

The PEAL Center
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The PEAL Center Announces Dr. Tricia H. Shelton as Incoming Board Chair

[Pittsburgh, PA, October 8, 2025] — The Parent Education and Advocacy Leadership (PEAL) Center is proud to announce that Dr. Tricia H. Shelton has been voted in as the incoming Chair of the Board of Directors.

Dr. Shelton brings more than 20 years of leadership in education, with deep expertise in early childhood education, school administration, and teacher preparation. Dr. Shelton has been a member of The PEAL Center Board of Directors since 2022. Most recently, she served as Vice Chair of the Board and as Chair of the External Affairs Committee, where she played a key role in advancing the organization's mission through strategic partnerships and community engagement.

Currently serving as an Assistant Professor at Slippery Rock University, Dr. Shelton's scholarship and teaching emphasize inclusive practices and cultivating belonging in schools and communities. She is a strong advocate for equity and cultural responsiveness, striving to challenge systemic inequities that impact marginalized students and families. A former early childhood teacher and K–4 building principal, Dr. Shelton brings practical, hands-on experience to her role, making her uniquely positioned to guide The PEAL Center's mission of ensuring that all families and youth are empowered to advocate for inclusive education and healthcare. Dr. Shelton is especially passionate about fostering strong, empathetic partnerships between teachers and families. She believes that meaningful family engagement is a cornerstone of student success and is committed to equipping educators with the knowledge and tools needed to build culturally affirming, collaborative relationships. In addition to her professional leadership, she is also the parent of a young adult with ASD, giving her a deeply personal understanding of the critical importance of The PEAL Center's mission and impact.

"We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Shelton into this leadership role," said Meredith Peterson, Executive Director of the PEAL Center. "Her vision, experience, and unwavering commitment to equity and inclusion will strengthen our work and amplify the voices of the communities we serve."

The PEAL Center also extends its deepest gratitude to outgoing Board Chair, Dr. Tanya Manning-Yarde, for her dedication and service. Dr. Manning-Yarde, who has served on the Board for several years, recently resigned for personal reasons. Her leadership and contributions have been invaluable to advancing the mission of the PEAL Center, and the organization is thankful for her commitment and impact.

As Board Chair, Dr. Shelton will lead the Board of Directors in advancing the PEAL Center's mission, supporting families, and driving systemic change in education and healthcare access.

About the Parent Education & Advocacy Leadership (PEAL) Center

Since 2005, the PEAL Center had been committed to empowering families, children and young adults with disabilities, and the professionals who serve them. Today, PEAL is a Pennsylvania statewide organization that continues to promote inclusion and access to education and healthcare. The PEAL Center offers free of charge support to those served through individual assistance, trainings, and leadership development. The PEAL Center serves all of Pennsylvania with offices in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, and remote staff.

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