



Katie McCleary, MFA, Consultant
National Center for Executive Leadership and School Board Development

Areas of Expertise

**Communication Strategies | School/Board Organizational Behavior and Culture
Leadership Development | Community Collaborations | Charter Schools | Prison Education
Youth Development | Arts in Education | Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging**



Katie McCleary, MFA, has been an educator for over 20 years and is a sought-after speaker and facilitator in the areas of communication, organizational behavior and culture, youth development, charter school innovations, LEA community partnerships, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging strategies, board governance, leadership development, and prison education. She has provided expertise, workshops, and keynotes to board members, teachers, administrators, and LEA community partners, in many school districts, including Sacramento County Office of Education, Folsom Prison, Federal Dept. of Education, The California Endowment, and the California Charter School Association.

McCleary has served in public schools since 2003 in various roles, supporting career-technical education, arts and culture programs and partnerships, mentoring and after-school programs, charter schools, juvenile-justice and correctional schools, and community partnerships. In addition, McCleary has taught at various community colleges in Los Rios Community College District and currently teaches leadership at Pacific University in the Masters in Nonprofit Leadership program. In 2011, McCleary founded an art-based literacy nonprofit, 916 Ink, that has transformed literacy education through creative writing and publishing practices. 916 Ink partners with more than 60 public schools and districts and operates in Sacramento County and San Joaquin County. In 2017, McCleary joined the Board of Trustees for Visions in Education, a charter school, working in 9 counties and serving more than 7,200 students in families with a 92 million budget. In 2020, she served as Board President and helped with legislation to ensure that charter schools can operate fairly and in their intended spirit.

McCleary was recognized in 2017 by Sacramento State's Department of Education's graduate program for her work as an outstanding community partner in schools and for moving the needle forward on literacy. McCleary has also been recognized as "40 Under 40" by the Sacramento Business Journal. In 2015, Mashable.com crowned McCleary a "Real Miss America" for her work in low-income communities. In 2016, McCleary founded a writing project in Folsom prison that resulted in two anthologies of work that are widely read throughout juvenile justice entities in California. In 2017, PBS KVIE awarded her the "Heart of a Hero" award for her work in low-income schools.

McCleary is a fervent champion of developing leaders for public-facing roles to better serve youth, families, and communities. She hosts a leadership podcast on NPR CapRadio called “The Drive.” In 2022, her book, Bridge the Gap, was published by McGraw Hill and Inc. Magazine named it 1 of 3 business books to read. Her bridging differences framework to fuel better communication and collaboration in schools, organizations, corporations, and more has been adopted by many. Her work has been featured in Forbes, NPR, PBS, New York Post, Sacramento Magazine, Apple News, Shondaland, Computerworld, and more.