**Leon Smith Bio:**

Leon Smith is an educator and policy advocate with over twenty-three years of experience. He is a life-long learner and extremely passionate about the profession of teaching. Leon graduated from the University of Maryland at College Park with a bachelor’s degree in secondary social studies education and earned his master’s degree from Pennsylvania State University in Instructional Systems. He received his PK-12 Principal’s certification from Cabrini University. Recently, Leon was named the 2025 PA Teacher of the Year. In 2020, he was named a Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction by The National Society of High School Scholars. Cabrini University’s Center for Urban Education awarded Leon with the High Impact Moral and Courageous Teacher Award in 2024.

He is extremely passionate about diversifying the educator workforce and learning about the important legacy of Black educator activism. For two years, Leon served as a policy fellow, where he was named 2023 Fellow of the Year, and Senior Fellow with Teach Plus PA. Teach Plus’s mission is to empower excellent, experienced, and diverse teachers to take leadership over key policy and practice issues that advance equity, opportunity, and student success. In these roles, Leon advocated for policies and programs to expand and diversify the educator pipeline to legislators and members of the PA Department of Education. He also serves as a mentor with Project IMPACT, a program at Rowan University designed to increase the representation of males from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds in teaching.

His contributions to the field of education extend to leadership roles with non-profit organizations advocating for educator diversity and equity. Leon is a Board member with the Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium whose goal is to increase the number of teachers of color and culturally relevant and sustaining educators in classrooms across the Commonwealth. He is also a Regional Advisory Board member for Teach Plus PA supporting its mission of transforming education policy, advocacy, and instructional practice in Pennsylvania. Leon enjoys learning about Black history and currently serves as a College Board AP workshop consultant for the new AP African American Studies course where he supports national and international educators as they prepare to teach the class.