For more than two decades, Muriel Summers was at the helm of A.B. Combs Elementary. The highly diverse school is featured across the world for its innovations in leadership. It carries the honor of being the world's first Leader in Me school, with Muriel as co-author of the book by the same name. Currently, 5,000 schools in over 50 countries are replicating and building upon Muriel and her staff’s leadership model, which sees all adults—and ALL students—as leaders.

Following Muriel's recent retirement from Wake County Public Schools, she joined FranklinCovey Education as its lead Global Ambassador. She presents at international, national, state and local educational conferences on topics such as: Reinventing Leadership One Teacher, One Student at a Time; Making a Difference in Students' Social-Emotional Lives; and Empowering Students and Teachers from the Inside Out.

Muriel's school was named a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education and a Number One National Magnet School in America (only school recognized twice). Muriel also received numerous prestigious awards including The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, awarded by the Governor of North Carolina as the highest honor a North Carolinian can receive, as well as Principal and Teacher of the Year.

Muriel is the proud mother of two children, and is enjoying her new role as grandmother.

Dr. Ruby K. Payne is the authority on working across economic classes to create sustainable communities where everyone can live well. As a former high school teacher and principal, she understands the unique challenges facing schools and communities around the country. In addition, her efforts have achieved a global reach.

After changing the conversation in education to focus on poverty, Dr. Payne's work expanded into social services, criminal justice, healthcare, the workplace and emotional poverty.

Two recent publications won Independent Publisher Book Awards: Emotional Poverty in All Demographics and Before You Quit Teaching. She has written or co-authored many other books, including Bridges Out of Poverty. Her book, A Framework for Understanding Poverty, has sold 1.8 million copies and continues to help people achieve success.

In 1996, Dr. Payne founded aha! Process, a publishing and consulting firm which has received awards for its publications. Dr. Payne has also published books with Solution Tree Press and the Association for Middle Level Education.

She lives in Texas with her husband, Tee. She loves having time with her son, Tom, and his husband, Carlos, as well as Tee's children and grandchildren.

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