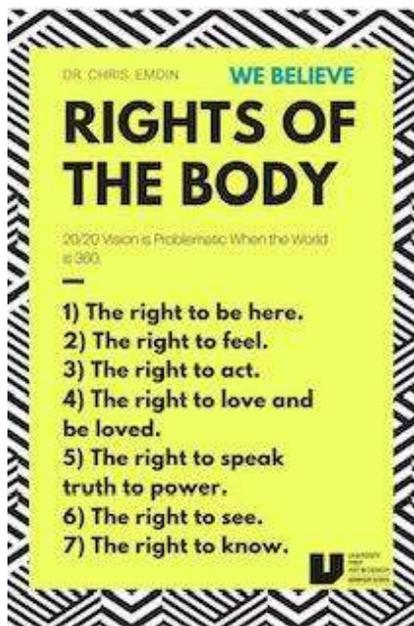


U Prep Schools' 2020-2021 Leadership Conference



This year's U Prep Leadership Conference, held just before the beginning of the school year annually, was invigorating! Led by our Chief of Teaching and Learning, Dr. Curtis L. Lewis, the conference opened with our promise to provide a more culturally responsive education for all students.

Culturally Responsive pedagogies and practices examine instructional philosophy and practice critically, both acknowledging and searching for the presence of historical forms of oppression embedded in curriculum, instruction, policy and approaches to teacher-student relationships.

Dr. Lewis acknowledged that, "Although this goal may seem ambitious during the current pandemic and virtual learning environment, we, as leaders, remain dedicated to

responding to the pressing need for cultural diversity expressed by our students, and we acknowledge Dr. King's fierce urgency of now."

The conference also featured a keynote address from Colin Seale, author of "Thinking Like a Lawyer," a book which explores how to close the critical thinking gap for all students. Seale challenged U Prep Schools' leaders to broaden their thinking and examine their "why" for pursuing a career in education. He also encouraged them to continue as a learner of their craft.

The week continued with breakout sessions led by department heads, training workshops where new policies and procedures were introduced, and group reflections - led by our Deans of Culture - to start each day. The vision was clearly established, but more importantly, leaders were challenged to find themselves within it.

The energy from the conference with the leaders of the network set the stage for the all-staff crew in the following week. Every staff member in our 10-school network, collectively, was met by Dr. Chris Emdin, Director of Science Education at the Center for Health Equity and Urban Science Education and Associate Professor of Science Education at the Teachers College, Columbia University. He delivered our keynote address and led us into a deep dive into Culturally Responsive Education, covering what it means and how it relates to our overall work as an organization. He left us with seven principles, The Rights of the Body, that each of our schools has incorporated into their vision, affirming each and every student.

