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Rochester Prep's Shanai Lee receives school reform fellowship

Justin Murphy, 9.27.21



Shanai Lee, an administrator for the parent company of Rochester Prep Charter School, will receive the two-year Rochester Education Fellowship, the project organizers announced Thursday.

Lee, a graduate of Wilson Magnet High School, was until recently the regional senior director for Uncommon Schools, the nationwide charter school operation that runs Rochester Prep. Before that she was the clerk for the Rochester City School District, among other jobs in RCSD. She has a doctorate in education and a masters of business administration from the University of Rochester.

The fellowship is funded by the Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation and modeled after a charter school incubator in Indianapolis.

Other local organizations supporting the fellowship include Action for a Better Community, the Children's Institute, Ibero-American Action League and Connected Communities.

In quotes in the press release, leaders heralded the prospect of change that will be transformative, transformational, bold, systemic and long-lasting.

Past efforts with the same goal have struggled to articulate a specific alternative vision for education in Rochester, one of the poorest and most segregated communities in the country.

RCSD itself is not involved in the fellowship. The idea, Farash Foundation Executive Director Holli Budd said in January, is to have "a system of schools, not a school system."

In a statement, Lee said: "I look forward to working with families and stakeholders to create real change in our education system that will have a lasting effect on our current students and parents as well as future generations."

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