

October 23, 2025

Dear Members of the Dr. Charles Mitchell, Jr. Leadership Scholarship Committee,

I am honored to write this letter of recommendation for Shakira Abney Wisdom, who served as Principal of Robert F. Smith STEAM Academy and Denver School of the Arts Middle School. In my role as Executive Director of Secondary Schools, I collaborated closely with Miss AW, as her students affectionately called her. I witnessed a leadership demeanor and a commitment to equitable education that uniquely prepares her for graduate study and a lifelong career in educational leadership.

What sets Shakira apart as a candidate for this leadership scholarship is her disciplined intellect, moral courage and a proven capacity to translate vision into measurable impact. Specifically, I would highlight:

- Strategic Data Informed Leadership: She led with a combined approach of rigorous analysis and compassionate, student-centered decision making.
- Commitment to Equity and Inclusion: She prioritized access and success for all learners, including historically underserved groups, through elevated teacher practice and student engagement.
- Collaborative Servant Leadership: She built and sustained high performing teams by modeling transparent communication, listening deeply and distributing leadership opportunities.
- Resilient and Ethical Leadership: Even under pressure, from budget constraints to accountability demands, she maintained a principled stance, balancing accountability with empathy.

I wholeheartedly and without reservation recommend Shakira Abney Wisdom for the Dr. Charles Mitchell, Jr. Leadership Scholarship. I am confident that her leadership, scholarly potential, and dedication to social justice in education will translate into meaningful contributions to your program and to the wider educational community. I would be glad to discuss her qualifications further or provide additional examples of her work. Please see my contact information below.

Sincerely,

*Nadriene L. Jackson*

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