

EXTENDED PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Nia S. McDaniel is a 17-year-old African American high school student, author, student advocate, and emerging national youth voice on resilience, learning differences, education, ADHD awareness, and realizing potential.

Her debut book, *Learning To Conduct, My ADHD Journey*, grew from an intensely personal question: What happens when a bright and hardworking student believes her continuing struggles mean that she is not intelligent enough?

For years, Nia worked hard but did not fully understand why academic tasks could require so much time and energy. She experienced challenges involving attention, task initiation, distraction, test performance, confidence, and the disconnect between effort and results. Because those difficulties were not initially understood, she often interpreted them as personal shortcomings.

The eventual recognition of ADHD and related learning challenges provided more than a label. It provided language, context, and relief.

Nia began to understand that she was not incapable and that her brain was not broken. She needed appropriate tools, support, and a clearer understanding of how she learned.

That realization became the foundation of *Learning To Conduct, My ADHD Journey*.

The book uses music and the orchestra as its central metaphor. Thoughts, responsibilities, feelings, fears, and distractions are portrayed as instruments. Without shared sheet music or effective direction, even talented musicians can create noise rather than harmony. The story shows a young person gradually learning that she does not need to silence every instrument. She needs to understand the music and become

its conductor.

Although written for middle-grade readers, the book has broader relevance for parents, teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, ADHD professionals, and anyone who supports children whose intelligence may be obscured by unidentified or misunderstood learning challenges.

Nia's public identity extends beyond the book. She is developing as a thoughtful youth communicator whose personal experience provides an accessible entry point into larger conversations about education, confidence, neurodiversity, self-advocacy, and the importance of listening to students.

She does not present herself as a clinician or claim to speak for every individual with ADHD. Her authority comes from authentic lived experience, reflection, and her willingness to use her story to help others.