solo article" (February 2023). We Need to Name This video series panelist on navigating academia. <https://www.weneedtonamethis.com/watch/v/episode13>

Nickson, D. (December 2021). Black Movement, Black Striving: Centering Black Families' Education Agency Across City-Suburb Divides. Division L (Policy & Politics) Newsletter of American Educational Research Association.

### **SELECT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

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Nickson, D. (2025, April). Rooted in and across place: Black families' geographies of communal and educational care. Paper presented as part of a symposium titled, Honoring Black and Indigenous people's place and land relations: Educational engagement in and beyond schools. Session Co-Organizer. American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference, Denver, CO.

Germinaro, K. & Nickson, D. (2025, April). Black spatial storylines: Connections of Black space and story as pedagogy. Poster presented as part of session titled, Imagining Black worlds: Emphasizing Black methodologies in reparative educational inquiry. American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference, Denver, CO.

Nickson, D., Habtom, S., Beyene, Y., Ngongi-Lukula, S., Ishimaru, A. (2024, November). "He is especially smart and has wisdom": Co-designing joy and justice with Black families and communities. Critical Conversation at the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), Los Angeles, CA.

Nickson, D., Habtom, S., Ngongi-Lukulu, S., Beyene, Y., Williams, M., Williams, C., Page, N., Ishimaru, A. (2024, April). The Conditions for Co-Design: Partnering for Racial Equity in an Era of Retrenchment. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA.

Nickson, D., Habtom, S., Ngongi-Lukulu, S., Beyene, Y., Williams, M., Williams, C., Page, N., Ishimaru, A. (2023, November). The Conditions for Co-Design: Partnering for Racial Equity in an Era of Retrenchment. Paper presented at the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), Minneapolis, MN.

Nickson, D. (2023, April). It's just home: Honoring the relational nature of place in Black families' educational strivings. Paper presented as part of a symposium titled,

Collaborative Inquiry as a Rehearsal of Educational Transformations: Issues of Races, Justice, and Community in Detroit. Session Co-Organizer. American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference, Chicago, IL.

Nickson, D. (2023, April). “Livonia is just all racism”: Locating racial and spatial histories in Black families’ educational agency. Paper presented as part of a symposium titled, Reimagining suburbia: Youth of color, family, and community activism for educational justice. Session Co-Organizer. American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference, Chicago, IL.

Nickson, D., Wilson, C., Kneff-Chang, T., Bragg, J. (2022, November). Leading, leaving, and growing education justice organizations: Sustainability lessons learned from community organizers. Paper presented at the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), Seattle, WA.

Nickson, D. (2021, April). Choosing Race, Choosing Place: Black Families' Racial Subjectivities in Pursuit of Educational Opportunity. Paper presented as part of symposium titled, Dancing in the Rain, Weathering the Storm: Stories of Black Family Agency and Resistance. Session Co-Organizer. American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference, Virtual Conference.

Nickson, D. & Knight, D. (2021, April). School Finance Inequity and Urban Divestment: Black Families Navigating Racialized Opportunity Structures in Metropolitan Detroit. American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference, Virtual Conference.

Nickson, D. (2020, November). Children of movement, children of place: Place-based subjectivities in Black families’ search for educational opportunity. Paper presented at the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), Virtual Conference.

Wilson, C., Nickson, D., Ransom, K. (2018, November). Spiriting educational justice in Detroit: The leadership of African American mothers mobilizing for increased school access, equity, and local control. Paper presented at the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), Houston, TX.

Wilson, C., Nickson, D., Wilson-Clark, D., Hetrick, C. (2017, April). Advancing educational justice given the benefits, challenges, and potential of participatory action research. Paper presented at the American Education Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX.

Nickson, D., & Wilson-Clark, D. (2016, November). Lifelines to authenticity: The role of insider narratives and experience in participatory action research and community-driven leadership. Paper presented at the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) Annual Conference, Detroit, MI.

## **INVITED SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS**

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Speaker, Born of Struggle: Black Lives, Black Studies, and the Construction of Knowledge, Highline Public Schools Culturally Responsive Teaching Institute, June 21st, 2024.

Speaker, Leading Towards Justice Symposium Un-Keynote Conversation, University of Washington College of Education, January 19, 2024.

Speaker, Born of Struggle: Black Lives, Black Studies, and the Construction of Knowledge, Shoreline School District Ethnic Studies Series, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Alumni Reflection Speaker, UCEA Barbara L. Jackson Scholars Recognition Ceremony, University Council on Educational Administration Annual Conference, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Panelist, 50 Years of African American Studies at Northwestern University, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Panelist, For Cultivating Care, Dignity, Love, and Respect in Education Webinar, *Equity & Excellence in Education* Journal, March 24, 2022

Speaker, Cities, Suburbs, & Education Equity: Seeking Justice Across Boundaries & Borders, Transformation in Action Speaker Series, Transforming Privilege, March 3, 2022.

Panelist, Women of Color and the Academy (WOCATA) Early Career Roundtable, University of Michigan (Virtual), March 24, 2021.

Speaker, Black Movement, Black Educational Opportunity: Examining Perceptions of Place and School Choice Decision-Making Across Metro Detroit, Lunch U.P. (Urban Planning) Series, University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, March 12, 2020. (Cancelled Due to COVID-19 Precautions)

## **GRANTS**

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*Codesigning Family-School Agency & Early Critical Literacies of Black Youth towards Systemic Racial Equity*, Research Grants on Reducing Inequality, William T. Grant Foundation, 2022-2025.

Co-PI with Lead PI: Ann Ishimaru (\$600,000)

*Deepening and Institutionalizing Racial Equity in an Evolving Research Community Practice Partnership*, Advancing Equity in Research-Practice Partnerships Supplemental Grant Program, Spencer & William T. Grant Foundations, 2022.

Co-PI with Lead PI: Ann Ishimaru (\$15,000)

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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### **University of Washington College of Education**

- Leadership for Learning Ed.D. Program (L4L) Black Geographies of Educational Leadership Special Interest Group, 2023-2024.
- L4L Leadership for Equitable Systems (LES), 2022-2023, 2024-2025.
- L4L Leadership for Equitable Systems, Historical Strand, 2021-2022.

- EDLPS 579, Special Topics in Organizational & Policy Analysis- Cities, Suburbs, & Education Equity, Winter 2022, Winter 2026.
- EDLPS 561, Education Policies and Leadership in Political Contexts, Spring 2021, Spring 2022, Spring 2023, Spring 2025.
- EDLPS 503, Equitable Collaborations: Advocating with Students, Families and Communities, Fall 2020-Winter 2021, Winter-Spring 2022, Winter 2023, Winter 2024, Fall, 2024, Winter 2026.

### **University of Michigan School of Education**

- EDUC 645, Graduate Teaching Assistant, Cultural Studies in Education, Fall 2017.
- EDUC 737, Graduate Teaching Assistant, Content Knowledge for Teaching: Histories, Perspectives, and Methods, Fall 2017.

## **STUDENT ADVISING**

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### **PhD Advisees:**

- 1) Simone Ngongi-Lukula (*co-advised with Ann Ishimaru*)
- 2) Yikealo Beyene

### **PhD Committees:**

- 1) Mary Padden (*Completed Spring 2024*)
- 2) Sarah Clancey (*Completed Spring 2024*)
- 3) Lindsey Kaiser (*Completed Spring 2024*)
- 4) Hailey Karcher (*Completed Summer 2024*)
- 5) Cassandra McKenzie
- 6) Kiet Pham
- 7) Todd Obilor, GSR Clinical Psychology

### **MEd Advisees:**

- 1) Olga Mashnitskaya (*Completed Spring 2023*)
- 2) Sophie Higdon (*Completed Spring 2024*)
- 3) Sahra Ibrahim (*Completed Spring 2025*)
- 4) Cyrus Lyday
- 5) Kate Pasco
- 6) Andrea Malagón

### **Edd Advisees:**

- 1) Chris Alejano (*Completed Spring 2024*)
- 2) Alvertis Brooks (*Completed Spring 2024*)
- 3) Beatrice Butler (*Completed Spring 2024*)
- 4) Katie Cryan Leary (*Completed Spring 2024*)
- 5) Melia LaCour (*Completed Spring 2024*)
- 6) Tarra Mitchell (*Completed Spring 2024*)
- 7) Paula Montgomery (*Completed Spring 2024*)
- 8) Katrina Pearl (*Completed Spring 2024*)

- 9) Melissa Riley (*Completed Spring 2024*)  
10) Ayva Thomas (*Completed Spring 2024*)

## **SERVICE**

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### **College**

- Member, Student Support and Advisory Committee, University of Washington College of Education, September 2024- Present.
- Faculty Mentor, Black Mentoring Collaborative, University of Washington, April 2022- June 2022.
- Steering Committee Member, Sisterhood Initiative, University of Washington College of Education, January 2022-Present.
- Member, Boeing Endowed Teacher Education Professorship Search Committee, University of Washington College of Education, December 2021-March 2023.
- Member, Diversity & Equity Committee, University of Washington College of Education, September 2020-June 2022.
- Faculty Mentor, University of Washington Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program, November 2020-June 2021.

### **National**

- Reviewer, Spencer Foundation Small Grants, January 2024- December 2024.
- Member, University Council on Educational Administration (UCEA) Annual Convention 2022 Program Committee, December 2021-November 2022.
- Member, AERA Division L (Policy & Politics) Outstanding Dissertation Selection Committee, February 2022.
- Reviewer,  
AERA Handbook of Education Policy Research, 2<sup>nd</sup> Volume  
Bank Street Occasional Paper Series  
Emerging Voices in Education  
Equity & Excellence in Education  
Frontiers in Education  
International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education  
Journal of Urban Affairs  
Review of Educational Research  
Social Problems

## **AFFILIATIONS AND ACADEMIC MEMBERSHIPS**

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- American Education Research Association (AERA)  
Member, Division G, Social Context of Education

Member, Division L, Education Policy and Politics  
Member, Division A, Administration, Organization, & Leadership  
Member, Research Focus on Black Education SIG  
University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA)