



Dr. Tahira Reid Smith

Smithsonian-Featured Inventor | Engineering Professor | Mentor to 1500+ students

Dr. Tahira Reid Smith is a Smithsonian-featured inventor, Full Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Penn State University, and founder of Jump Dreams, Inc. — the company bringing the world's first automated Double Dutch jump rope system to market. Her 40-year journey from a third-grade sketch in the Bronx to a Smithsonian exhibit has been featured by the New York Times, Essence, NBC's Today Show, NPR, BBC, and PBS NOVA. A Fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, a distinction held by only a small fraction of ASME members, Dr. Reid Smith speaks at the intersection of innovation, faith, and cultural legacy. Her talks inspire students to believe their ideas matter and equip educators to recognize the inventors sitting in their classrooms.

AS SEEN IN



Smithsonian

The New York Times



EBONY

SIGNATURE TOPICS

From a Bronx Sketch to the Smithsonian: How Big Dreams Start Small: A third-grade idea drawn on a piece of paper became a patented invention now featured at the Smithsonian — and Dr. Tahira Reid Smith wants every student to know that their ideas matter too. She shares the story of a young girl from the Bronx who refused to let go of her dream, and the steps that turned that dream into reality. Students leave believing their own ideas are worth pursuing — and with practical first steps for how to begin. *Ideal for: Elementary & Middle School Assemblies · Youth STEM Programs · Career Days · Summer Programs*

Engineering Confidence: How Young People Become Inventors: Innovation isn't a talent — it's a set of habits anyone can learn. Drawing on her work mentoring over 1,500 students, Dr. Tahira Reid Smith teaches young audiences how to think like an innovator: how to notice problems, ask better questions, and keep going when things get hard. This talk gives students a practical framework for building creative confidence that lasts well beyond the school year. *Ideal for: High School Audiences · STEM Schools · Robotics Programs · Pre-College Engineering Programs*

The Power of "Wow": What Every Educator Should Know About Unlocking Potential: A single word from a mentor changed Dr. Tahira Reid Smith's life. In this talk for educators, she shares the moment that set her on a path toward invention and leadership — and offers teachers a practical framework for becoming that pivotal voice for the students in their own classrooms. Attendees leave with concrete tools for recognizing, affirming, and unlocking potential in every student they serve. *Ideal for: Teacher Conferences · Educator Professional Development · School Leadership Retreats · Mentorship Organizations*

 1500+
students educated

 50+
keynotes

 1700
citations

 50+
media interviews

 20+
awards

A Lifetime of Innovation

From Childhood Sketch to Prototype, Patent, and the Smithsonian



Dr. Tahira Reid Smith's groundbreaking invention – the world's first automated Double Dutch jump rope system – began as a third-grade sketch at PS 97 in the Bronx in 1986. Years later, as a mechanical engineering student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, she transformed that childhood idea into a working prototype. Today, the photo from the day her prototype first worked is on display at the Smithsonian's "Change Your Game" exhibit, and she is bringing the invention to market through Jump Dreams, Inc., the Black-woman-owned company she founded in 2024. She recently showcased Jump Dreams at the Congressional Inventions Project's Women's History Month Innovation Showcase on Capitol Hill, and her upcoming children's book, *Tahira and the Double Dutch Dream: The Story of Jump Dreams*, will share the journey with the next generation of dreamers. Dr. Reid Smith is ready to inspire your students with stories of creativity, persistence, and the power of holding onto a dream.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Smithsonian-Featured Inventor
- ✓ Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Penn State University
- ✓ Founder & CEO of Jump Dreams, Inc.
- ✓ Featured on Capitol Hill (March 2026)
- ✓ Mentor to hundreds of students and aspiring inventors



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