

Dr. Rola Bazzi-Gates, PhD, ACSW, LMSW, MSW, PSWC is an accomplished educational leader, scholar, and advocate whose career has been defined by an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of students, families, and educators. With more than 27 years of professional experience in education, mental health, and social work, Dr. Bazzi-Gates has dedicated her career to advancing equitable and inclusive educational opportunities for all students.

For the past ten years, Dr. Bazzi-Gates has served as a Special Education Coordinator with Dearborn Public Schools, one of Michigan's largest and most diverse school districts. In this role, she provides visionary leadership and oversight for specialized programs serving students with a wide range of learning, behavioral, and developmental needs. She works collaboratively with administrators, teachers, service providers, and community partners to ensure that students receive comprehensive and effective support systems that allow them to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Dr. Bazzi-Gates has made a profound and lasting impact on the district through her leadership, advocacy, and commitment to excellence. She is widely recognized for her ability to bring together multidisciplinary teams, strengthen program implementation, and ensure compliance with state and federal regulations while maintaining a student-centered approach. Her work has directly improved services for students with disabilities and has provided meaningful support to families navigating complex educational systems.

Beyond program administration, Dr. Bazzi-Gates is a passionate advocate for both students and staff. She has mentored and supervised social workers, coordinated professional development opportunities, and supported educators in implementing effective, research-based practices. Her leadership has fostered stronger collaboration among staff and strengthened the district's capacity to serve diverse learners.

Prior to her role as Special Education Coordinator, Dr. Bazzi-Gates served for nearly two decades as a school social worker and mental health therapist, where she worked directly with children, adolescents, and families facing complex challenges. Her dedication to the profession is also reflected in her extensive mentoring of graduate-level social work students and her contributions to the professional development of educators and social workers across the district.

Dr. Bazzi-Gates' outstanding service has been recognized through numerous honors, including the **School Social Worker of the Year Award** from the Michigan Association of School Social Workers and the **Outstanding Ancillary Employee of the Year Award** from Dearborn Public Schools and Wayne County RESA.

Through her leadership, compassion, and tireless advocacy, Dr. Bazzi-Gates continues to transform systems of support for students with disabilities and to positively impact the lives of the students, families, and professionals she serves. Her work exemplifies the highest ideals of educational leadership, service, and dedication.

