

Attallah Sheppard is a passionate spoken word poet, teacher and community ‘artist’ hailing from in New London, CT. Attallah cultivated her passion for the arts and social change as a young founding member of Writer’s Block Ink- an educational arts non-profit with the mission to “ignite social change on the page and the stage”. For the past 10 years Attallah has used and continue to use her craft and her profession as vehicles to explore and expose stories of social justice to heal the human family. Attallah has a Bachelor’s in Business Administration from Howard University.

At the core of her work is a mission to close the achievement and opportunity gaps in America. She served as an Academic Advisor with the Yale-Bridgeport GEAR UP Partnership program in Bridgeport public schools. This program focuses on college readiness and building a college-going culture. It was here at Central High School where she started *Queen Code*, an after-school girls’ leadership group whose mission is to build positive self-image, stronger relationships amongst young girls and instill a “queen” mind set through weekly sessions. She is currently teaching at Achievement First Amistad High School in New Haven, a Foundations of Leadership course around college readiness and soft-skill building. Attallah traveled to Africa in 2016 with 2015 Newbury Award winner, Kwame Alexander, to work with *Literacy Empowerment Action Project* for Ghana. Always grounded in the importance of arts education alongside urban education, Attallah serves a teaching artist with the Connecticut Writing Project of Fairfield University; using poetry to teach the importance of youth/student voice. She also works as a Coach with Poetry Out Loud, a national poetry recitation program for high schools. She holds the 2008 Poetry Out Loud Connecticut State Champion title.

Grounded in a mission to transform societal views and systemic narratives on things like race and class, Attallah hopes to mobilize the youth to advocate for changes they deem necessary for a more just world. Investing in young minds today creates greater opportunity for strong leaders of a brighter future for tomorrow.

Attallah’s poetry has appeared in the *Power of Words* Connecticut Writing Project anthology as well as in the journal, *Study and Scrutiny: Research on Young Adult Literature*.