

**Virginia Association of Science Teachers
2021 Virtual Professional Development Institute**

**General Session III
Thursday November 18, 6:00 pm – 6:45 pm**



Dr. Joi Merritt
Associate Professor of Science Education
James Madison University

“ Systems for Success in the Elementary Science Classroom”

At the elementary level, teachers are often responsible for teaching all subject areas. The narrowing of the elementary curriculum has resulted in limited time on science, which is an equity issue, as research shows students in our most marginalized schools have even fewer opportunities to engage in meaningful and powerful science learning than their counterparts in privileged schools. This talk will discuss solutions for providing access, engagement and success for elementary students in science.

Biography:

Dr. Joi DeShawn Merritt received her BS in Engineering (Chemical Engineering) from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Prior to returning to the University of Michigan and receiving her Ph.D. in Educational Studies (Science Education), Dr. Merritt was a high school chemistry and physics teacher in Charlotte, NC. Her research focuses on: (a) designing science and engineering curriculum materials and assessments to investigate K-16 student learning over time, and (b) preparing elementary teacher candidates to teach science equitably in the inclusive, culturally and linguistically diverse classroom. Dr. Merritt teaches courses on elementary science methods, curriculum planning, inquiry and critical thinking.