

University School Teacher a Finalist for Arts Teacher of the Year



Photo by: Alex Catalano

University School's Ms. Toranika Washington is a nationally-recognized dance educator most recently honored as a 2013 Finalist for Broward County's Teacher of the Year in Arts.

"The entire Arts Department is incredibly proud of Ms. Washington and her nomination for Broward County Teacher of the Year in Dance. Toranika is constantly reaching for the stars, bringing the highest standards of dance, artistic creativity, and educational practice to the department and her students," said University School Director of the Arts Jenny Cook. "With a simple 'I have an idea,' she strives to be a visionary in her field, exposing our students to the latest dance techniques and practices in the industry."

Ms. Washington's latest idea blossomed into a two-day Fall Dance Workshop open to area dance students aged 11+ who will be mentored by an impressive line-up of guest artists, including Shane Garcia from Season 10 of So You Think You Can Dance. Students will learn techniques in contemporary modern, contemporary jazz, improvisation, contact improvisation, partnering and hip-hop. The cost for the workshop is just \$30 for students who [register](#) by November 1. The workshop takes place December 7-8, 2013 at University School's Epstein Center for the Arts.

In 2010, Toranika served on the panel that wrote the New Generation Sunshine State Standards for the state of Florida, which is used as a curriculum guide for K-12 dance educators and school administrators. In 2011, she was one of only eight national dance educators chosen to receive the SURDNA Arts Teacher Fellowship Award. The full scholarship sent her to Bates College in Lewiston, Maine where she collaborated with other dance educators and professionals from all over the globe. She is a member of the National Dance Education Organization, and an executive board member of the Florida Dance Education Organization.



At University School of Nova Southeastern University, Ms. Washington is a Dance Director, sponsor for the National Honor Society for Dance Arts, and the founder and director of Innovations Dance Theatre.

Both performing and fine arts are an integral part of the curriculum at University School that helps balance the academic equations and contribute to scholastic success. Dance is offered as a Lower School option starting in grade 4. Dance is also a popular elective in Middle School and Upper School that culminates in an impressive year-end Dance Concert showcase. In addition, University School includes opportunities for students to dance in musical productions.