

Candidate & Campaign Training Speakers:

Asma Akhras



Asma has experience teaching at all levels from elementary to college, and currently works as a math instructional leader at District 99 in Cicero and as a student-teacher supervisor at Benedictine University. Asma earned her bachelor of arts degree in elementary education with a minor in math education summa cum laude from Saint Xavier University, and her master of education degree in curriculum and instruction from Benedictine University. She is also certified to teach secondary math. Asma has served on the Darien School District 61 Education Foundation as well as the Hinsdale South High School Foundation. She is also the cofounder of the Sreen Foundation (sreen.org), a nonprofit organization supporting the social and

emotional needs of children battling cancer. She is a member of the Indian Prairie Public Library board of trustees.

Anisha Ismail Patel



Anisha Ismail Patel was elected in a landslide victory to serve on the Arlington Heights School Board of Education during the 2017 Consolidated Elections. As a first time candidate in local government, her unprecedented win in a highly contested race will serve as a motivator for other people and especially women of color to run for public office.

As a global educator, she is the Founder and CEO of InnovusED, an education consulting firm. A participant of the Harvard Global Education Think Tank, Anisha began her journey attending international schools in Malawi, Africa. She moved to the US to further her education. Honored as the Valedictorian of her graduating college class, she was also awarded academic merit scholarships at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, earning a Bachelors in Elementary Education and a Masters in Educational Administration and Leadership.

Anisha is dedicated to cultivating global citizenship and makes an impact in the fields of education; and nurturing youth & women in leadership & service. Passionate about community organizing, she has launched non-profit organizations to promote philanthropy and empowerment. She aspires to implement change on the global, national and local landscapes. In 2016, she was invited by President Obama to a White House reception along with other national leaders.

She is a speaker, writer, and education social entrepreneur. Anisha has been featured in the Atlantic, Chicago Tribune, Daily Herald, Patheos, Education Post and the Huffington Post. Together with her husband and children, she lives in the suburbs of Chicago.

Dilara Sayeed



Dilara Alim Sayeed is Director of Envision Education Consultants. She has an M.S. Ed from Northwestern University (1999), has attended the Harvard University Graduate School of Education Principal Center (11/2010), and is pursuing a graduate degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign. Dilara has 19 years of experience teaching at the PreK-12th grade levels at public and private school systems. She is currently an educator in District 203 and an instructor in the Department of Education at Benedictine University. Her passion is promoting successful teaching and learning for students of all ages.

Envision Education's current initiative is partnering with Indian-based Edvantage Teacher Leadership Institute to connect educators in India with teacher leaders in the United States via ongoing SKYPE peer mentoring. As Director, Dilara conducts workshops for educators and community members internationally and writes on education and youth issues. She also serves on committees and on the board of trustees of organizations such as KidsMatter and the Webb Foundation. She strives to share opportunities to reflect and grow as lifelong learners for teachers, students,

parents, and community members.