

**TAMPA HEIGHTS**  
**ELEMENTARY MAGNET**

*Navigators*

**STAFF BIOS**

**2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR**

# ADMINISTRATION



**Melanie Hill-Anderson**  
**Principal**

My name is Melanie Hill-Anderson and I am overjoyed to be the new principal at Tampa Heights Elementary Magnet. I possess over twenty-two years educational experience spanning grades PreK-5th Grade with a specific concentration in working with students with special needs. My most recent administrative experience has been shaped by thirteen years of successful leadership. I served as the principal of E.L. Bing and Potter Elementary schools and as assistant principal at E.L. Bing Elementary and Philip Shore Magnet School of the Arts. I am elated to bring my skills as an educational leader to our school and to work with you as a partner in education to ensure your child's success.

Along with staff, I will work hard to make Tampa Heights Magnet a school that our community can continue to be proud of by building strong relationships with parents, students, staff, and community partners. We will focus on a positive mindset, fostering a nurturing safe environment for children, use of data to make solid instructional decisions, and providing exciting and challenging enrichment opportunities for all students.



**Denise Howard**  
**Assistant Principal of Elementary Instruction**

Denise Howard holds a Master of Science degree in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University (Tampa, FL 2011) and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from the University of South Florida (Tampa, FL 2006). Ms. Howard holds professional educator certifications in School Principal (All Levels), Educational Leadership (All Levels), Elementary Education (K-6), and ESOL Endorsement. Ms. Howard has served Hillsborough County Public Schools for the past 14 years in several capacities. She began her tenure as an elementary teacher at Robles Elementary for nine years. In 2015, she was appointed as Assistant Principal of Cleveland Elementary where she elevated the

educational experiences for all learners and cultivated community and family engagement. Her efforts helped to increase student achievement and create a culture of inclusion.

Ms. Howard is a passionate lifelong learner who enjoys traveling, spending time with loved ones, and giving back to the community. She is a member of the Hillsborough Alliance of Black School Educators where she advocates for equity for both students and educators. She is also a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Ms. Howard is excited to join the Tampa Heights Elementary Magnet Team as Assistant Principal. Her vision is to serve the Tampa Heights Family by establishing trust and building lasting relationships with all Stakeholders.

## KINDERGARTEN



**Marcelene Schiele**  
**Kindergarten Teacher**

Hello! My name is Marcelene (Marci) Schiele and I am one of the Kindergarten teachers at Tampa Heights! This is my ninth year at Tampa Heights and my twenty-fifth year teaching in Hillsborough County. My passion for teaching Kindergarten began when I, myself, was a Kindergarten student! Just a little about myself... I was born and raised in West Tampa and I am a proud graduate of Jefferson High School. I attended the University of West Florida in Pensacola. After graduating and moving back to Tampa, I married my college sweetheart, Bill. We have two children; Samantha, a college freshman and Tyler, a high school Junior. I enjoy spending time with my family, traveling, going to the beach and reading!



**Letecia Nathan**  
**Kindergarten Teacher**

I was born and raised in Tampa. I graduated from Mercer University in Macon, GA with a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature and Elementary Education. Every year has been exciting and memorable, as I have been lucky to teach such wonderful students. Tampa Heights Elementary is a great place where I truly enjoy being around such enthusiastic students, staff, and parents. In my classroom, I promote an atmosphere of safety, trust, and respect. I work hard to build a sense of community among my students, and I emphasize the idea of teamwork. I value cooperation and collaboration both in my classroom and as I work with my peers. I believe that great things can happen when we work together! Tampa Heights is a place where I really feel like part of a strong community and part of a winning team! In my spare time, I also coach varsity cheerleading at Tampa Bay Tech High School.

## FIRST GRADE



**Ciara Anderson**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher**

My name is Ciara Anderson, and I am brand new to Tampa Heights Elementary Magnet! I just moved to Hillsborough County this summer and am very excited to work with a motivated and diverse group of leaders and educators this school year. This will be my second school year but first time teaching first grade. My goal for this year will be to focus on becoming an ever-learning educator and positive role model for my students. I enjoy collaboration and working alongside a team with a goal of propelling student achievement. When I am not teaching, I enjoy spending time with my family, traveling combined with fulfilling my bucket list, and catching up on my favorite television shows.



**Bethany Hamer**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher**

My name is Bethany Hamer and I am in my third year of teaching first grade. First grade is my favorite because of how much the kids grow as learners, it's so exciting! I also love first grade because of all the fun learning opportunities we get to engage in. My goal for this year is to cultivate well-rounded students: intellectually, emotionally, and socially. When I'm not at school I like spending time at home with my partner and our free roaming rabbit. I love travelling, hiking, and watching movies.



**Dorothy McCoy**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher**

Hi, I'm Ms. McCoy and I love being a teacher! I have taught in Hillsborough County for over 16 years and it has been such a pleasure to create a love of learning in my students. Since I feel people can really enjoy learning, my class tends to work hard and laugh hard.

I come from a large family, and it has made me know the importance of getting along with others. That's why every year, I strive to create a family feel amongst my students, so they have a special bond that often they keep even when they move on from my class. Nothing makes me happier, than to bump into a previous student and hear that they have stayed friends with their classmates from my class. I look forward to meeting my new class, and making another year to remember.

# SECOND GRADE



**Cassie Ham**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher**

Hi, my name is Cassie Ham and this is my second year at Tampa Heights. I moved to Tampa last year from Sarasota. I went to University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee to receive my degree in Elementary Education. I love going to new places and meeting new people. I am excited for this school year in 2nd grade. 😊



**Summer Montgomery**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher**

I was born and raised in Virginia Beach, Virginia and moved to Florida to attend college. I attended the University of Miami and finished my degree at the University of South Florida. This is my 17th year teaching. The majority of my career has been teaching in Tampa, Florida; however, I also taught at an international school in Tokyo, Japan from 2005-2006. When I'm not teaching, I love to spend my free time with my husband, Dave, and our daughters, Kaitlyn and Savannah. We love to spend time outdoors enjoying nature, attending music & food festivals and searching for treasures in antique shops. I am so excited for a fantastic school year!



**Abbi Stamler**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher**

Hi! My name is Abbi Stamler, and I was born and raised in Connecticut. I love going to the beach, being active, and animals of all kinds! I moved to Tampa in 2007 to earn my Bachelor of Arts in accounting. After working for a number of years, I decided to go back to school and pursue my passion for education. I returned to Tampa, where I earned my Masters in Elementary Education at the University of South Florida. I joined the Tampa Heights family in December of 2018. I am thrilled to be here and am looking forward to another fabulous year in second grade!

## THIRD GRADE



**Lindsay Anders**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher**

My name is Lindsay Anders and I'm an enthusiastic educator who's passionate about providing opportunities for all students to learn, grow, and succeed! Excited for the year ahead with the wonderful Tampa Heights community.



**Marvilyn Lyons**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher**

Hello, my name is Marvilyn Lyons, and I am excited to be a part of Tampa Heights Magnet. I have been teaching in Hillsborough County for 14 years. I am a Florida native and a proud graduate from USF, Go Bulls! I also obtained my master's degree in Education Leadership from American College of Education. I am blessed with a wonderful husband and two children. Oh, can't forget my German Shepherd, Sammie. She is a big part of our family.

My philosophy for teaching is to foster the love of learning through unique learning experiences. Parent and teacher communication is important for student success. I look forward to a positive partnership.



**Leshai Williams**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher**

Hello my name is Mrs. Sanders (Ms. Williams). I am from Tampa, FL. I graduated from Bethune-Cookman University where I received my degree in Elementary Education. I have a husband and two beautiful children. I have been teaching for 10 years.

# FOURTH GRADE



**Yolanda Cox**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher**

I am Yolanda Cox. I have lived in Tampa with my family for almost twenty-five years. My wonderful husband and I have two beautiful daughters. My oldest graduated Blake High School as the 2020-2021 valedictorian and is on her way to the University of Central Florida. My youngest is a chorus major at Blake and she plays saxophone with the Marching Yellow Jackets. I received my Bachelor of Science degree from the University of South Florida. Go Bulls!! I look forward to getting to know all our new families at Tampa Heights and I look forward to seeing our returning families again.



**Mrs. Chatham**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher**

Hi, I'm your teacher Mrs. Chatman. I was born and raised right here in Tampa, Florida. I attended Brandon High School, HCC, and subsequently graduated from the University of South Florida with a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education, Class of 94' ( Go Bulls!!). This is my 27<sup>th</sup> year as a teacher in the Hillsborough County School District and my third year here at Tampa Heights Elementary Magnet. I have taught first through fourth grades but have spent the majority of my career teaching third and fourth. I am married with three amazing children: two boys and a girl. My youngest is in the fourth grade here at Tampa Heights. In my spare time, I enjoy cooking, gardening, reading, and spending time with my family.

I'm looking forward to teaching you all this school year.



**Marion White**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher**

I was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. I recently moved to Tampa, FL from Ft. Sill Oklahoma. I received my Bachelor's Degree from the University of Central Oklahoma. I graduated with my Master's Degree from The University of Oklahoma in May of 2018. As a first-generation college graduate, I have always wanted to inspire the next generation to dream big! I've been teaching at Tampa Heights for 3 years. Prior to becoming an elementary school teacher, I taught Pre-K for 3 years in Oklahoma. I consider myself extremely blessed to be a part of the Tampa Heights Elementary Magnet family! I am looking forward to this school year!

## FIFTH GRADE



**Nadine Abukhaled**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher**

Hello! My name is Nadine Abukhaled and I am so excited to be part of the Tampa Heights Elementary Magnet family! I am a first-generation American born and raised in Tampa and educated in Hillsborough County Public Schools. I earned my B.A in Psychology from USF in 2016. Shortly after, I found my passion for education while substitute teaching, which inspired me to return to USF. I have since earned my Master of Arts in Teaching for Elementary Education along with Reading and ESOL Endorsements. When I am not teaching, I love to bake and spend time with friends and family!



**Samantha Levine**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher**

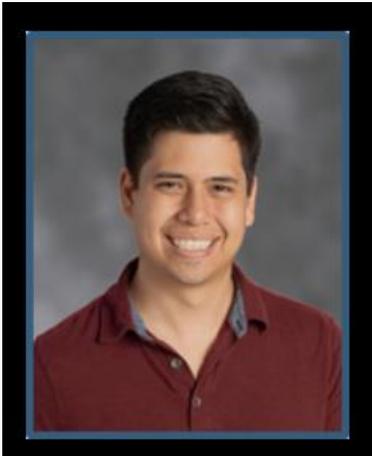
Hello, Guten Tag, Ciao, Chairete! My name is Samantha Levine. This is my 12th year teaching and 10th year being part of the fantastic Tampa Heights family. I have taught Kindergarten, 3rd grade, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and now 5<sup>th</sup> grade. I am originally from Ossining, New York. I moved to Florida in 2006 to attend the University of Central Florida, where I received my Bachelors in Elementary Education, as well as, my Reading and ESOL Endorsements. For as long as I can remember, I had wanted to be a teacher. Being the daughter of a teacher, I knew the importance of the profession and could not imagine doing anything else. I hope to share my passion for education with my students through fun and innovative lessons that will help them grow as global leaders. Outside of school, I spend time with my husband and beautiful daughters, Harper and Hallie. I love to cook, read, travel, spend time with friends, watch and play sports. I am looking forward to another wonderful school year and learning alongside my class on this amazing adventure called fifth grade.



**Alexis Schmidt**  
**5th Grade Teacher**

My name is Alexis Schmidt, and I was born and raised in Orlando, Florida. I attended the University of Central Florida and received a degree in Communications with a minor in Hospitality. After graduating I knew I wanted to make a difference within my community and decided to investigate teaching. I became a substitute at a middle school, instantly fell in love with the work and have been teaching ever since!

# VE/ESE/GIFTED



**Kyle Lockhart**  
VE/ESE

Hello, my name is Mr. Lockhart! I am from Tampa and love Tampa Heights Elementary School! I went to college at the University of South Florida. Go Bulls! I am entering my 9<sup>th</sup> year teaching. I enjoy spending my free time with my family and friends! I have a two-year-old daughter named Clara with my wife Susann. I have a passion for teaching all students and helping our students further their reading, math, and writing skills!



**Meagan Gallogly**  
VE/ESE

Hello my name is Meagan Gallogly and this is my fifth year teaching at Tampa Heights! I am very excited for the 2021-2022 school year. I have a true passion for teaching and love making a difference in our students lives. I was born and raised in Tampa, Florida, and during my free time I love watching Buccaneer football and a relaxing day at the beach. I am so thankful to be a part of this school family! Go Navigators!



**Erica Negron**  
**Teacher of Gifted**

Hello! My name is Erica Negron. I live with my husband, my 2 sons, and my dog. I'm definitely outnumbered! I was born and raised in Southern California and moved to Florida as a high school student. As the oldest of five children in a single parent household, I have learned what it takes to manage, love, and teach young minds. My experiences and responsibilities have taught me that everything we do should have a purpose and a goal in mind. Teaching and inspiring children is what I have always wanted to do. I attended USF as a first-generation college student and earned my Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with Honors! After being in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at Tampa Heights for 7 years, I am now entering my 2<sup>nd</sup> year as the K-5 Gifted teacher. I am thrilled to start working with your child!

## SPECIALS



**Michelle Mixson**  
**Art Specialist**

Greetings! I am a Tampa native and received my bachelor's degree from the University of Tampa. I am a life-long artist and feel blessed to share my passion. My mission is to expose students to a variety of artwork and help them discover the artist within themselves. When I am not drawing or painting, I am spending time with my daughter Lily and our pets. I also enjoy reading, biking, gardening, visiting my family, and taking advantage of our awesome city parks, pools, and libraries. I am very excited to be part of the Tampa Heights Elementary Magnet family and to take our students' creativity to the next level.



**Stan Golka**  
**P.E. Specialist**

I have lived in Tampa most of my life. I attended USF earning a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Physical Education. I have taught Physical Education at Lee/Tampa Heights for 26 years. I am one of only 2 teachers left from the original faculty that started the original Magnet program in Hillsborough County in 1993. I also have been coaching wrestling in Hillsborough County for the last 27 years.



**Margaret Porter**  
**Music Specialist**

I was born and raised in Tampa Fl. Left after high school to attend Florida A & M University (FAMU) where I received my degree in Music Education. What makes me happy is being surrounded by family and friends who are enjoying each other's company. When I'm not with them, I like to watch scary movies with my husband or read a good book. My goal in music is for the students to gain a respect for all types of music and with that brings the respect of others' differences.



**Mary Kate Conway**  
**Media Specialist**

I was born and raised in the NY/NJ area and received my BA in Communications from Salisbury University in Maryland. After staying at home with my daughter and son for 8 years, I finished my M.A. in Library and Information Sciences from USF and I am SO excited to bring my love of STEM/STEAM and reading to the Tampa Heights Family! I live in Tampa with my husband, our two kids, and our dog, Nova. My favorite hobbies are traveling and baking.

# HEALTH & SPECIAL SERVICES



**Melissa Jones**  
**School Counselor**

Greetings, Navigators!

I am extremely excited to set sail as a 4th year Navigator here at Tampa Heights and year 31 as an educator with the School District of Hillsborough County. I've had the privilege of serving the district in many capacities to include Classroom Teacher, District Trainer of Diversity, ABE/GED Instructor, Magnet Lead Teacher, Behavior Specialist, and currently as School Counselor. In addition to being a School Counselor, I serve as an Evening AS Academic Advisor at Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus.

I am a Tampa native and a product and graduate of Hillsborough's finest schools. I hold a B.S. degree in Elementary Education from THE FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY, three M.Ed. Degrees- Elementary Education; Reading; and School Guidance and Counseling from Nova Southeastern University.

I am the blessed mother of two beautiful adult daughters, ages 19 (Tallahassee Community College) and 21 (THE FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY). During my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my mom, exercising, traveling, shopping, and serving the community with my Sorors of the illustrious Tampa Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.



**Beth Karmann**  
**School Psychologist**

My name is Beth Karmann, and this is my 7th year as a school psychologist in Hillsborough County Public Schools. I attended school at the University of South Florida for my undergraduate degree and Nova Southeastern University for graduate school. In my spare time, I enjoy traveling, hiking and spending time with family and friends.



**Rachel Yeomans**  
**School Social Worker**

Mrs. Rachel Yeomans, our school social worker, is thrilled to join the Tampa Heights Navigators for her first year! Ms. Yeomans is eager to serve and support the students, families, and community of Tampa Heights. Mrs. Yeomans was born and raised in Nashville, Tennessee, and graduated from Tennessee State University with a Master of Social Work degree. Mrs. Yeomans enjoys spending time with her family and friends, traveling, and spending time outdoors.



**Morenike Cameron**  
**School Nurse**

I am the Licensed Practical Nurse for Tampa Heights Elementary Magnet (formerly Lee Elementary Magnet). This is my 10th year working in our wonderful school. I have a beautiful, gifted daughter who is a ninth grader this year. My role at the school is to care for the medical needs of the students and faculty on our campus. I love this job because I can interact with students and families. Working at Tampa Heights Elementary Magnet is always enjoyable due to our small, friendly, and helpful staff.

# RESOURCE TEACHERS



**Shavonda Phillips**  
**Math Resource Teacher**

Hello. I'm Ms. Phillips, the Math Resource Teacher at Tampa Heights Magnet this year. I was born and raised here in Hillsborough County. I'm a graduate of Nova Southeastern and University of South Florida.

When I'm not teaching I love spending time with family, shopping, cooking, traveling, and watching football!

Looking forward to an awesome year 😊



**Carrie McGriskin**  
**Reading Resource**

Hi! I am the Reading Resource Teacher here at Tampa Heights. Though I have called Tampa Bay home for eight years, I am a New York native, and have lived in Indiana, and on Florida's East Coast. I have a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and Master's Degree in Reading Education, both from Stetson University in DeLand, Florida. This is my second year at Tampa Heights, but my 12th year teaching. I have taught in grades 2 through 5, and middle school reading. I am passionate about instilling the love of reading in my students. As a Reading Resource Teacher for the last five years, I have enjoyed teaching reading to small groups of students throughout the school. I have loved getting to know the amazing students here at Tampa Heights; this truly is a special school. My husband and I have a three-year-old daughter, and are expecting our second daughter this year! We love to travel to eat good food and are fans of all things Disney.



**Barbara Bowman**  
**Writing Resource Teacher**

Although a Tampa native, I was raised in Brooklyn, NY, and returned to Tampa as a teenager. I attended Hillsborough High School (Go Big Red!). I graduated with a Bachelor's degree from University of South Florida in Elementary Education and a Master's degree from University of West Florida in Educational Leadership. My husband, two children, and I have had the pleasure of living in a few different cities and states. I have been teaching for Hillsborough County for 17 years in a variety of positions including: fourth grade teacher, academic coach, and writing resource teacher. Every year has been exciting and memorable! This is my second year at Tampa Heights Elementary Magnet. I have truly enjoyed the growth mindset and openness of the students, teachers, and families. Teaching students to articulate their thoughts through writing fills my heart every day. I look forward to years to come with our Navigators!



**Mialana S. Johnson-Dixon**  
**Elementary Reading Coach**

Mrs. Johnson-Dixon graduated with a Bachelor of Science from the University of South Florida in Varying Exceptionalities. She also studied Educational Leadership at NOVA Southeastern University receiving a Master's of Arts degree. For over 17 years, Mrs. Johnson-Dixon has served passionately educating students in all core subject areas. Her field of work has encompassed students with:

- Disabilities (Social and Cognitive)
- Reading & Math Deficiencies
- Socio & Economically Disadvantage Backgrounds
- English as a Second Language

Mrs. Johnson-Dixon has a gift for bringing life to academics and making learning engaging and applicable for all students.



**Ralynda Austin**  
**Kindergarten Para**

Hello! My name is Ralynda Austin and I'm the Kindergarten Para at Tampa Heights! This is my ninth year at Tampa Heights and my 11th year with Hillsborough County Public Schools. I was born and raised in Ybor City and graduated from The Academy of The Holy Names. I went on to attend The University of Florida, (Go Gators!) Receiving a bachelors of science in communication sciences and disorders. I am engaged and have two daughters. Yanna, a kindergartener here at Tampa Heights and Amaya, age 2. I enjoy working with kids and dancing and I am looking forward to another amazing year at Tampa Heights!