



DUKE ELLINGTON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS PRESENTS...



**46<sup>th</sup> Commencement Ceremony**  
Class of 2021 Graduation Program  
**Saturday, June 19, 2021 | 3:00 pm**

Duke Ellington School of the Arts Theater  
3500 R St, NW  
Washington, DC 20007



## **District of Columbia Public Schools**

Muriel Bowser  
Mayor

Dr. Lewis Ferebee  
Chancellor

Dr. Jerry Jellig  
Instructional Superintendent



## **46<sup>th</sup> Annual Commencement Ceremony**

### **Duke Ellington School of the Arts**

3500 R Street NW, Washington, DC 20007

Saturday, June 19, 2021

3:00 p.m.

#### **Co-Founders**

Peggy Cooper Cafritz

Mike Malone

#### **Head of School & Principal**

Sandi Logan

#### **Assistant Principal, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade**

Lisa Jones

#### **Assistant Principal, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade**

Isaac Daniel

#### **Director of Arts**

Angela Jones

#### **Director of Shepherding & Social Emotional Learning**

Donna Hollis

#### **Director of Administrative Operations**

Donna Hayden

#### **Director of Parent and Student Engagement**

James Walker

#### **Director of Operations & Collaborative Projects**

Jevelle Branch

#### **Director of External Affairs & Community Engagement**

Savannah R. Overton-Williams

#### **Executive Assistant to the Principal**

Veronica Martin

#### **Senior Class Officers**

Eve Ellis, President

Sydni Lette-Daffeh, Vice President

Neiori Willingham, Secretary

Kennedi Nash, Treasurer

Sean Polk II, Parliamentarian

Reagan Taylor – Dance Representative

Zora Gregory – LMC Representative

Jonetta Harrison – TDP Representative

Erik Ventura – Theatre Representative

Victoria Nkop – Vocal Music Representative

#### **Senior Class Sponsors**

Jevelle Branch

Donna Hollis

Angela Jones

Veronica Martin

Nicolás Ojeda

Suwana Reavis

Anthony Verlich

#### **Duke Ellington School of the Arts Project Partners**

District of Columbia Public Schools

The Ellington Fund

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

The George Washington University

**The Duke Ellington School of the Arts Project** is an independently operated public school in partnership with the D.C. Public Schools, George Washington University, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and The Ellington Fund. At Ellington, a college preparatory and arts focused high school, students specialize in Dance, Instrumental Music, Literary Media and Communications, Museum Studies, Technical Design & Production, Theatre, Visual Arts, & Vocal Music.

**The Ellington Fund** was founded in 1978 and serves as the independent 501(c)3 fundraising arm of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts.

Jeanette McCune, *DESAP Board President*  
Ari Q. Fitzgerald, *Ellington Fund Board President*  
Amber Golden, *SHADE President*  
Kevette Burwell, Jocelyn McClure, Ronald Lee Newman, *Alum Leadership Council*

**Academic Chairs**

English – Cullen Swinson  
Math – Charise Shaw  
Science – Michele Baskin  
Social Studies – Lynn Moore  
Specialized Instruction – Ben Smith, *Lead Teacher*  
World Languages – Laura Moticka, *Lead Teacher*

**Art Chairs**

Dance – Charles Augins  
Instrumental Music – Heather Haughn  
Literary Media & Communications – Shom Shamatpande  
Museum Studies – Marta Reid Stewart  
Technical Design & Production – Robin Harris  
Theatre – Kenneth Johnson  
Visual Arts – Rodney Little  
Vocal Music – Dr. Monique Spells

*Special thanks to all Academic and Arts Faculty!*

*KornerStone Productions*  
*Stacie Banks, Lee's Flowers*  
*Chakauna Cleveland, Lighting Designer*  
*Robin Harris, Stage Manager*  
*Vichelle Jones, Stage Manager*  
*Tony Starnes, Video Editor*  
*Thom Woodward, Sound Engineer*

*Special thanks to former DESAP Board President Charles Barber for his many years of service to the Ellington community!*

*Special thanks to the faculty and staff who are not returning next school year. We thank you for your service to our students and community-at-large – Michele Baskin, Heather Haughn, Elena Prince, Jami Ramberan, Shom Shamatpande*

*Special thanks to our retiring faculty member, Vera Katz!*

*"We would thank you from the bottom of our hearts, but for you our hearts have no bottom." - Unknown*

# 46th COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY PROGRAM

## Opening Selection

*Git It All*  
Prepared for Inauguration 2021  
Performed by Radical Elite Show Band  
Director, Kieron Irvine and Assistant Director, Tyra Woods  
Edited by Infinite Content

## Processional

Class of 2021

*Pomp and Circumstance*  
March No. 1 op. 39  
By Edward Elgar  
Duke Ellington School of the Arts Orchestra  
Conducted by Heather Haughn  
Edited by Tyra Woods

*The Star Spangled Banner*  
Traditional,  
*Lift Every Voice and Sing*  
Written by James Weldon Johnson  
Performed by Charli Temoney

## Welcome

Sandi Logan, Head of School & Principal

## TDP Presentation

*Through Our Eyes*  
By Technical Design & Production Class of 2021

## Salutatorian Address

Jackson Grant

## Instrumental Selection

*Guitar Concerto no. 1 in D major, Movement III*  
by Mario Castelnuovo Tedesco.  
Performed by Jack Bobley

## Valedictorian Address

Sean C Polk II

## Theatre Presentation

*Excerpts from Senior Showcase*  
Performed by Theatre Class of 2021

## Museum Studies Presentation

*Museum Studies Limitless*  
by Museum Studies Class of 2021

## Ellington Fund and Special Awards

Ari Q. Fitzgerald, Ellington Fund Board President  
Jeanette McCune, DESA Board President  
Sandi Logan, Head of School & Principal

## Visual Arts Presentation

*Ventures of the Mind*

Animation by Piankhi Zimmerman and Rodney Little  
Featuring Visual Arts Class of 2021

## Introduction of Commencement Speaker

Eve Ellis, Senior Class President

## Dance Performance

*Never Would Have Made It*

Music by Marvin Sapp

Choreography by Synia Cherry and Jayna Thomas  
Performed by Dance Class of 2021

## Commencement Address

Christine Platt

*Author, Advocate, Policy Reformer*

## Vocal Music Performance

*Impossible Dream*

Composed by Mitch Leigh, with lyrics written by Joe Darion  
Performed by Sean Polk II

## Literary Media & Communications Performance

*Check A Box*

Performed by Quinnyetta Scotland  
Edited by Oscar Jamaal

## Acceptance of the Class of 2021

Dr. Jerry Jellig, Instructional Superintendent

## Awarding of Diplomas

Sandi Logan, *Head of School & Principal*  
*Class of 2021*

## Final Thoughts

Sandi Logan, *Head of School & Principal*

## Recessional

*Brand New Day*

Written by Luther Vandross  
Performed by The Vocal Department

## Christine Platt Commencement Address



Christine Platt is a modern-day Renaissance woman. From serving as an advocate for policy reform to using the power of storytelling as a tool for social change, Christine's work reflects her practice of living with intention. She holds a B.A. in Africana Studies, M.A. in African-American Studies, and a J.D. in General Law. An award-winning author, Christine has written over two dozen literary works for people of all ages. When she's not writing, Christine spends her time curating The Afrominimalist—a creative platform chronicling her journey to intentional living. She currently serves as the Managing Director of the Antiracist

Research & Policy Center at American University.

Christine is a member of the Association of Black Women Historians, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, and serves as an Ambassador for Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. She is also a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. Christine regularly partners organizations on educational initiatives including Teaching for Change, Turning the Page, An Open Book Foundation, First Book, Eaton Workshop, PEN/Faulkner Foundation, and Writers and Artists Across the Country. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for Lee Montessori Public Charter School in Washington, DC.



# *Congratulations*

## *Duke Ellington School of the Arts*

### *Class of 2021*

June 19, 2021

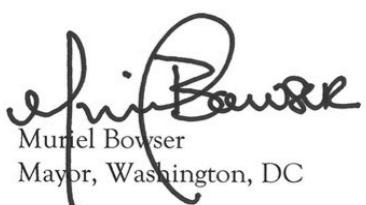
As Mayor of Washington, DC, I am honored and pleased to join your family, friends, and neighbors in extending congratulations to the Duke Ellington School of the Arts Class of 2021!

Your academic experience will be marked by innovation, perseverance, and growth. Learning in a remote environment challenged you, your teachers, and your friends and family in remarkable ways. You have demonstrated that you cannot only face a challenge, but succeed. Know that life will test you, but you have the knowledge and skillset to triumph over obstacles, large and small.

Graduating in Washington, DC connects you to the world in a special way. The nation's capital is right outside your window. Cherish your DC experience to strengthen your resolve, collect new skills, and become your best self.

Your future is yours to define. I encourage you to continue to work hard and stay focused on the future you imagine for yourself.

On behalf of the 712,000 residents of Washington, DC, I congratulate you on your accomplishment. May success follow you always.

  
Muriel Bowser  
Mayor, Washington, DC





June 2021

Dear Graduate,

On behalf of the entire DC Public Schools community, congratulations on your graduation! This diploma is the culmination of your hard work and dedication to your studies. I am proud of what you have accomplished, and I hope that you and your family take the time to step back and celebrate this milestone.

The past year and a half presented a multitude of challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but you persevered, completed your high school education, and are now a DCPS graduate! I hope you will reflect on the opportunities you have had throughout your high school journey and the challenges that you have overcome with persistence and integrity.

Whether you are continuing your education through a career certificate program or a bachelor's degree, entering the military or an apprenticeship program, or moving directly into a career, please continue to take time to explore your interests and know they may take you in unexpected directions. I entered college as a biology major, and my career plans were upended when I volunteered at an elementary school and realized the joy of teaching a young person to read. Over twenty years later, I still consider myself a teacher first and feel fortunate to have the opportunity to support your success every day. Whatever the future holds, you should be confident that your hard work has given you the tools you need to succeed in college, career, and life.

Take a moment to consider who stood with you when you celebrated your achievements and who lifted you up in moments of struggle, whether they be family, friends, teachers, or other members of your community. Thank them for the role that they played in your success. It is my hope that your accomplishments will make the path a bit easier for the students who come after you to achieve their goals for college and career.

The road ahead will continue to have milestones and challenges but know that the DCPS community is here to support you and we are rooting for your success. Congratulations again, and we cannot wait to see all that you accomplish as a member of the DCPS alumni community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lewis D. Ferebee".

Lewis D. Ferebee  
Chancellor, DC Public Schools



June 2021

Dear Graduates of the Class of 2021:

Congratulations! You did it! The world awaits you, but it won't wait for long, so jump in. Four years ago, you came to high school with hopes and dreams of future success as defined personally and familiarly. You embraced the challenges of rigorous coursework, co-curricular engagement, and relevant, real-world experiences. You developed relationships with teachers, parents, counselors, administrators, staff members and your peers. You experienced difficult times and tremendous successes- and you have persevered! You were asked to be the first students in a century to manage through a global pandemic, and you checked that box. You have earned a high school diploma from the District of Columbia Public Schools!

This milestone is the first step in finding your life's passion as you endeavor to college or the world of work. Remember always, that the core purpose of your new knowledge is to improve the world around you. Use it wisely. Make a difference.

As you celebrate this accomplishment remember to thank those people who helped you along the way. You didn't get here on your own. Your teachers, administrators, counselors, support staff, family members and friends and perhaps, even those with whom you disagreed all had a role in the person that you've become today. Thank them all. And a few words of wisdom-

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”  
-Nelson Mandela

“Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most importantly have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.” –Steve Jobs

I will add my own advice to close: Define success personally, not by what society, your peers, or the person across the street says. We're a community, but our journey is intensely personal. The moment you find what you love and what you're go at is the moment you find peace. I'm privileged to have known you.

Sincerely,  
Jerry Jellig (electronic signature)  
Dr. Jerry Jellig  
Instructional Superintendent

## DUKE ELLINGTON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

### Class of 2021 Post-Secondary Plan

At Ellington, achievement is recognized in many ways. We are pleased to list the following post-secondary plans for which the Class of 2021 members have designated. Collectively, the Class of 2021 have been awarded over **\$11.4 million** in college scholarships and grants.

<b>Allen-Graham, Samiya</b> Savannah College of Art and Design (Performing Arts)	<b>Contreras-Carias, Kastenney</b> Loyola University of New Orleans	<b>Gregory, Zora R.</b> Spelman College
<b>Bailey, Felicia C.</b> University of Nebraska - Lincoln	<b>Cotten, Darren Garrett</b> Howard University	<b>Grinage, Da'Mion Alphon'Zo</b> Unknown
<b>Barrett, Nyah A.</b> AMDA College of the Performing Arts - Los Angeles	<b>Davenport, Sumaan</b> Pratt Institute - Main	<b>Hall, Nyielah Ade</b> West Virginia State University
<b>Basabe, Jamari</b> Delaware State University	<b>Davy-Wilson, Amari Mykael</b> Morgan State University	<b>Hamahoullah, Sarah</b> Catholic University of America
<b>Bishop, Nathaniel L.</b> GAP Year/Employment	<b>Dell-Bosak, Kathryn</b> Maryland Institute College of Art	<b>Harmon, MiAngel A. C.</b> Loyola University New Orleans
<b>Blair, Noah AK</b> Bethune-Cookman University	<b>Donaldson, KayaZhanna O.</b> Howard University	<b>Harrington, Dayun T.</b> Montgomery College
<b>Bobley, Jack S.</b> New York University	<b>Duran, Santiago Alejandro</b> St. Mary's College of Maryland	<b>Harris, Lauren K.</b> George Washington University
<b>Bonhomme, Sebastian</b> Southernn University A & M College	<b>Easter, Eric H.</b> New York University	<b>Harrison, Jonetta Fredreana</b> Temple University – Media Studies
<b>Boyd, Kayla M.</b> Unknown	<b>Ellis, Eve Dakota</b> Spelman College	<b>Herder, Kaylea</b> Southern University A & M College
<b>Brown, Zaybian A.</b> Unknown	<b>Exum, Makael A.</b> The University of the Arts	<b>Hernandez, Kenia Y.</b> Virginia Commonwealth University
<b>Bryar, Esmé</b> Norwich University of the Arts	<b>Farooq, Armiya Nijae</b> Savannah College of Art and Design	<b>Hicks, Makiyah Nilah</b> Pace University
<b>Burley, Myiana</b> Bethune-Cookman University	<b>Finn-Ailer, Kamaya</b> GAP Year	<b>Hill, Tamiyah Emani</b> George Mason University
<b>Butler, Jelani</b> Howard University	<b>Fleming, DeWan Tyriq</b> Unknown	<b>McMurray-Hodges, Ciera G.</b> Morgan State University
<b>Carter, Mya</b> Pratt Institute – Main (Photography)	<b>Fonseca Ramos, Elisha</b> Unknown	<b>Holland, Jaisyn O.</b> James Madison University
<b>Cherry, Synia Jonna</b> Apprenticeship Program	<b>Garcia, Joshvic</b> Unknown	<b>Hooks, Christian L.</b> Fashion Institute of Technology
<b>Choice, Lalah Imani Marie</b> Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University	<b>Garcia, Kaila J.</b> University of the District of Columbia	<b>Irby, Kaitlyn Amelia Rose</b> SUNY at Purchase College
<b>Clay, Jabulani</b> Unknown	<b>Graham, Ciera E.</b> Clark Atlanta University	<b>Jackson, Nautau Alik</b> Unknown
<b>Comfort-Cohen, Louis</b> Columbia College Chicago	<b>Graham-Bond, Maliah LeeAnn</b> Morgan State University	<b>Jennings, Jordan M.</b> Southern University A & M College
	<b>Grant, Jackson Sena</b> Berklee College of Music	<b>Johns, Ernest</b> Unknown

<b>Johnson, Chyna</b> Norfolk State University	<b>Butler-Morgan, Iyanna</b> Benedict College	<b>Smith Jr., David William</b> Morgan State University
<b>Joseph, Laci Niani</b> Temple University	<b>Morgan, K'lah Nicole</b> Spelman College	<b>Smith, Jasmine</b> Loyola University New Orleans
<b>Kaba, Myriame Fatim</b> Montclair State University	<b>Mushala, Sydney N.</b> Georgia State University	<b>Solomon, Taylor Ayanna</b> Xavier University
<b>King, Josiah</b> Firefighter/Entrepreneur ON-RAMP	<b>Nash, Kennedi Mi'kaylah</b> Howard University	<b>Stewart, Kwencie Mhyomie</b> GAP Year
<b>Kittleson Wilker, Karl</b> St. Olaf College	<b>Neal, Allyson Diane</b> North Carolina Central University	<b>Strader, De'La Amber</b> Unknown
<b>Lane, Malachi X.</b> Bethune-Cookman University	<b>Nkop, Victoria C.</b> Delaware State University - Music	<b>Stroud, Mason</b> Bowie State University
<b>Latson, Kayla Rose Iman</b> Arizona State University - Tempe	<b>Onofre, Ana M.</b> Unknown	<b>Stubbs, Diara</b> Unknown
<b>Lette-Daffeh, Sydni A.</b> Fordham University	<b>Oo, Zaw L.</b> University of Virginia	<b>Taylor, Raegan Noëlle</b> Marymount Manhattan College
<b>Lewis, Zarina Zohara Sudan</b> University of Hawaii at Manoa	<b>Padua, Margarita Mei</b> Bard College	<b>Temoney, Charli Danielle</b> Temple University
<b>Lloyd, Kyle Daniel</b> Lawrence University Conservatory of Music	<b>Palmer, Nahah</b> Pennsylvania State University	<b>Thomas, Jayna A.</b> Howard University
<b>Lustig, Cassandra Quinn</b> New York University	<b>Peña, Jazmine R.</b> Unknown	<b>Golden-Thompson, Aeris</b> International Christian University
<b>Lytle, Paul V.</b> Butler University	<b>Pitropia, Wend-Manegde</b> New York University	<b>Tompkins, Taylor C.</b> La Moyne College
<b>Manja, Aaliyah H.</b> Pace University – Study Abroad	<b>Polk II, Sean C.</b> University of Cincinnati	<b>Ventura, Erik J.</b> DePaul University
<b>Marsh II, David</b> University of California – Los Angeles	<b>Porter, Sahara Queen</b> Morgan State University	<b>Voth, Madeleine</b> Reed College
<b>Marshall, Jaden A.</b> Pace University – Music & Film	<b>Powell, Amaria</b> Unknown	<b>Wells, Anna Maury Wood</b> University of New Haven
<b>Marshall-Shkymba, Ruby-Summer</b> Outward Bound GAP Year Program - Film	<b>Price, Grace</b> Fordham University	<b>Whittaker, Delani Denise</b> Berklee College of Music
<b>McNeil, Raven L.</b> Salisbury University – Pre-Medicine	<b>Quarles, Jahmiya</b> University of Cincinnati	<b>Williams, M. Leigh</b> Mercyhurst University
<b>Merryweather, Teiana Denise</b> Virginia State University	<b>Scotland, Quinnyetta</b> Employment	<b>Willingham, Neiori Samia</b> Savannah College of Art and Design
<b>Monroe, Sean A.</b> Morgan State University	<b>Simmons, Jade</b> Pace University	<b>Winter, Dean</b> Unknown

*Post-secondary plan is based on documentation given to senior counselor, as of 6/14/21*



In Honor of our Co-Founders  
Mike Malone & Peggy Cooper Cafritz

