

Ericka Shannon

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Ericka Shannon is a native of Atlanta, GA, where she received her dance training from the Atlanta School of Ballet, studying under the direction of Thomas J. Pazik and Kathryn McBeth. Ms. Shannon danced professionally over a decade with the Nashville Ballet, Lexington Ballet, Augusta Ballet and Ohio Dance Theatre. While performing, she enjoyed dancing a wide variety of soloist and principal roles. Currently, Ms. Shannon has been working in the metro-Atlanta area for the last ten years, teaching at numerous studios including, Georgia Dance Conservatory, Rhythm Dance Center and Atlanta Ballet Centre for Dance Education. She is currently on staff at The Neighborhood Ballet, and teaches an after school dance program at Westchester and Glennwood Elementary.

Ms. Shannon's teaching experience spans the last eighteen years and she has taught all levels of dance and movement within a variety of settings. While performing, she began working within the community focusing on arts education and outreach. The need for all children to be given exposure to the arts through education helped Ms. Shannon realize her passion beyond the stage. It is her guiding principle that the arts present the greatest tool to educate and inspire the whole child, while creating and inspiring the audiences of tomorrow. The layering of movement with traditional curriculum and state standards is her focus, incorporating a teaching philosophy of encouragement, dedication, challenge and strong work ethic. The benefits of dance and movement are for everyone, and it is Ms. Shannon's belief with education and awareness, dance unlocks ability and promise in all aspects of life.

Recently, Ms. Shannon was afforded the opportunity to be a part of the new arts infusion program in CSD. She was a part of two pilot programs at Westchester Elementary. The programs while different in scope truly stretched her as an artist and teacher. The second grade movement program infused core curriculum standards hi-lighting the solar system, phases of the moon, seasons and constellations. She worked predominantly within the classroom pushing in on math and science standards. However, as the collaboration of infusion unfolded, standards from every subject were tiered into the program by its conclusion. This four week original series provided a fantastic way of learning while moving and engaging every child and learning style.

The second pilot program created at Westchester was for the third grade expedition. Ms. Shannon collaborated with third grade teachers to create a brand new production titled, "One Well". Original script, choreography, sets and costumes were developed and implemented during the six week series. Ms. Shannon's role was to collaborate with teachers about integration, review of expedition content, providing ideas/writing script for production, creating original choreography, planning project calendar with teachers, working and creating with students, and purchasing and securing materials for project. Students connected with content using movement that built non-linguistic representations of content-specific vocabulary which facilitated a deeper understanding of the content.

For future projects, Ms. Shannon's dream is for all curriculums to be connected and boundless. Her passion is to collaborate with all teachers, creating programs that fully realize the potential of arts infusion in education. The opportunity to see original programs interpreted by different grade levels within the same school or different schools of the same school system would be the ultimate thrill. All movement programs are truly customizable because it is limitless and engages all aspects of learning and standards, needing only to be powered by enthusiasm and imagination.

Ms. Shannon's goal is to provide support, creativity and zealously. She believes she is an instrument for educator's dreams and goals to come alive in their classroom. Children are our greatest asset, and making their education our priority is paramount. Ms. Shannon believes her passion for movement and infusion provides another tool to reach every student, engage every mind and change the future dialogue of learning while educating the whole student.

