

# AGENDA



## Newark Kids Count 2019

Thursday, March 28, 2019  
9:00 am – 12 noon  
Express Newark, Lecture Hall 213

### 9:00 Registration

**9:30 Welcome**     **Reginald Lewis**, Executive Director, Newark City of Learning Collaborative; Assistant Professor of Professional Practice, Rutgers University-Newark, School of Public Affairs and Administration; ACNJ Board of Trustees

**Introduction**     **Cecilia Zalkind**, President & CEO, ACNJ

**Data Presentation: A Profile of Newark's Children and Young Men of Color**  
**Alana Vega**, Kids Count Coordinator, ACNJ

**Panel Discussion: The Future of Newark's Young Men of Color**  
*Introductions:*     **Ryan Haygood**, President & CEO, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice;  
Chair, My Brother's Keeper Newark Executive Committee

*Moderators:*     **Dionysus Augus**  
**Manuel Mejia**

*Panelists:*     **Ras J. Baraka**, Mayor, City of Newark  
**Aisha Glover**, President & CEO, Newark Alliance  
**Roger León**, Superintendent, Newark Public Schools

**Closing Remarks**     **Cecilia Zalkind**, President & CEO, ACNJ

*We'll be live tweeting during this event! Follow us on Twitter @ACNJforKids and @MBK\_Newark. Join the conversation by using #KIDSCOUNT, #NewarksFuture and #WeCountToo.*

Giving Every Child A Chance

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# Guest Speakers

## INTRODUCTIONS



**Ryan Haygood** is the third president and CEO of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (the “Institute”). In this role, he leverages his national expertise to advance the Institute’s cutting-edge work in empowering urban communities so the residents of color are connected to full-time, meaningful jobs, have access to affordable housing and the democratic process, and are treated fairly by the criminal justice system. Prior to leading the Institute, Haygood served as the deputy director of litigation at the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund INC. (LDF), where he worked for more than a decade. At LDF, Haygood litigated some of the most important civil rights cases of our time. In two of those cases, he defended a core provision of the Voting Rights Act, widely regarded as one of the nation’s greatest pieces of civil rights legislation, before the United States Supreme Court.

A passionate advocate, Ryan speaks and writes regularly on issues concerning race, law, civil rights, and democracy. He is frequently interviewed by media outlets, including: MSNBC, CNN, National Public Radio, and the New York Times. Prior to joining LDF, Ryan was a litigation associate in the New York office of Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver, & Jacobson, LLP, and was a recipient of the prestigious LDF/Fried Frank Fellowship. At Fried, Frank, Ryan represented clients in a variety of complex commercial and civil rights matters before federal courts.

Ryan received his J.D. from the University of Colorado School of Law and B.A. in American History and Political Science *cum laude* from Colorado College, where he was nominated for the Rhodes scholarship and earned academic and athletic All-American honors as a football player.

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## MODERATORS



**Dionysus Augus** is a Harlem native, Newark transplant, but has a deep love for the place that formed him into the man he is today. He is a Youth Build Newark graduate and studied art under the late founder and CEO of Yendor Productions, Rodney Gilbert, Mr. Augus founded his own mixed media company to help build artists up to take initiative for their own intellectual properties, Sol Offerings. Being an artist of multiple forms, and an orator of reputable nature, Mr. Augus prides himself on his ability to engage audiences through his art. He is currently a co-host for My Brother’s Keeper’s first ever podcast series bringing attention to policy issues affecting young men of color.



**Manuel Mejia** is a sophomore at Rutgers University-Newark, majoring in Neuroscience and Behavior and minoring in Film. He is a 2018 My Brother’s Keeper Fellow, a Student Researcher at New-Arks Leaders of Health with the Abbott Leadership Institute and an Independent Videographer. Mr. Mejia is a lifelong student of Newark and is proud to watch the City evolve into a flourishing metropolis.

## **PANELISTS**



**Ras J. Baraka** is the 40th Mayor of the City of Newark.

A native of Newark, whose family has lived in the City for more than 70 years, Mayor Baraka's progressive approach to governing has won him accolades from grassroots organizations to the White House. With a forward-thinking agenda that reduced crime to its lowest levels in five decades, addressed affordability while maintaining steady growth, lowered unemployment, and returned local control of schools after more than two decades, Baraka defied expectations during his first term in office.

As a part of his commitment to strengthen Newark's position in the expanding technology space, Mayor Baraka has partnered with corporate stakeholders and institutions, such as NJIT (New Jersey Institute of Technology) on efforts that will capitalize on the 26 miles of dark fiber which lie beneath the City's main corridors. Consequently, Newark is the host city for VOICE, a three-day summit hosted by Amazon Alexa, which is at the forefront of natural language processing. Additionally, in 4Q of 2018, the City will also launch LinkNWK (pronounced Link Newark), a new communications network of sidewalk kiosks that will provide residents of and visitors to Newark with free, gigabit Wi-Fi, mobile device charging, phone calls to anywhere in the U.S., access to municipal services, maps and directions, and real-time local information on city streets at no cost to taxpayers or users.

Mayor Baraka's futurist agenda includes the implementation of a groundbreaking partnership called Hire. Buy. Live. Newark, a program that marks the first time that any US city has sought to transform its economy by combining employment, procurement, and residential strategies. These types of initiatives caught the attention of Amazon, which named Newark as a finalist city in its search to establish its second global headquarters.

He is considered nationally as a thought leader in the space of urban revitalization and his defiance of a hostile Presidential directive targeting the immigrant community with an executive order designating Newark as a sanctuary city solidified his status as one of the country's most progressive elected officials.

Mayor Baraka was educated in the Newark Public Schools. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and History from Howard University in Washington, D.C. and a Master's Degree in Education Supervision from St. Peter's University in Jersey City. His father, the late Amiri Baraka, was a legendary poet and playwright. His mother, Amina Baraka, is herself a renowned poet. The father of three daughters, Mayor Baraka is a published author and well-regarded in the entertainment industry for his appearance on the Grammy-award winning album, "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill" in his authentic role as an educator.



**Aisha Glover** serves as the President & CEO of the Newark Alliance, which plays a key role in leveraging the city's corporate and anchor communities' collective impact and helps carry out Mayor Ras J. Baraka's vision for inclusive economic growth.

Ms. Glover has over 15 years of experience as a convener, champion and agent for economic empowerment and social justice. She most recently served as the President & CEO of the Newark Community Economic Development Corporation, where she led the city's bid to attract Amazon's second headquarters, strengthened the small business ecosystem, introduced innovative programs that provided resources to women and minority entrepreneurs, supported over \$4B in real estate development and led the attraction of corporations and businesses to the city.

Prior to joining the Newark team, Aisha served as the VP of External Affairs at the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation, the nonprofit organization that manages the city-owned Brooklyn Navy Yard, a national model for urban industrial development and job creation. There, she helped establish an exhibition and visitors center, oversaw strategic partnership development, community engagement, public affairs and fundraising and played a key role in supporting the Yard's growing economic development initiatives. Ms. Glover's impact there was informed by her tenure at the Center for the Urban Environment, New York City's largest provider of environmental education programs. There, she led a team that furthered the Center's environmental justice and education initiatives, helped create a local chapter of the nationally-recognized Small Business Alliance, and was instrumental in launching Green Brooklyn, the borough's first and largest sustainability event.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Hunter College of the City University of New York, a Masters of Public Administration from Baruch College of the City University of New York and an executive leadership certificate from the Columbia Business School, School of Social Enterprise.



**Roger León** was born in the city of Newark, grew up in the city of Newark, remains a proud product of the Newark Board of Education, dedicated 25 years of service to the children in the Newark Public Schools, and still lives in Newark.

Mr. León attended Hawkins Street School from Kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and graduated from Science High School. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences at Rutgers University and was determined to remain in Newark to teach and impact lives at both of his alma maters. For three years, he taught 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Hawkins Street School and was the Head Coach of the Science High School Debate Team for eight years. His classes won local competitions and his students demonstrated high academic growth. The debate team won local, state, and national championships. The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Algebra Pilot resulted in his move to Rafael Hernández Elementary School. Mr. León taught Algebra I to 8<sup>th</sup> graders for high school credit and provided intensive professional development in mathematics to Newark teachers across the district. The success of this project resulted in hundreds of 8<sup>th</sup> grader students earning high school credit in Algebra I, teachers earning dual certification in Mathematics, and the district's highest elementary mathematics standardized test scores in years.

Mr. León earned his Master of Arts in Administration and Supervision from Montclair State University and subsequently served as a turnaround principal in Newark for ten years. Mr. León was the principal of Dr. William H. Horton School for four years and University High School of the Humanities for six years. Since Mr. León believes that every child is a genius, it was his responsibility to lead and work collaboratively with all stakeholders to improve both schools. With the Accelerated Schools Project model at Horton, he promoted data driven instruction, built a strong culture of achievement, and increased parent and community involvement. Student achievement increased, attendance improved, and discipline referrals decreased. Under his leadership at University, the school implemented its own whole school reform model, which was a return to the school's original design; a school that is an engine of social change and social justice. As a result, the middle grades standardized test scores ranked #1 in New Jersey and the school became the top performing high school in the city, one of the top 75 high schools in the state, and ranked one of the top high schools in the country.

Mr. León has served as the Assistant Superintendent in the Newark Public Schools for ten years. Mr. León's vision was to set high educational standards for everyone in every school and provide all of the necessary time and resources to effectuate change across the district. His mission was to improve the lives of our students and their families and strengthen the community. In this capacity, he supervised the school leadership team of the high schools and a network of elementary schools, served as the Deputy Chief Academic Officer in charge of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Support Services, and directed administration responsibilities district-wide. This ten-year experience drove national, state, and local education reforms where he led, co-led, and implemented new standards from ESEA to NCLB to now, ESSA. The reforms influenced early childhood, special education, bilingual education, and elementary and secondary education in the city of Newark. Mr. León spearheaded and organized major initiatives and community conversations influencing change throughout the entire district. During these ten years, Mr. León led and worked collaboratively with local and state agencies, higher education, foundations, private-public partners, community based organizations, faith-based organizations, elected officials, principals, teachers and staff, every central office department, community advocates, parents, and students.

As a resident, student, teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent in Newark, Mr. León has taught thousands and mentored hundreds. He has witnessed generational progress and has inspired outstanding leaders, doctors, social activists, teachers, principals, attorneys, scientists, authors, professors, innovators, business owners, artists, and countless others who he has encouraged to remain in Newark, like he has.

Mr. León is passionate about education, passionate about Newark, and passionate about progress.