



October 23, 2025

To the Scholarship Committee:

It is my honor to write this letter of recommendation for Shanitra Deas to receive the Dr. Charles Mitchell, Jr. Scholarship, as she pursues her doctoral degree in educational leadership.

I serve as the Chief Academic Officer of 95 Percent Group and have known Shanitra since she joined the organization in January 2023 and moved into her current role as Digital Sales Enablement Manager. I work closely with Shanitra as she leads the digital sales strategy supporting K-12 literacy improvement. Shanitra is also an active leader on our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Committee, for which I serve as the executive sponsor. To highlight Shanitra's strengths and accomplishments:

- She has demonstrated leadership across multiple roles, from classroom teacher to instructional coach, to principal, and now in her current role at 95 Percent Group.
- Shanitra has shown a consistent commitment to advancing literacy and equity for all students. As a teacher, she delivered professional development to her peers focused on culturally responsive instruction and writing across content areas. As a principal, she fostered an inclusive school culture focused on literacy, equity, and student voice, while focusing on data-driven decision-making to support diverse learners. At 95 Percent Group, she collaborates across departments to align technology, pedagogy, and equity to provide literacy access to all.
- Ms. Deas has proven herself as an accomplished scholar with a strong background in educational leadership, earning a B.A. in English with a Leadership Studies Minor and an M.Ed. in Divergent Learning, as well as an M.Ed. in Educational Leadership and Administration.
- Shanitra's leadership is elevated in her service on the DEIB committee at 95 Percent Group, her membership in the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, her nomination as Teacher of the Year and winner of Distinguished Teacher of Reading, along with her acknowledgement as a presenter at several state and national conferences.

On a personal note, I would add that in my interactions with Shanitra and as I have observed Shanitra in many different settings, I find her a truly collaborative team-builder who leads with integrity. As a member of a fast-growing company, she has been a leader who drives meaningful results by applying improvement and implementation science principles to create sustainable, systemwide change. She will be an asset to her cohort in her doctoral studies program and an important leader as she earns her degree and enters the next chapter in her career.

I believe Shanitra exemplifies scholarship, leadership, and service aligned with NABSE's mission to enhance and facilitate the education of all students, particularly African American students; I therefore recommend her wholeheartedly for the Dr. Charles Mitchell, Jr. Scholarship. Please feel free to reach out to me should you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Laura Stewart' in a cursive script.

Laura Stewart
Chief Academic Officer
95 Percent Group
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