



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

2024 ELEMENTARY SECTION ELECTIONS

The biographical information concerning the nominees' past and present service to NCTE was supplied by the candidates. Names on the ballot are presented in random order. Each year nominations are made by a nominating committee elected by the membership in the spring.

The 2023–2024 NCTE Elementary Nominating Committee members are Idalia Nuñez, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Hiawatha Smith, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, and Natasha Thornton, Educational Consultant and Adjunct Instructor.

ELEMENTARY SECTION STEERING COMMITTEE

The Elementary Section Steering Committee is responsible for the governance of NCTE's Elementary Section and guides the affairs of the Section. All Steering Committee members serve four-year terms.

(Vote for two.)



CRISTINA T MARTINEZ (she/her) Dean of Elementary School, Sunflowers Academy, Miami, Florida, six years. **Formerly:** English language instructor, Florida International University, four years; First-year college writing instructor, Ohio State University, two years. **Specialty Area(s)/Area(s) of Expertise:** Bilingual education, rhetoric and composition, curriculum development, faculty development. **Membership(s):** NCTE; Kappa Delta Pi (KDP); the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). **Award(s):** Graduate Assistantship, Ohio State University; Travel Grant, Project Narrative, Ohio State University; Stipend through the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Summer Institute for Literary and Cultural Studies, Wheaton College. **Presentation(s):** Ohio Latin Americanist Conference (OLAC) at Bowling Green State University; Ohio State University's Department of English.

How has NCTE provided a professional home for you?

There are aspects of day-to-day reality for educators that are challenging. NCTE is a professional base for me in that it's where I turn to for things to "make sense," whether it's reading an article on a topic of interest, participating in professional development opportunities, or conventions. NCTE has been a compass to think through situations I encounter, as well as help me be timely and relevant in my practice as an educator and administrator.

How does your current work in your career, community, and/or classroom contribute to NCTE's mission and vision, and demonstrate alignment with NCTE's commitment to equity and justice? How have your personal strengths and experiences contributed to making positive change(s) in the profession?

I work at a K–8 school serving a Hispanic community. My work consists of developing our team's pedagogical training as it relates to delivering quality education to students who are bilingual or non-English speakers. My background in English education allows me to ensure we are equitable to students who are recent immigrants, including having equal access to resources as their classmates. I work with the administrative team to ensure accommodations for maximum learning outcomes.

What is your rationale for seeking this office? What would you like to accomplish while in office?

I work in a unique cultural "biome" that is made of extraordinary layers. I want to bring visibility to students of migrant families so more resources become available to educators. I also want to take the ideas that I encounter as new tools to enhance teaching and learning in my community. We grow by meaningful exchanges, and I hope to take an active role in the exchange of real-time knowledge and experiences this role offers.



Heather Ramer Fletes (she/her): Independent Literacy Consultant, McKinney, TX; Texas Council for Teachers of English Language Arts Elementary Section Chair; North Texas Council for Teachers of English Language Arts Vice President; Valley Creek Elementary PTA Board, Vice President of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Site Based Committee. **Formerly:** RLA coordinator, elementary teacher, nine years. **Specialty Area(s)/Area(s) of Expertise:** Bilingual education, pedagogy, curriculum, content literacy, SOTR, coaching teachers. **Membership(s):** NCTE, TCTELA, NTCTELA, CEL, VCE PTA. **Awards:** CEL Emerging Leader, Terry Scholar. **Program Contribution(s):** Presentations at CEL, Texas Association

Bilingual Educators, Coalition of Reading and English Supervisors Texas. **Publications:** TCTELA Newsletter

How has NCTE provided a professional home for you?

As an elementary educator, I taught all content areas. Funds were not provided for RLA-specific conferences. When I joined NCTE, I felt I was coming home. Members were diverse, yet like-minded in our belief that literacy can change lives and highly literate people make the world a better place. Through the publications of NCTE and attending powerful professional development at annual conferences, I grew and felt welcomed and supported as a literacy educator.

How does your current work in your career, community, and/or classroom contribute to NCTE's mission and vision, and demonstrate alignment with NCTE's commitment to equity and justice? How have your personal strengths and experiences contributed to making positive change(s) in the profession?

I train teachers and leaders in classrooms. I promote inclusive and honoring practices for readers of all backgrounds and abilities. I advocate for access to diverse texts. Educators I partner with hear that independent reading and writing are foundational to literacy. As a talented public speaker and writer, I use my voice to champion literacy practices rooted in research and

justice. Daily, I exhort teachers and leaders to implement pedagogy that connects students to literacy.

What is your rationale for seeking this office? What would you like to accomplish while in office?

I currently serve in a similar capacity for my state affiliate. At NCTE, there is not an equally strong voice coming from the Elementary Section. I would like to take my work promoting literacy organizations to the national level and serve the organization that means so much to me. This is a confusing time for early literacy, and elementary teachers need strong connections with research and guidance for navigating decisions impacting their literacy teaching.



SANJUANA RODRIGUEZ (she/her) Associate Professor of Reading Education. **Formerly:** Elementary school teacher and literacy coach; NCTE Elementary Nominations Committee, Orbis Pictus Committee Chair, Professional Dyads for Culturally Relevant Instruction. **Specialty Area(s)/Area(s) of Expertise:** Early literacy development of culturally and linguistically diverse students, diverse children's literature, and the experiences of Latinx pre- and inservice teachers. **Membership(s):** NCTE, ECEA, AERA, ILA. **Program Contribution(s):** Presentations at NCTE, LRA, AERA.

How has NCTE provided a professional home for you?

NCTE has been my professional home since 2009, when I attended and presented as a classroom teacher and doctoral student. NCTE has helped me to grow as an educator and make connections with educators from different spaces. NCTE has provided me with a network of colleagues and mentors. Through participating in NCTE's PDCRT program, I found educators dedicated to equity and justice in their communities who have formed a network of scholars and teachers.

How does your current work in your career, community, and/or classroom contribute to NCTE's mission and vision, and demonstrate alignment with NCTE's commitment to equity and justice? How have your personal strengths and experiences contributed to making positive change(s) in the profession?

As a teacher educator, I believe that I have the potential to impact thousands of students. I continuously seek to engage in reflection about the work that I do with teachers and strive to do work that is grounded in equity and justice. I am committed to serving and extending NCTE's mission and vision and continuing to serve in roles to contribute to that positive change.

What is your rationale for seeking this office? What would you like to accomplish while in office?

Having served the organization in different capacities, I am interested in serving on the NCTE Elementary Section Committee. I believe that this is one way that I can continue to give back to this organization. One of the goals that I would seek to accomplish would be to continue to center justice and equity work and to create inclusive spaces to engage with teachers who are looking for spaces that value this work.



Carmen Lugo Llerena (she/her/hers). Early Childhood Educator, NYC Department of Education; doctoral student, Teachers College-Columbia University; Board Member, NCTE Early Childhood Education Assembly (ECEA)
Formerly: Trustee, NCTE Research Foundation; NCTE Professional Dyads and Culturally Relevant Teaching (PDCRT).
Specialty Area(s)/Area(s) of Expertise: Culturally relevant pedagogies; literacy; childhood culture and play; civic engagement in early childhood. **Membership(s):** NCTE, AERA. **Publication(s):** Co-authored articles in *Bank Street Occasional Paper Series* and *Urban Education*; coauthor, *No More Culturally Irrelevant Teaching (Not This but That)*;

contributor, *In the Pursuit of Justice: Students' Rights to Read and Write in Elementary School*.
Program Contribution(s): Presentations at NCTE, AERA, and Reimagining Education Summer Institute (RESI), Teachers College.

How has NCTE provided a professional home for you?

NCTE has provided a space for me to grow as an educator since 2015. As part of a dyad in the PDCRT community, and through my involvement with the ECEA, Research Foundation, and Latinx Caucus, I have been mentored and supported by educators and scholars committed to disrupting racism and other forms of bias in pedagogical practice, school curriculum, and educational policies. These connections have prompted several collaborations and cultivated enduring friendships.

How does your current work in your career, community, and/or classroom contribute to NCTE's mission and vision, and demonstrate alignment with NCTE's commitment to equity and justice? How have your personal strengths and experiences contributed to making positive change(s) in the profession?

As an early childhood educator, I am dedicated to creating learning experiences within a social justice framework to develop my students' racial and cultural literacy and nurture a sense of civic responsibility. As a mentor to teacher candidates and novice teachers, I share resources and demonstrate ways to integrate culturally relevant literacy pedagogies into their teaching practices, while also providing guidance and support on how to navigate and counter systemic inequities in schools.

What is your rationale for seeking this office? What would you like to accomplish while in office?

I am so grateful for the opportunities NCTE has afforded me and hope my experience and perspective can serve other members. In seeking office, I hope to work collaboratively to further NCTE's mission, support teachers, and advocate for equitable literacy experiences for all students.

ELEMENTARY SECTION NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee prepares a slate of candidates for vacancies that occur annually on the Elementary Section Steering Committee and selects candidates for the succeeding year's Elementary Section Nominating Committee. The candidate who receives the largest number of votes in the election will chair the committee.

(Vote for three.)



LIZ MURRAY (She/her/hers) Literacy Consultant, Davis Montessori Teacher Education Program, CA; Co-Chair, Early Childhood Education Assembly of the NCTE; Research Partner and Consultant, Bay Area Writing Project, CA. **Formerly:** Early childhood teacher (K–2), teacher education supervisor. **Specialty Area(s)/Area(s) of Expertise:** Early childhood education, multilingual education, teacher preparation. **Membership(s):** AERA, LRA, PETAA, UKLA. **Publication(s):** “Cuando Tenía Seis Años. . .”: Family Storytelling in Early Years Bilingual Classrooms during Distance Learning,” in *Advancing Culturally Responsive and Socially Just Approaches to Multilingual Family-School Partnerships*, V. J. Lee and K. L. Lewis (Eds.) (2023). **Presentation(s):** AERA, LRA, LLA, NCTEAR, NCTE.

How has NCTE provided a professional home for you?

Since 2013 I have been a member of the ECEA and have been on the board since 2020, currently as Co-Chair. The ECEA and its members epitomize for me what early childhood literacy education should always be—a space for liberatory education that centers antiracist pedagogy and practice, and “revolutionary love” (Wynter-Hoyte et al, 2022). Critically examining language and literacy practices with our youngest learners is a privilege and endless source of joy.

How does your current work in your career, community, and/or classroom contribute to NCTE’s mission and vision, and demonstrate alignment with NCTE’s commitment to equity and justice? How have your personal strengths and experiences contributed to making positive change(s) in the profession?

I work in a variety of areas, with classroom teachers as well as multilingual families and communities. I am constantly learning from the people I work with and applying this to ongoing relationships. Community and families are at the heart of my work, reflecting NCTE’s vision statement where they are included in the subheading “Power” as constituents we must engage with to impact literacy policy and practice now and in the future.

What is your rationale for seeking this office? What would you like to accomplish while in office?

NCTE is my most cherished professional home, and being on the Nominating Committee would be a chance to engage with people I highly respect to help shape NCTE’s future leadership. A humanizing family engagement framework (Gallo, 2017) shapes my interactions with teachers and communities. Affirming community knowledge and experience and bringing that into all educational spaces is a critical part of liberatory classroom practice. This is what I would be looking for in potential candidates.



María G. Leija (she/her/ella) Assistant Professor of Early Childhood/Elementary Education, University of Texas at San Antonio, Texas; Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction for Children Committee member. **Formerly:** K–6 and middle school teacher (6 years). **Specialty Area(s)/Area(s) of Expertise:** Bilingualism, biliteracy, family engagement, and teacher education. Memberships: NCTE, ECEA, and AERA. **Award(s):** Professional Dyads and Culturally Relevant Teaching (PDCRT) Award and Cultivating New Voices Among Scholars of Color (CNV) Fellowship. **Publication(s):** *Theory into Practice*; *Bilingual Research Journal*; *Early Childhood Education Journal*; *The Reading Teacher*, *Social Studies and the Young*

Learner. **Program Contribution(s):** Presentations at NCTE, LRA, and AERA.

How has NCTE provided a professional home for you?

NCTE continues to provide learning spaces that nourish educators seeking to improve their praxis and pedagogy in ways that humanize the students they serve. NCTE is a leader in facing challenges and speaking back to oppressive policies and practices. In doing so, it supports its members in developing awareness of key issues that affect communities. Through NCTE, I have had the privilege of building networks that have supported my growth.

How does your current work in your career, community, and/or classroom contribute to NCTE's mission and vision, and demonstrate alignment with NCTE's commitment to equity and justice? How have your personal strengths and experiences contributed to making positive change(s) in the profession?

As a teacher educator, I am committed to ensuring that preservice and inservice teachers are prepared to serve all students in a manner that honors their knowledge, culture, and experiences through culturally sustaining practices. My work examines how Latinx bilingual teachers incorporate students' linguistic, experiential, and cultural experiences to develop students' biliteracy. In addition, my work examines how bilingual teachers effectively create bidirectional spaces between home and school to support emergent bilinguals' academic success.

What is your rationale for seeking this office? What would you like to accomplish while in office?

I have been a member of NCTE for the last six years and have provided service in varied capacities. I would like to continue to provide service to the organization. As an Elementary Section Nominating Committee member, I will support the Committee in meeting its annual goal of identifying key members. I will nominate individuals that will support NCTE in advancing the vision and mission of the organization.



Cori Salmerón (she/her) Assistant Professor of Language & (Bi)Literacy Education, Georgia State University. **Formerly:** Elementary school teacher for six years. **Specialty Area(s)/Area(s) of Expertise:** Multilingual students' language and literacy practices (focus on writing), culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy, social justice teacher preparation. **Membership(s):** NCTE, American Educational Research Association, Literacy Research Association. **Publication(s):** Articles in *Language Arts*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Journal of Literacy Research*, *Bilingual Research Journal*, *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, *Multicultural Perspectives*, *Association of Mexican*

American Educators Journal. **Award(s):** University of Texas Graduate School Continuing Fellowship. **Program Contribution(s):** Presentations at NCTE, LRA, AERA, Bilingualism Matters.

How has NCTE provided a professional home for you?

As a junior scholar of color, NCTE has provided a rich range of support. Namely, my participation in the NCTE Latinx Caucus mentoring program and membership in the 2020–2022 NCTE Cultivating New Voices among Scholars of Color (CNV) cohort. In addition to these formal opportunities, I have found a professional home in the Elementary Section through the varied conversations that I am able to have with practicing teachers, authors, teacher educators, publishers, nonprofits, and researchers.

How does your current work in your career, community, and/or classroom contribute to NCTE's mission and vision, and demonstrate alignment with NCTE's commitment to equity and justice? How have your personal strengths and experiences contributed to making positive change(s) in the profession?

I appreciate that NCTE's mission and vision has a broad perspective that makes space for multiple literacy practices, including multilingualism. In my work I have had the opportunity to educate hundreds of elementary preservice teachers and foster an orientation that is committed to equity and justice in education. In my research I have published in both researcher- and practitioner-focused journals to ensure that my work has the opportunity to reach a wide audience.

What is your rationale for seeking this office? What would you like to accomplish while in office?

Among the varied conferences that I attend, NCTE feels like a family. The diversity of perspectives at NCTE is unmatched, and I am motivated by this community to continue to engage in critically oriented teacher preparation and literacy research. I am interested in being a part of the NCTE Elementary Nominating Committee because I would like to be a part of conversations that shape the future of NCTE.



Laquita Ngando Duvall (she/her/hers). Elementary classroom teacher, Dekalb County Schools, 2020–present. **Formerly:** Elementary school teacher for four years (5th grade), Professional Dyads and Culturally Relevant Teaching. **Specialty Area(s)/Area(s) of Expertise:** Early childhood education, culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies, content area literacy, funds of knowledge. **Membership(s):** PDCRT member, NCTE, Linguistic Justice Collaborative (LJC). **Program Contribution(s):** Presentation of “Curricularizing Black Linguistic Justice: A Community-Centered Cultural Conversation with Elementary Learners” at NCTE, National Conference on Undergraduate Research .

How has NCTE provided a professional home for you?

NCTE has provided a place where I can strengthen my practice. NCTE has provided me with the necessary tools to learn, grow, and be a better educator. While presenting at NCTE, I was able to connect with other experts who were passionate about NCTE’s mission, vision, education, diversity, and literacy. It has also provided a place for me to find new ways to enhance students’ learning and provide equity in classrooms that are increasingly diverse.

How does your current work in your career, community, and/or classroom contribute to NCTE’s mission and vision, and demonstrate alignment with NCTE’s commitment to equity and justice? How have your personal strengths and experiences contributed to making positive change(s) in the profession?

As a teacher educator, my current work contributes to NCTE’s mission and vision by acknowledging students’ funds of knowledge, identities, languages, and cultures. This aligns with NCTE’s vision of applying “the power of language and literacy to actively pursue justice and equity for all students and the educators who serve them.” In the classroom, I utilized culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies and showed other educators how to use them. I advocate for improving student learning.

What is your rationale for seeking this office? What would you like to accomplish while in office?

My interest in serving on the Elementary Nominating Committee is to help improve the quality of learning and teaching at all levels of education. While seeking office on the Elementary Nominating Committee, I would like to support teacher educators to apply NCTE strategies and resources to support diverse learners’ literacy skills and learning in the classroom and community to promote equity.



Luz Yadira Herrera (she/her) Assistant professor, teacher education, California State University, Channel Islands. **Formerly:** Elementary school teacher of seven years, English as a New Language (ENL), New York City Department of Education; consultant, En Comunidad Collective. **Specialty Area(s)/Area(s) of Expertise:** Bilingual education, culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy, translanguaging pedagogy; **Award(s):** 2022 English Journal Edwin M. Hopkins Award. **Publication(s):** *En comunidad: Lessons for Centering the Voices and Experiences of Bilingual Latinx Students*; *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*; *English Journal*; *American Educational Research Association*; *Literacy Today*;

Language and Education. **Program Contribution(s):** Presentations at NCTE, AERA, La Cosecha, NABE.

How has NCTE provided a professional home for you?

My partnership with NCTE has been marked by a wonderful collaboration between teachers, teacher educators, and children's book authors. NCTE has created a welcoming space for discourse on bilingualism in education and the importance of centering the home language practices in the education of emergent bilingual children. I have connected and collaborated with brilliant educators with a wide range of expertise, working toward deepening our collaborative work of advancing culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy.

How does your current work in your career, community, and/or classroom contribute to NCTE's mission and vision, and demonstrate alignment with NCTE's commitment to equity and justice? How have your personal strengths and experiences contributed to making positive change(s) in the profession?

As a teacher educator, I am committed to nurturing the next generation of teachers who center their students' language practices, cultures, and ways of being. My experience supporting teacher candidates in traditional teacher education pathways and teacher residency programs is defined by a systematic commitment to equity and justice by contributing to the strengthening of our teacher preparation programs, guided by a commitment to equity and justice through education.

What is your rationale for seeking this office? What would you like to accomplish while in office?

Serving on the Elementary Steering Committee would provide me with an opportunity to support NCTE's commitment to equity and justice in education. I am seeking to serve on this committee to further support new and experienced teachers (and teacher educators) in creating pedagogical spaces that welcome the dynamic language practices of children in their ELA classrooms and beyond; affirming the identities and sense of belonging of bilingual and multilingual children.



Virginie Jackson (she/her) Assistant Professor of Literacy Education, Kennesaw State University (KSU), Kennesaw, GA; Elementary Education Program Coordinator. **Formerly:** Elementary school teacher for 11 years, literacy specialist, curriculum coordinator; edTPA Coordinator. **Specialty Area(s)/Area(s) of Expertise:** Early literacy, culturally responsive pedagogy, preservice teacher preparation **Membership(s):** NCTE member, PDCRT; ARF member and 2024 conference co-chair; Georgia Association for Teacher Educators (GATE) member. **Award(s):** GATE Distinguished Research in Teacher Education Award. **Publication(s):** Book chapters in Association of Teacher Educators (ATE); IGI

Global (in press); *Springer International Handbook of Research on Multicultural Science Education*; articles in *Frontiers in Education*, *GCTE*, *GJL*, *Current Issues in Education Journal*. Program Contributions(s): Presentations at NCTE, GATE, ARF, GERA, KSU Conference on Literature Co-Director.

How has NCTE provided a professional home for you?

Being part of the NCTE Professional Dyads and Culturally Relevant Teaching (PDCRT) program has offered me a valuable professional home. Accepted into PDCRT, I've had the privilege to learn from exceptional cohort members, past and present, exploring culturally relevant teaching, linguistically sustaining curriculum, and research-based practices for diverse abilities in children.

How does your current work in your career, community, and/or classroom contribute to NCTE's mission and vision, and demonstrate alignment with NCTE's commitment to equity and justice? How have your personal strengths and experiences contributed to making positive change(s) in the profession?

In my role preparing preservice teachers for culturally responsive early literacy instruction, I actively align with NCTE's commitment to equity and justice. Leveraging strong communication, adaptability, and cultural awareness, I create inclusive learning environments. Advocating for innovative methods and curriculum enhancements, I contribute to NCTE's mission. Through collaboration and continuous learning, I inspire my students to advocate for growth and diversity in education, embodying NCTE's vision for positive change in the profession.

What is your rationale for seeking this office? What would you like to accomplish while in office?

I am seeking this office to contribute actively to the Elementary Section's growth and impact. My goal is to identify and nominate dedicated professionals who align with NCTE's vision. I aim to enhance collaboration, foster inclusivity, and prioritize initiatives that address current educational challenges.