

Founder Bio

Dr. Wesley J. Watkins, IV, is the Founder of The Jazz & Democracy Project® (J&D), a music integrated curriculum that utilizes jazz as a metaphor to bring American democracy to life, enrich the study and teaching of U.S. history, government, civics and culture, and inspire youth to become active, positive contributors to their communities. "Dr. Wes," as his students call him, first proposed such a curriculum as part of the Stanford University School of Education Undergraduate Honors Program. He conducted research for his undergraduate honors thesis at Oxford University where he engaged and learned from music educators at both local elementary schools and world renowned secondary institutions like The Bedales School, Eaton College, and The Yehudi Menuhin School. After earning his Ph.D. from the International Centre for Research in Music Education at the University of Reading, England, Dr. Wes immediately applied his knowledge as an independent arts education consultant in the San Francisco Bay Area, working at the district, school, and classroom levels. He then spent three years working for education reform non-profits where he facilitated professional development for teachers, instructional coaches and administrators. Dr. Wes is an avid music lover—particularly jazz and Afro-Cuban jazz—who loves to witness artists standing emotionally naked, transmitting their emotions to the audience, and modeling the best of what improvised music has to offer: a lesson in unity.



Links:

[Dr. Wes TED Talk](#)

[Dr. Wes on *Black Renaissance*](#)

[J&D in *Oakland Magazine*](#)

[J&D on OZY](#)

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