Superintendent Denise Juneau Names Two to SPS Cabinet

*Keisha Scarlett, Ed.D. and James Bush appointed to new positions*

SEATTLE – Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Denise Juneau today announced two new cabinet-level leadership appointments in two different district divisions.

- **Keisha Scarlett, Ed.D.**, has been named Chief Academic Officer and will oversee the district’s Teaching and Learning Division. Dr. Scarlett is currently the SPS Chief of Equity, Partnerships, and Engagement. She begins her new position on Jan. 9, 2021, replacing Diane DeBacker, Ed.D., who is leaving SPS on Jan. 8, 2021 to return to her home state of Kansas.

- **James Bush** has been named the district’s Chief of Equity, Partnerships, and Engagement. Mr. Bush, who is currently the SPS Executive Director of School and Community Partnerships, replaces Dr. Scarlett on Jan. 9, 2021.

“It’s testament to the overall strength and excellence of Seattle Public Schools staff that we are able to fill these positions with such high-caliber individuals,” said Superintendent Juneau. “We are very fortunate that Dr. Scarlett and Mr. Bush have accepted their new roles and will continue to lead our district during these challenging times. Dr. DeBacker’s leadership will be missed but, like me, she knows that she’s leaving her division in very good hands.”

**Keisha Scarlett, Ed.D.**

Dr. Scarlett is a multigenerational resident of Seattle and graduate of Seattle Public Schools. She began her career with the district as a teacher at Asa Mercer Middle School.

Since that time, Dr. Scarlett has also served as a school principal at South Shore PK-8; Human Resource Director; Executive Director of Organizational Development for Equity, Strategy and Partnership; and her most recent position as Chief of Equity, Partnerships, and Engagement.
As the Chief Academic Officer, she will lead Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction; College and Career Readiness; Digital Learning; Early Learning; ELL/International Programs; Native Education; and Research and Evaluation.

Dr. Scarlett holds a doctorate degree in Education Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Washington.

From Dr. Scarlett: “I am deeply honored and thrilled to serve our district in the role of Chief Academic Officer. I am so appreciative of Dr. DeBacker’s leadership, and grateful for all that I have learned working in close partnership with her over the past year and a half as we work as a system to implement the district’s strategic plan, Seattle Excellence. The purpose of education is to reveal talents. Our students -- particularly those furthest from educational justice -- deserve every opportunity to be nurtured in educational environments that inspire engagement, promote partnership and agency with their families and create what our partners from Kingmakers of Oakland call a ‘conspiracy of care’ across every classroom, school, community and citywide.”

James Bush

Mr. Bush has for the past two decades served our ethnically and linguistically diverse students, their families, and our schools in various roles within and external to SPS.

Prior to joining SPS, Mr. Bush served as the neighborhood programs manager at the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, where he managed a variety of community-building programs. He also served as a key leader for the City of Seattle’s Race and Social Justice Initiative under three Seattle mayors.

For the past four years, Mr. Bush has served as the SPS Executive Director of School and Community Partnerships.

Mr. Bush, who grew up in Seattle’s Rainier Beach neighborhood, attended the University of Washington, earning a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s in public administration from the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance.

From James Bush: “I’m grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve our students, families and staff at Seattle Public Schools. There’s never been a more important time than now to ensure racial equity throughout our district, and that requires the deep partnership and commitment of all our stakeholders.”

Diane DeBacker, Ed.D.
When Dr. DeBacker joined Seattle Public Schools in early 2019, she brought with her over 35 years of educational leadership experience including serving as the Kansas Commissioner of Education for the state of Kansas.

Under her leadership, the Teaching and Learning Division helped develop over 600 emergency learning videos, adopted new curricula, identified priority standards for remote learning, trained 4,000 educators on new learning platforms, conducted surveys and focus groups to inform decision-making, and created a Remote Learning Playbook to guide teaching and learning this school year.

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