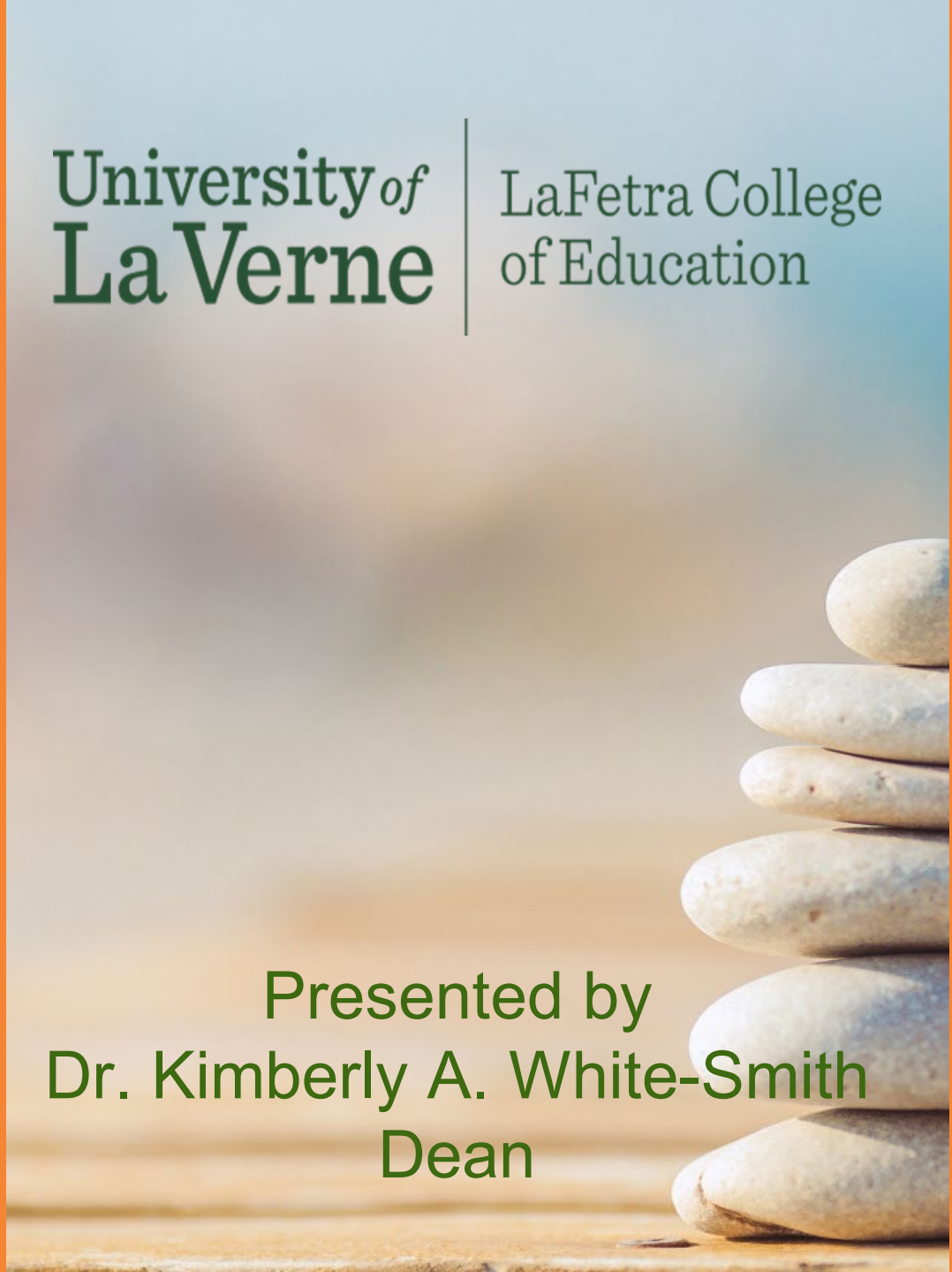


**(Un)Educable:  
A Leader's Journey  
to Eradicate the  
Labeling of BIPOC  
Children**

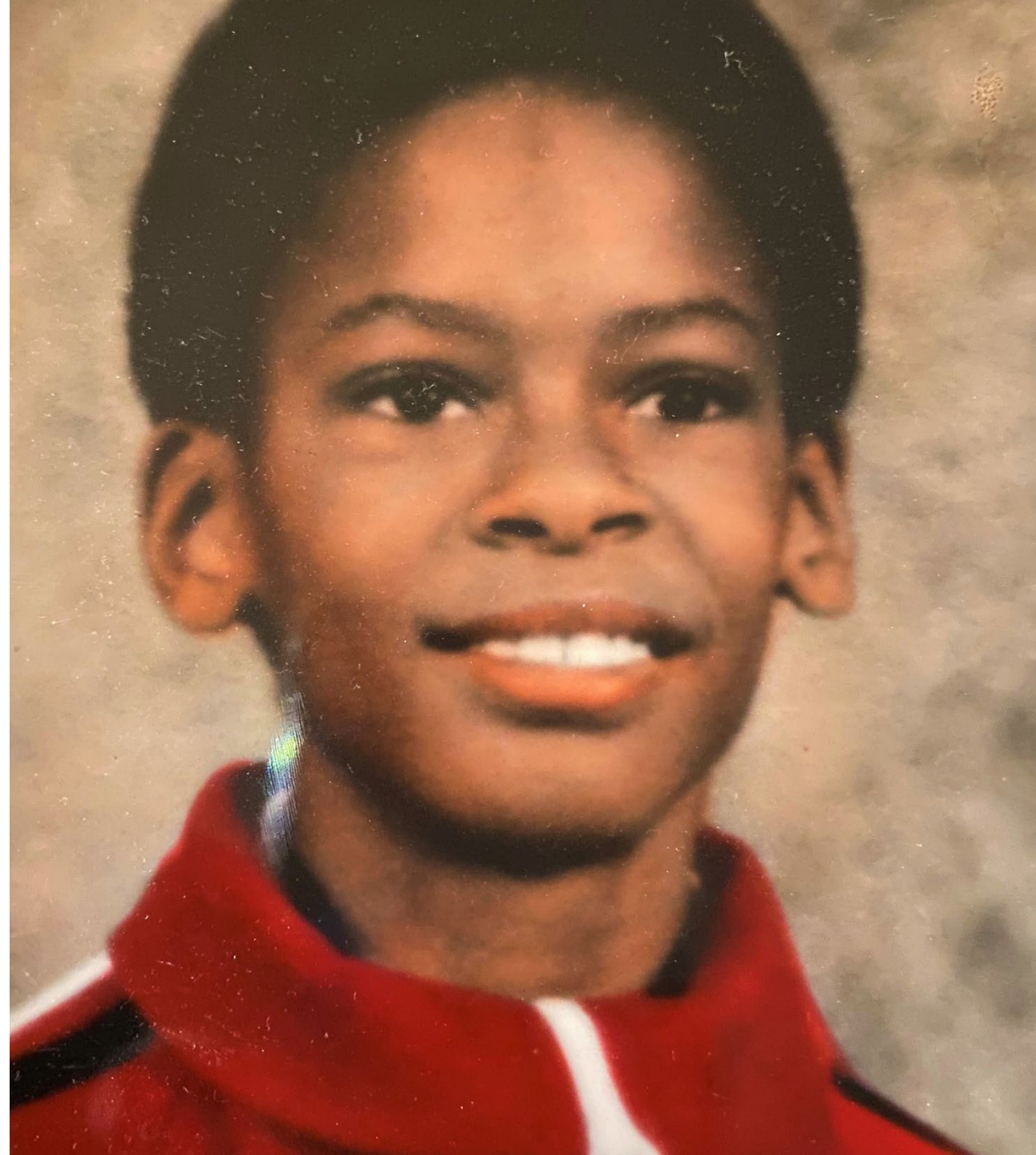
University of  
**La Verne**

LaFetra College  
of Education

Presented by  
Dr. Kimberly A. White-Smith  
Dean



Chucky



# Disability Studies and DisCrit



All education professionals are subject to deficit thinking, however, teachers are more likely to hold a deficit model concerning the academic potential of African-American students. Their disruptive behaviors are more likely to be interpreted as a disability (emotional disturbance or intellectual disability) rather than a symptom of trauma (Allen and White-Smith, 2014; Hing, 2014; White-Smith).



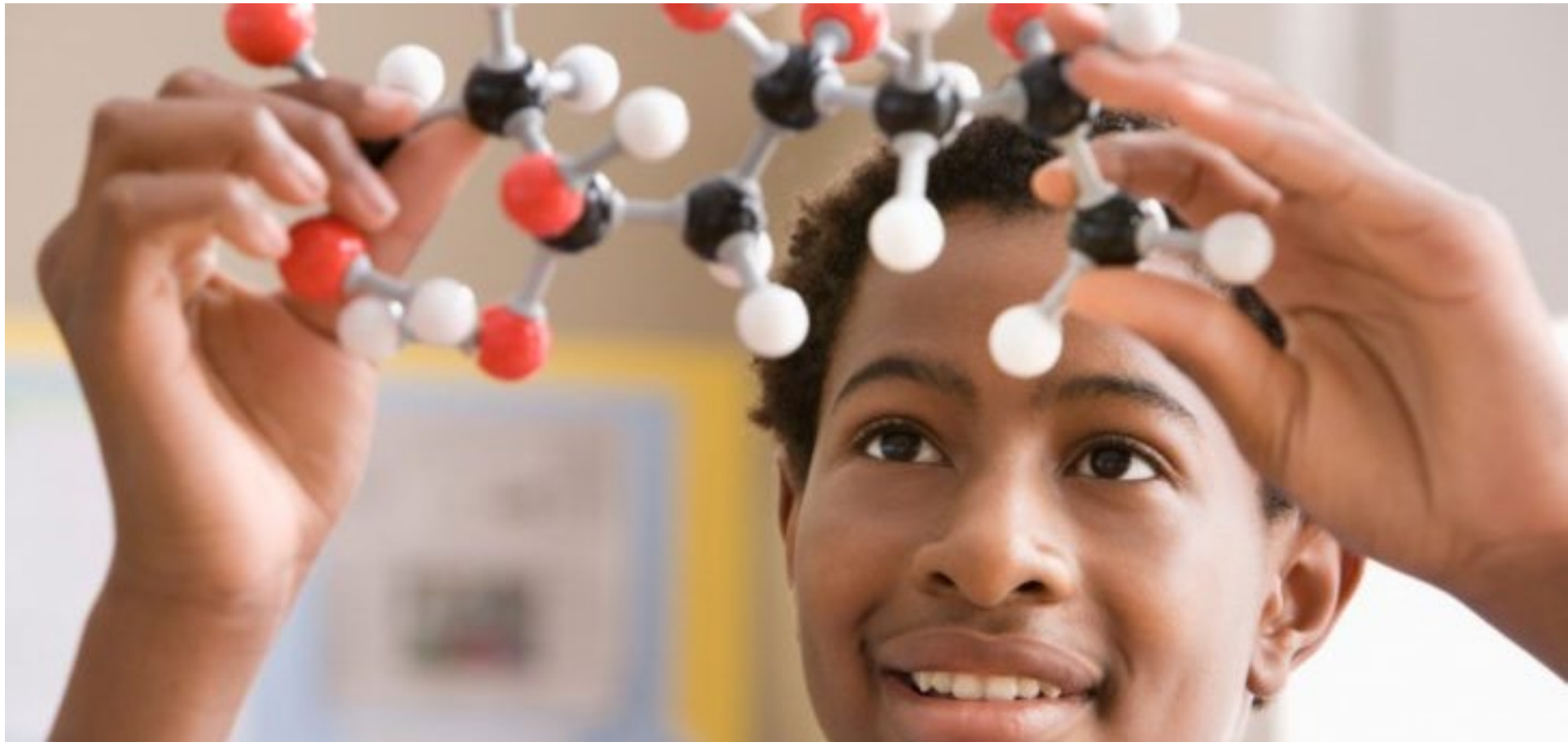


**African-American** students are suspended and expelled at **3 times** the rate of white students. No other ethnic group experiences this degree of disproportionality in exclusionary discipline (Hing, 2014).

Once removed from the classroom, our most *vulnerable* students who require the most support are placed on a direct path toward the criminal justice system (Wald & Losen, 2003).



Students with disabilities and minority students share a common experience of being marginalized within the school system (Fenning & Rose, 2007).



**Special Education**

**Diagnosis: An Entry Point  
*to the Prison Pipeline***

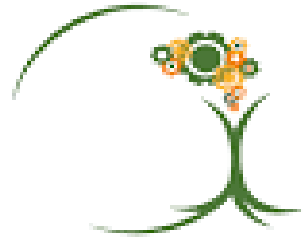


In 2004, Congress acknowledged racial disproportionality in subjective special education categories such as emotional disturbance and intellectual disability. *African-American students are significantly overrepresented* in these categories (IDEA Act of 2004). Their placement rates are **2.8 times** higher than all other ethnic groups combined (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

# Areas of Focus:

- **developing** highly skilled –profession ready teachers through intentional exposure of teacher candidates to a variety of traditional and innovative school options
- **diversifying** the education workforce through close community and district partnerships
- **promoting** trauma-informed education centered on healing and not mislabeling students of color
- **cultivating** mindfulness for advancing conscious social change, empathy, anti-racist practices and well-being in schools





*LaFetra College of Education*  
**Center for Neurodiversity,  
Learning, and Wellness**  

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*University of La Verne*

CNLW is a holistic learning clinic that allows students enrolled across all departments in the LFCE to be trained to provide interdisciplinary support and services to our local communities in the form of tutoring, mentorship, counseling, trauma informed practices, anti-racist reflective practices, and psychological testing services.



# Community-Based Partnerships

Our community-based partnerships include **220 local school districts** in high need areas, such as Pomona, San Bernardino, and Bakersfield.

## Professional Development Schools:

- Solorio Elementary School/ Etiwanda School District/ Located in Fontana (High needs area/emphasis on academic justice)
- Foothill Knolls STEM Academy in Upland USD (Focus on Neurodiversity)
- La Verne Science and Technology School in Pomona USD (High needs area)
- San Jose Charter School (Focus on Social Emotional Learning/ High needs area)

## New Strategic Partners

- California Connections Academy (Virtual School)
- Renaissance School for the Arts and Sciences/ Private/ Located in LA County (Focus on Neurodiversity)
- Epic de Cesar Chavez High School/ Located in Kern County (Adult Learners)

# Innovation Through Partnership

**San Bernardino City Unified School District** signed a multi-year professional development contract with CNLW to offer a non-degree professional certificate in Neurodiversity and Inclusion for a cohort of 35 district-wide teacher leaders, increasing to 70 in SY20-21.

**Pomona Unified** in collaboration with Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity (BranchEd) we are beginning a multi-year process in our Teacher Education Programs to diversify the profession and better serve our Black and Latinx populations. We are creating a teacher training program that produces classroom-ready BIPOC teachers and continuously improves teacher preparation structures, policies, and practice in the service of improving students' outcomes.

**Pomona Unified and West Covina Unified** are partners in our CNLW Dyslexia Teacher Training Program. Both districts have committed to establishing district satellite training sites within 3 years.

# Supporting and Affirming Neurodiversity

LFCE/CNLW provides workshops and professional development opportunities for in-service teachers, parents and students in the communities we serve:

## **Literacy Tutoring:**

- Online literacy tutoring with our teacher candidates for children across the regions we serve. This fieldwork focuses on individualizing reading instruction for neurodiverse learners.
- We provide **dyslexia specific tutoring** for local children through our Dyslexia Teacher Training Partnerships

## **Focused Workshops:**

- We host RICA Preparation Workshops, currently online, to support candidates who benefit from focused support to pass RICA
- We offer CBEST and CSET workshops through our Wilson Library
- We offer Dyslexia Experience, a simulation, currently online, to raise awareness and promote understanding

## **The Genius Project:**

- CNLW offers a 4-day, 3 night residential summer program for incoming college freshman and rising high school seniors who have documented learning differences (2020 was held virtually).

# Social-Emotional Wellness for Families

Due to the high levels of family stress associated with the current pandemic, CNLW has developed a parent mindfulness curriculum to help increase social-emotional wellness for parents. Facilitators have been trained to deliver the curriculum in the following school districts:

## **Upland Unified:**

- During SY 20-21, 25 parents at Foothill Knolls Academy registered to participate in the 8-week program, delivered online on Saturday mornings. Participants learned strategies for mindful breathing, calm communication, and self-regulation. The program will expand to 3 additional school sites in the district during spring 2021.

## **San Bernardino City Unified:**

- When the pandemic closed schools in spring 2020, parents requested support to manage extreme stress levels associated with remote schooling. Approximately 80 parents participated in at least 1 session of the 8-week online program to learn mindfulness strategies to manage stress and calm parent/child communication. 90-minute sessions were delivered on Saturday mornings.

## **Long Beach Unified:**

- CNLW partnered with school psychologists in LBUSD who manage the district's family resource center to implement the 8-week program for 20 parents. Currently 55 additional parents are registered for the upcoming winter session. The curriculum is also being translated into Spanish to increase parent engagement.

# University and LFCE Sponsored Community Events

We provide opportunities for community members to engage in large scale events and become a part of our university:

**Family Learning Conference (April 24):** We are in year 15 of hosting a family literacy conference, partnering with Pomona Unified, and inviting other communities to meet authors and participate in workshops. Education majors and teacher candidates prepare workshop sessions, parents and family are offered free transportation and lunch, and are given bags of free books to encourage literacy. This year the conference will be online.

**Neurodiversity Symposium (April 17):** The CNLW is currently in its 4th year of operation. Each year, we host a symposium that invites educators, special education advocates, community leaders, and families to explore the science and practice of topics that relate to the education and well-being of neurodiverse learners. Past events have focused on dyslexia, mindfulness/SEL, and universal design for learning. This year's event will host Thomas Armstrong, an internationally recognized expert in the field of neurodiversity.



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