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# Alumni Spotlight: Tanika Johnson, Ed.D. in Administrative Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction Concentration

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Tanika Johnson

Tanika graduated from Carson-Newman University with an Ed.D. in Administrative Leadership, Curriculum

and Instruction Concentration. She currently works as a Licensed Professional Counselor and Mental Health Service Provider in Tennessee. As she dedicates herself to a lifelong investment within educational leadership, we asked Tanika to share her experience pursuing her doctorate degree at Carson-Newman University.

### **Why did you want to work in education? What inspired you?**

Every student deserves a free and appropriate high-quality education. This is regardless of socioeconomic status. As an educator, it is my duty to aid students in achieving a high level of educational success. This entails promoting rigorous instruction, elevating student growth, and closing the achievement gap in underserved communities. Most importantly, students should be equipped with the tools necessary for college and entry-level or advanced careers.

### **Why did you choose Carson-Newman University for your administrative leadership doctorate?**

I selected Carson-Newman University for my administrative leadership doctorate because of the institution's accreditation status and affordable tuition rates, along with the education department's flexible scheduling options and personalized learning platform. Additionally, the administrative leadership doctoral program is an excellent option for working professionals.

### **What skills did you gain or sharpen through your program at Carson-Newman University and how do they benefit you in today's educational climate?**

In terms of skill sets and the practical application of them today, I enhanced my knowledge base of coaching and leading teams to demonstrate an understanding and intensive knowledge of content by examining each grade level's Lexile levels, supporting students in evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing key concepts, as well as permitting students to encounter a productive struggle, increase their understanding of difficult concepts, and providing a learning experience with multiple layers of learning. The highly effective educator accesses a rich repertoire of instructional practices, strategies, and resources and applies them appropriately.

### **How has your Ed.D. in Administrative Leadership program with Curriculum and Instruction Concentration impacted you in terms of your current position or a position you'd like to attain in the future?**

Currently, I am a National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations Second Cohort Fellow. Over the course of my career, I have acquired a wealth of experience with education consulting and serving the special education community and the exceptional needs of children, adolescents, and adults with disabilities. Prior

to my enrollment into the Ed.D. Administrative Leadership program and throughout the duration of my studies, I served in the capacity of an Early Childhood Specialist, Early Childhood Teacher Mentor, Advisor, and Evaluator. Most recently, I accepted an additional role as a Contributing Faculty Member.

As it relates to the pyramid model, I've facilitated discussion forums that focused on positive behavior support and intensive individualized interventions for children exhibiting challenging behaviors, offered training on the proper implementation of functional behavioral assessments, behavior intervention plans, advocated for the use of tools that allow for early intervention, remediation, and progress for children exhibiting challenging behaviors. This also includes working for the state of Tennessee, and Department of Education as a Common Core Coach for Reading Intervention. My future work entails designing a "Parents are Partners in Education" advocacy training that will be delivered via a virtual summit or webinar.

**What was a challenge you faced during your administrative leadership program, and who or what helped you overcome it?**

One of the most substantial challenges I encountered was with formatting my dissertation. There is a specific style guide for formatting and a major learning curve associated with reviewing, following, and implementing each rule. To overcome this challenge, I solicited the services of an expert editor for editing and proofreading my dissertation.

**What was the biggest takeaway from your administrative leadership doctoral program?**

Educational leadership is a lifelong investment. Leadership involves holding yourself accountable for each student's academic achievement and growth and decisions enacted with high-stakes involved. Ultimately, these life-altering decisions affect the next generation of productive citizens in society.

**What would you tell (or what advice would you give) prospective students considering the Ed.D. in Administrative Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction Concentration program at Carson-Newman University?**

I believe a degree program in Administrative Leadership with a Curriculum and Instruction Concentration is highly rewarding and invaluable. The program is the next step towards influencing curriculum and instruction, reforming local, statewide, and federal policies, as well as deciphering educational goals for public and private institutions. Moreover, this program not only enlightens you as an educator but transforms the lives of all students along their academic journeys.

**Is there anything else you would like to share?**

It is through educator's amplified voices, leadership efforts, and advocacy strategies that all students attain

high quality instruction for optimal academic performance. We are at the forefront of systematic change and are the impactful change that every student will see.

📌 #AdministrativeLeadership, #Alumni, #CarsonNewmanUniversity



## CONTACT

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