

MELODIE K. BAKER Ph.D.

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### **QUALIFICATION SUMMARY**

**Strategic Leadership:** Proven record in conceiving and transmitting vision into reality, mission into action and philosophy into practice. Focused and performance driven problem solver who identifies organizational needs and delivers effective solutions on time and within budget.

**Policy Reform:** Experienced national policy director and coalition builder—proven success in developing state and national strategies to advance equity, inclusion and social justice.

**Development:** Demonstrated ability to develop long-term and meaningful business partnerships to achieve robust impact, build brand recognition, external presence, and sustainability. Experienced leading and building coalitions, advocating, and generating enthusiasm among key stakeholders.

**Fiscal & Operational and Risk Management:** Experience forecasting and evaluating financial risk, organizational health, predicting opportunities for growth and eliminating waste. Grantmaking, planning, implementation and reporting. Contract development, execution, budgeting and negotiations.

### **EDUCATION**

State University of New York at Buffalo,

**Ph.D., Educational Psychology and Quantitative Methods**, May 2023

State University of New York at Buffalo,

**Advanced Graduate Certificate (AGC), Applied Statistical Analysis**, August 2018

Daemen University,

**M.S., Executive Leadership and Change**, May 2009

State University College of New York at Buffalo,

**B.A., Public Relations/Communications and Marketing**, May, 2005

Harvard Business School,

**Non-Profit Management Certificate**, May 2012

### **POLITICAL BACKGROUND**

United States Congress, House of Representatives  
2020 Special Election Candidate  
MB2024

7/1/2019-10/4/2020

## **New York 27th Congressional District**

Platform: Education, Workforce Development, Health Care, & Economic Development  
Hired a talented team of professionals to run a congressional campaign and build a coalition of supporters, volunteers and advocates. Secured full union support from UAW, AFL-CIO, SEIU 1199, NYSUT and several others. Day to day responsibilities included canvassing, public speaking, fundraising, press conferences and policy research.

## **BUSINESS BACKGROUND**

### **ImpactSTATS Inc**

1/2/2018-Current

#### **Founder & Executive Director**

Senior Evaluator

Manage day-to-day business operations to maximize the value of the organization through the lens of social justice and racial equity.

Key/Relevant Contracts:

BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION,

6/2023-8/2024

Grant: Landscape Analysis & Policy Recommendations for NYC Math Curriculum

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

1/2024-8/2024

Project: Implicit Bias and Preschool Suspension and Expulsions in Charleston, South Carolina

PRITZKER CHILDREN'S INITIATIVE &

ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE FOR GOVERNMENT,

2/2019-12/2023

Key activities/accomplishments:

- Led the research and evaluation for New York State Department of Health's First 1000 Days on Medicaid Initiative
- Developed policy recommendations based on the implementation of NY State's First 1000 Days Initiative
- Authored, [Building Capacity for Change: A Playbook for Growing Early Childhood Reform Programs Using a -Collective Impact Framework.](#)
- Provide diversity, equity and inclusion & Collective Impact Training
- Design a program implementation plan to achieve goals identified by NYS Department of Health
- Build a shared community vision across partners and local leadership
- Collaborate with NYSDOH to implement strategies

### **CHARTER SCHOOL OF INQUIRY**

02/15/2013-Current

**Co-Founder,**

Founded the first inquiry-based charter school in Western New York.

## PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

### **JUST EQUATIONS**

07/01/2020-11/1/2024

#### **National Policy Director**

Directly responsible for building national partnerships and working across education systems to ensure math policies that give all students the quantitative foundation they need to succeed in college and beyond.

#### Key Accomplishments

- Authored several reports and op-eds to advanced equitable education policies
- Worked with Harvard University to develop new math requirements for admissions
- Featured in the [LA Times](#), [The 74](#) and several other publications as the driving force behind recent math policy changes in college admissions.
- Developed and implemented policy/advocacy strategies to advance organizational goals
- Identify and engage partners in policy and advocacy efforts; develop and maintain new policy-based partnerships with state and national organizations as the opportunity arises, representing and promoting the work of Just Equations
- Identify and set state-based policy and advocacy priorities in key states, and at the national level

### **UNITED WAY OF BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY, ERIE NIAGARA**

08/14/2014-06/30/2020

#### **Director of Education, BIRTH-8 COALITION, Chair**

Directly responsible for the design and implementation of the education platform strategic plans, coalition leadership, building and management, product development, grants making and management, budgets and investments supporting 26 school districts in Erie County. Work with key community leaders to align existing resources, to expand capacity to design a workable operations plan to improve outcomes for children and families in Erie County. Track indicators to measure progress and activities to provide information to key stockholders on a regular basis. Review investment process applications, program evaluations and self-assessment to determine funding allocations. Hire subcontractors, consultants and support staff to manage key projects. Fundraising and identifying alternative sources for funding.

#### Key accomplishments:

- Developed and implemented an Educational Neglect Policy in coordination with New York State Education Department, local school districts and the Department of Social Services.
- Planned and implemented two 5 year, 2.5 million USDOE Full-Service Community Schools grant in the Buffalo City School District and the Cleveland Hill School District

- Implemented a successful district wide early literacy program in the Lackawanna City School District
- Developed and implemented multi-lingual Born Learning Trail in Western New York

**THE SERVICE COLLABORATIVE OF WNY, Buffalo, NY**

02/2014- 8/2014 Regional

**Opportunity Corps Manager**

Responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the Regional Opportunity Corps program and ensuring program implementation is carried out in accordance with specified grant objectives. Facilitated program development, management, implementation and partnership development for Erie, Niagara, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany counties.

**Key accomplishments:**

- Implemented new Regional Opportunity Corps grant program in all five counties in three months.
- Created new relationships for the Service Collaborative outside of Erie County

**BETHEL HEAD START, Buffalo, NY**

11/2009 -10/2013

**Assistant Director and Interim Director**

Strategic planning and leadership in the day to day operations and administration of education for at-risk children and families in Erie County. Generated reports to track and measure program progress. Managed and initiated relationships and contracts with local school districts to include, Maryvale, Cheektowaga, Cleveland Hill, Amherst, Buffalo, Lackawanna and Depew. Supervised leadership team to include, education, nutrition, family and community partnership, disabilities, mental health and health, program development, fundraising, public relations and community outreach. Coordinated with the State Education Department, Office of Children and Family Services and Head Start Regional and National Offices. Interpreted regulations, standards and developed policies and procedures. Supported an annual budget of 6 million dollars with 10 academic centers, 121 staff and 544 children. Reported to the Executive Director and Board of Directors.

**Key accomplishments:**

- Chair of strategic planning committee
- Initiated and implemented innovative programs to improve quality of services and child outcomes such as, Eat Well Play Hard, Early Reading First, and NYS Quality Stars rating program.
- Developed key partnerships with major business, government and community stake holders such as Buffalo Promise Neighborhoods, Read to Succeed Key Bank, Empire State Development and Buffalo Public Schools.
- Spearheaded agency preparation for triennial federal compliance reviews,
- Developed assessment tools for program design, strategic planning, grantee review, and self-assessment.

- Raised visibility and awareness of organization through effective marketing and public relations campaigns.
- Built a cohesive team environment through training, staff/leadership development and diversity initiatives.
- Raised over \$490,000 to implement programing
- Named Top 40 under 40 Leaders in WNY by Business First.
- Named Top 20 Under 40 Leaders by the Oishei Foundation

**CAO HEAD START, Buffalo, NY**

8/4/2009-11/2/2009

**Disabilities Coordinator**

Responsible for planning and administering the disabilities and mental health program services for children and families. Coordinated services with SED, OPWDD and Erie County School Districts. Provided ongoing assessment of the quality of services provided. Ensured individualization for each child with a disability.

**Key accomplishments:**

- Researched and provided training, workshops and guidance to staff, parents, and community on a variety of pertinent topics in the area of disabilities and mental health.
- Ensured on-going monitoring, tracking, follow-up and analysis of disabilities and mental health services.
- Maintain record keeping and reporting systems, including service area plan, schedules, timelines policies and procedures for disabilities and mental health services in accordance with Head Start Performance Standards and applicable laws and regulations.
- Ensured coordination of communication with staff, parents, program consultants and community to enhance services to children and families.

**THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK COLLEGE AT BUFFALO,** Buffalo, NY 01/2009-7/2009

**Volunteer Service-Learning Associate**

Responsible for the development and oversight of service-learning courses for the school of Arts and Humanities.

Implemented the college's efforts to establish powerful relationships with community partners and supporters. Developed outreach, education and volunteer programs which inspired community members and organizations to join the network of volunteerism.

**Key responsibilities/accomplishments:**

- Provide support, supervision, and evaluation of service-learning partnerships and student internships.
- Serve as a liaison between community agencies and faculty by establishing and maintaining contact with directors and appropriate staff at these agencies.

- Develop and led meetings and workshops designed to assist community partners to become more effective at facilitating service learning experiences for students from varied backgrounds.
- Procured grant funding and financial support for program initiatives.
- Facilitated training programs for local nonprofits and government agencies who worked with BSC service learning students.

**DAEMEN UNIVERSITY/SOUTH PARK HIGH SCHOOL**

Amherst/Buffalo, New York

**Program/Academic Coordinator,**

06/15/2006-

12/30/2009 Responsible for the development, implementation, and coordination of various activities and projects associated with the Daemen College Liberty Partnerships Program. Served as the primary administrator for the Liberty Partnerships Program at South Park High School.

**Key responsibilities/accomplishments**

- Developed a three-part academic cycle for at risk- high school students' grades 9-12.
- Initiated and facilitated organization's first leadership training and several other programs for high school students at South Park High School such as the Student Employment Program, For Girls only and the Certified Nursing Assistant Program.
- Expanded the introduction of innovative programs in health and safety, HIV/AIDS awareness, environmental education, conflict resolution, recreational and others.
- Succeeded in increasing school and program attendance of habitual documented truants.
- Recruited a full team of support staff to assist in facilitation of the program

**PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS**

Baker, M. K., Cameron C.E., LiPuma, K. & Wade, G. (2024). Facing a broken system: addressing suspensions and expulsions of young Black children in South Carolina. ImpactStats Inc. & BEE Collective: Buffalo, NY.

Baker, M., Jeffery, C. & Dee, T. S. (2023, November). Lesson from Algebra I Initiatives. 2023 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation K-12 Math Learning Forum, Washington, DC.

Baker, M., Morgan, I., & Wade, G. (2023). Opportunities denied: High-Achieving black and latino students lack access to advanced math. *The Education Trust*.

Baker, M. & Backstrom, B. (2023). Building capacity for change: A playbook for growing early childhood reform programs using a collective impact framework. *Rockefeller Institute of Government*.

Burdman, P. & Baker, M. (2023). Greater equity in higher education through math opportunity. *The Campaign for College Opportunity*.

Baker, M. (2022, August 23). The problem with dismissing data science education. *Just Equations*.

<https://justequations.org/blog/the-problem-with-dismissing-data-science-education-because-highschools-offer-statistics>

Baker, M. (2022, April 21-26). *The Effects of Ability Grouping on Black and Brown Students: A metaanalysis of 11 Primary Studies*. [Paper presentation]. AERA 2022 Annual Meeting, San Deigo, CA, United States.

Baker, M. (2022, April 27). The Effects of Ability Grouping on Black and Brown Students: A metaanalysis of 11 Primary Studies. [Poster presentation]. University at Buffalo Celebration of Student Academic Excellence. Buffalo, NY, United States.

Burdman, P., Baker, M., & Henderson, F. (2021). Charting a new course: Investigating barriers on the calculus pathway to STEM. *California Education Learning Lab*.

Baker, M. (2022, February 1). College calculus dosen't have to be a roadblock. *EdSource*.

<https://edsource.org/2022/college-calculus-doesnt-have-to-be-a-roadblock/666774>

Baker, M. (2022, October 31) Calculus is seen as a proxy for high-achieving students. That's a problem. *Chalkbeat*. <https://edsource.org/2022/college-calculus-doesnt-have-to-be-a-roadblock/666774>

Baker, M. (2022, February 10) Colleges can make calculus a gateway—not a gatekeeper—to STEM Fields. *EdSurge*. <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2022-02-10-colleges-can-make-calculus-a-gateway-nota-gatekeeper-to-stem-fields>

Baker, M. (2020, September 15) The pervasive sense of entitlement of white parents when it comes to

'good' schools. *Scarymommy*. <https://www.scarymommy.com/pull-kids-affluent-white-schooldiversity>

Baker, M. K. Gentry, D. Lembo, K. & Milner, J. (October 2018) Closing Plenary: Place-Based Initiatives and Their Impact Then and Now. Paper presented at the Promise Neighborhoods National Network Conference, Strong Schools Anchoring Neighborhood Success, Washington, DC.