



UTAH ANNUAL NAME CONFERENCE

MARCH 20, 2026

8:30 TO 3:00

UNIVERSITY GUEST HOUSE

110 FORT DOUGLAS BLVD

SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84113

Amplifying All Voices: Building Responsive Educators and Inclusive Schools

In an era of rapid demographic change and evolving political dynamics, Utah's K-20 educators face unique challenges and opportunities in serving their increasingly diverse student populations. This year's conference centers on expanding our collective reach across Utah's urban, suburban, and rural districts, strengthening educational networks, and equipping all leaders with practical tools for culturally responsive practice tailored to our state.

Welcome!



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Welcome to the 2026 Utah Chapter of the National Association for Multicultural Education annual conference. It is a profound honor to gather with you under this year's theme: Amplifying All Voices: Building Responsive Educators and Inclusive Schools.

Our work is shaped by the voices around us. As educators, we are granted opportunities to hear perspectives beyond our own echo chambers. Our work allows us to intersect across communities, a privilege not offered within all careers. However, the true power of our position lies beyond listening. As educators, we must identify ways to amplify all voices within the systems we serve, and help those less likely to listen to hear the perspectives around them.

In 2026, we are here to build the structures that ensure all are heard. The Utah NAME Conference Committee has curated a program designed for you as educators within Utah. We hope that you gather new ideas and build your network through your attendance today. Additionally, we hope that the keynotes and presentations today help initiate conversations that you continue within your own schools, districts, and universities.

We thank you for your tireless dedication to multicultural education. Your presence here is a testament to your choice to engage and to lead within our educational ecosystem.

In Solidarity,
Dr. Leah Davis
Conference Chair, UT NAME 2026



Welcome!



www.utahname.org

Welcome to the 2026 Utah Chapter of the National Association for Multicultural Education annual conference. As President of Utah NAME, it is both an honor and a responsibility to welcome you to this important gathering centered on this year's theme: Amplifying All Voices: Building Responsive Educators and Inclusive Schools.

This theme is not simply aspirational; it is essential. Across Utah and beyond, our classrooms reflect linguistic, cultural, and experiential diversity that continues to grow. Our role as educators is not only to acknowledge this diversity, but to intentionally design learning environments where every student's voice is valued, affirmed, and empowered. Amplifying voices requires courage, reflection, and sustained action. It asks us to examine our systems, refine our practices, and lead with equity at the center of our work.

Utah NAME remains committed to supporting educators in this work. This conference represents a collective effort; scholars, teachers, leaders, and advocates coming together to share research, strategies, and lived experiences. I encourage you to fully engage in the sessions, connect with colleagues, and extend these conversations into your schools, districts, and universities. The learning we do here should ripple outward into meaningful change for the communities we serve.

Thank you for your commitment to multicultural education and for choosing to be part of this community. Your presence signals leadership, purpose, and a belief that education can and must be responsive and inclusive for all.

With appreciation,
Hamed Shafiei, PhD
President, Utah NAME
2026





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About Utah NAME...

Utah NAME, Utah Chapter of the National Association of Multicultural Education, has been organized to operate exclusively for charitable, benevolent, scientific, literary, cultural, and educational purposes, including but not limited to: advancing a philosophy of inclusion that embraces the basic tenets of cultural pluralism; promoting cultural and ethnic diversity as a state-wide and national strength; fostering equity for all regardless of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, socioeconomic status, marital status, language, disability, or immigration status; promoting professional and social exchanges between people from all academic disciplines and diverse educational institutions and occupations who advocate for multicultural education; and representing and addressing the needs of the multicultural education community.

Our Mission...

The mission of Utah NAME is to promote and support education that is multicultural as a means of achieving full academic potential of every learner in Utah by:

- sharing knowledge and resources
- fostering an appreciation for diversity
- advocating for educational equity

The organization shall have, in furtherance of the aforesaid purposes, all of the powers conferred upon corporations pursuant to the provisions of Utah 503c Nonprofit Corporation Law and the laws governing NAME.

Become A Member...

When you sign up as a member of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), you automatically become a member of the Utah Chapter of NAME.

Benefits of Membership:

- Free subscription to NAME's quarterly journal, Multicultural Perspectives;
- Reduced registration for NAME's annual conference;
- Reduce registration for Utah NAME's annual conference;
- Opportunity to participate in state and local chapters, regional affiliates, and national committees;
- Participation in the election of officers, board of directors, and regional directors.

Schedule of Events



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8:30 am

Conference Welcome - Guest House Foyer

Dr. Leah Davis & Dr. Hamed Shafiei

9:00 am

Opening Ceremonies - Douglas Ballroom

Welcome Message, Jeanie Groves
Maxine Turner & Panel

10:10-10:55 am

Breakout Session #1

Douglas Ballroom East, Douglas Ballroom West,
Bonneville, Alpine, & City Creek Rooms

11:05-11:50 am

Breakout Session #2

Douglas Ballroom East, Douglas Ballroom West,
Bonneville, Alpine, & City Creek Rooms

11:50-12:35 pm

Lunch - Granite Ballroom

Mlni Keynote - Jessica Parker, Navajo Tribe

12:35-1:20 pm

Breakout Session #3

Douglas Ballroom East, Douglas Ballroom West,
Bonneville, Alpine, & City Creek Rooms

1:30-2:15 pm

Breakout Session #4

Douglas Ballroom East, Douglas Ballroom West,
Bonneville, Alpine, & City Creek Rooms

2:25-3:00 pm

Closing Session - Douglas Ballroom

Desange Keunihira

Keynote Session

03.20.2026 | 9:00 - 10:00 AM



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*Maxine Turner, Founder
Cuisine Unlimited Catering & Special Events*

Maxine Turner founded Cuisine Unlimited Catering & Special Events in 1980, starting by renting kitchen space from a local private school. She opened her first deli in 1985, eventually expanding to four sites. Her husband Marv later joined as CFO, followed by sons Aaron and Jeff in 2003, and the company grew to include design, rental, and florals. Cuisine Unlimited served as official caterers at USA House across seven Olympic Games before the Turners sold the business in 2021.

Maxine served ten years on the board of the International Caterers Association and six years on the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Board as chair of the Small Business Council. Locally, she served on numerous boards including Salt Lake Community College Foundation, Junior Achievement of Utah, the Utah Restaurant Association, American Red Cross, Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, and Park City Chamber & Office of Tourism. In 2013, she co-authored a catering textbook distributed to culinary schools nationwide.

A passionate advocate for hospitality education, Maxine chaired ProStart under the Utah Restaurant Association and teaches ProStart classes statewide, believing the program provides vital culinary and management pathways for high school students.

In 2024, Maxine founded One Table Together, bringing diverse groups of Utah parents and students together for family-style dinners where open dialogue addresses discrimination against immigrants, Native Americans, Asians, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ community, and victims of Islamophobia and antisemitism. The project aims to break down barriers and dispel harmful generalizations, reflecting the research of Dr. Gwendolyn Keita, whose work shows that meaningful interaction between groups fosters less prejudice and greater harmony.

Breakout Session #1

03.20.2026 | 10:10 - 10:55 AM



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**Douglas
Ballroom East**

Teachers' Perspectives: Literacy Recommendations for Newcomers with Limited Language Proficiency

Presenters: Rachel Edmunds

Current literature suggests that multilingual learners use their first languages to build English literacy. But what about newcomers with limited reading and writing skills in any language? This presentation discusses monolingual teachers' recommendations for supporting 4th-6th grade newcomers with limited language proficiency and proposed implementations.

**Douglas
Ballroom West**

From Awareness to Action: Preparing Pre-Service Teachers to Challenge Raciolinguistic Ideologies in Dual Language Bilingual Education

Presenter: Gift Onwubuya

This work examines how pre-service teachers learn to challenge raciolinguistic ideologies in Dual Language Bilingual Education. While scholarship links race and language to student deficits, practical classroom applications remain scarce. This study explores moving teacher education toward critical consciousness, ensuring educators confront racialized hierarchies that marginalize multilingual learners.

Bonneville

The State of Research on Leadership In Dual Language Immersion and Future Research Directions

Presenter: Bethany McGarry

This session will cover the state of research on dual language immersion leadership. Attendees will leave with an understanding of DLI in Utah and the United States, its benefits and drawbacks, the politically changing landscape of DLI, and ideas on how to support Utah students who would benefit from DLI.

Alpine

Construyendo Puentes: Effective Practices for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

Panel Discussion: Krista Mecham, Chelsey James, Kate Aragon, Letitia Vigil, & Karilyn Frazier
Following a brief overview of the Language and Culture Services teacher specialist role, an expert educator panel will field questions on supporting culturally and linguistically diverse students. Topics include culturally responsive curriculum, multilingual and ESL strategies, equitable access to quality education, family and community engagement, and practical solutions to common challenges in diverse classrooms. Come ready to ask questions and leave with strategies you can use right away.

City Creek

Building a Multilingual Taskforce In a Secondary School

Roundtable Discussion: Belinda Talonia, Brett Robertson, Melissa Gibbons, & Michael LeBaron
Practitioners from American Fork School will share how their ML Task Force emerged in response to shifting demographics, including team structure, guiding questions, and implementation lessons. Participants will engage in dialogue on transferability, challenges, and next steps, with time reserved for questions and reflection.

Breakout Session #2

03.20.2026 | 11:05 - 11:50 AM



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Can I do that? Working on Diversity When You Are Not Certain You Can

Presenter: Michelle Love-Day

This presentation will help participants navigate their school and district as they advocate for student voice, especially for our marginalized populations here in Utah. Many educators feel that they cannot do certain things due to the polarizing politics and policies, yet there is much that can be done in our schools to support students and families. Tools, resources, and information will be provided to help organize ideas and ways to create a space of belonging for students, parents, and teachers.

**Douglas
Ballroom East**

Welcoming Refugee Families: Perspectives, Tools, and Tips

Presenters: Toni Brown, Cinthia Marichal, Alondra Ferrel

Members of the Jordan School District will share their best practices for helping newcomer and refugee families make a home in our communities, schools, and classrooms. The presentation will offer practical strategies for building trust and ensuring these families feel seen, supported, and empowered from the moment they arrive.

**Douglas
Ballroom West**

Consulting Voices of the Past: Students and Faculty Revisit the Push for Ethnic Studies at Utah State University, 1968-1975

Presenter: Brenden Lee

This session explores how faculty members can use the past to help students connect to present issues. History Instructor Brendan Lee describes a student-driven class project he guided in Spring 2025, amidst national debates about DEI, on the historical push for Ethnic Studies programs at Utah State University, 1968-1975.

Bonneville

Building Cultural and Global Competency of K-20 Teachers and Leaders in Utah Through a Learning Abroad Experience

Panel Discussion: Peggy Kong & Udit Gupta

This panel examines a South Korea-based learning abroad program for Utah K-20 pre-service teachers and higher education leaders. Presenters will discuss program design, intercultural and global competency development, and how immersive international experiences inform instruction for Utah's culturally and linguistically diverse students across K-20 education landscape.

Alpine

The Impact of Schools Language Ideologies on Language Perceptions of Trans-Indigenous Pacific-Islander Children in the U.S.

Roundtable Discussion: Valmene Teriipaia Whippy

This session explores how multilingual Pacific Islander siblings in Utah perceive and evaluate the power of languages they know. Grounded in raciolinguistic socialization and translanguaging theories, the findings revealed that dominant school and societal ideologies highly shaped children's perceptions of language learning, highlighting the need for culturally sustaining, equity-centered pedagogies.

City Creek

Keynote Session

03.20.2026 | 11:50 TO 12:35 PM



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CIRCLE PROGRAM

Centering Indigenous Reciprocity, Culture, Learning, & Engagement

Career Connections

March 20, 2026

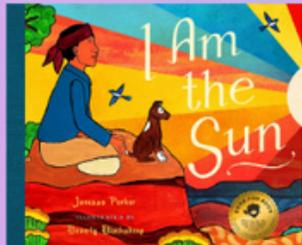
12 PM - 12:35 PM

University Guest House

Meet

Janessa Parker

Author of *I Am the Sun*



For more information contact
us at 801-581-7392 or at
native-excellence@utah.edu

Breakout Session #3

03.20.2026 | 12:35 - 1:20 PM



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**Douglas
Ballroom
East**

Self-Compassion for Diverse Educators

Presenter: Ben Inouye

Educators at the margins often direct toward themselves the unkindness they would never tolerate in their classrooms. This session dispels misconceptions about self-compassion – distinguishing it from self-care and self-esteem – and offers a practical path to relief. Participants will practice breathing, mantras, tonglen, and intention setting, with mnemonic tools to carry these practices forward.

**Douglas
Ballroom West**

Negotiation of Multilingual Identities and the Third Space of Multilingualism

Presenter: Gift Onwubuya

This pilot study explores how graduate multilingual speakers in Utah navigate linguistic hierarchies and identity. Using postcolonial theory and "third space" frameworks, the research reveals that while multilingualism is empowering, institutional monoglossic norms often marginalize these students. Participants resisted these constraints by creating hybrid spaces to assert belonging and legitimacy.

Bonneville

The Expressions and Behaviors of a Culturally Responsive Educator

Presenter: Belinda Talonia

Amid growing diversity in Utah's K-16 schools, this session explores culturally responsive educator behaviors and expression using dissertation research and current literature. Participants examine four best practices, assess their own practices, and reflect toward cultural proficiency. Interactive reflection, shared protocols, and discussion support translating theory into sustained, actionable leadership practice and impact.

Alpine

PD Bite 1: Through My Eyes: Using Theatre to Recognize & Resist Oppression

Presenters: Hannah Michels & Rachel Carlsruh

Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed gives educators tools to help students recognize and resist oppression. Participants will experience the Blank Character exercise firsthand, debrief, and explore classroom applications for multicultural and multilingual students – leaving with a curated collection of exercises and integration guidance.

PD Bite 2: Choosing Their Own Path: Empowering Pre-service Teachers' Professional Learning to Amplify All Voices

Presenter: Udita Gupta

This session explores how self-directed professional learning within a licensure course builds pre-service teacher agency through choice, reflection, and dialogue. Presenters showcase an action research model centered on individualized PD experiences that develop equity-focused, inclusive practices and amplify student voice.

City Creek

Access is Not Remedial: Designing Secondary Classrooms Where Students Can Persist

Roundtable Discussion: Letitia Vigil

Secondary classrooms often mistake independence for rigor, and support for remediation. This interactive session explores how instructional design and language demands shape student persistence. Participants will redesign lessons to increase access without lowering expectations, and leave with practical strategies to support multilingual and marginalized learners.

Breakout Session #4

03.20.2026 | 1:30 - 2:15 PM



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**Douglas
Ballroom
East**

Student and Teacher Perspectives on Inclusive Mathematics Instruction

Presenters: Laurel Dias & Trevor Warburton

This session shares findings from a qualitative study of eighth-grade students in a co-taught math class, highlighting how disability shapes learners' identities and participation. Participants will examine student narratives and gain strategies to strengthen co-teaching practices and foster equitable, inclusive learning environments.

**Douglas
Ballroom West**

Addressing Discriminatory Language in the Classroom and Halls

Presenter: Leah Davis

In this session, we will explore the impact of discriminatory language in K-12 settings and provide recommendations on how to address discriminatory language. Participants will learn a response framework, founded in resources from Learning for Justice, and practice various scenarios to empower themselves to address discriminatory language.

Bonneville

Game On!

Presenters: Krista Mecham, Chelsey James, Kate Aragon

Games are powerful tools for language learning – fostering creative and critical thinking while building motivation, vocabulary, and academic language in context. This interactive session explores research on how wordplay and board games increase engagement and confidence, particularly for second language learners. Participants will explore strategies for adapting common games to target specific language skills and will collaboratively build a shared resource connecting games to reading, writing, speaking, and listening goals.

Alpine

Deeper Learning: The Native Way to Teach

Presenter: Alan Groves

This session explores the natural alignment between Deep Learning frameworks and Indigenous ways of knowing – both emphasizing real-world, project-based, collaborative, and inquiry-driven learning. Rather than taking the traditional approach of teaching about Native Americans, this session uses Native American art as a lens for exploring how Native communities teach, learn, and make meaning. Participants will examine how centering Indigenous pedagogical practices can create deeper, more inclusive learning environments – particularly for students from Native communities.

City Creek

Unplanned Moments of Contention In Secondary Classrooms

Roundtable Discussion: Anda Pearson

What do teachers say when they say nothing at all? This study explores how secondary teachers' unplanned responses to controversy communicate implicit messages through covert signaling. Practicing teachers, teacher educators, and preservice teachers can engage with emerging findings and strategies for leveraging these moments toward intentional democratic practice.

Endnote Session

03.20.2026 | 2:25 - 3:00 PM



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Desange Kuenihira *Founder of Speak UnDEfeated*

Desange Kuenihira is a powerhouse speaker, humanitarian, author, entrepreneur, and the Founder & Executive Director of Speak UnDEfeated, a global nonprofit dedicated to breaking cycles of poverty and empowering women and youth through education, entrepreneurship, and advocacy.

Born in the Democratic Republic of Congo and raised for over a decade in a refugee camp in Uganda, Desange's life began in survival mode. As a child, she faced displacement, poverty, and the threat of forced marriage yet she refused to let her circumstances define her destiny. Against all odds, she rose from refugee to changemaker, transforming her pain into purpose and her story into a movement.

Desange is the author of Undefeated Woman, a deeply moving memoir that chronicles her journey from war, trauma, and displacement to freedom, education, and leadership. Her story has become a beacon of hope for women and girls across the world who are told their dreams are impossible.

Through Speak UnDEfeated, Desange has helped provide education, entrepreneurial training, and life-changing support to underprivileged youth and single mothers in Uganda giving them not just resources, but belief, dignity, and opportunity. Her organization actively works to combat extreme poverty and child marriage by empowering women to become providers, leaders, and builders of their own futures.

As an international speaker and advocate, Desange uses her voice to ignite courage, awaken purpose, and remind people of their unstoppable potential. Her message is raw, real, and transformational proving that resilience is not just survival, but a call to rise, rebuild, and lead.

Desange Kuenihira is not just undefeated she is a living testament that when one woman rises, she lifts generations.

Conference Sponsors & Donors



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The Lightspark Foundation (est. 2016) is a 501(c)(3) private foundation dedicated to improving social equity and environmental sustainability in Utah and strengthening democracy in the United States. Our grants focus on organizations doing meaningful work with tangible results that directly improve outcomes in their communities

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