

A native of Holguín, Cuba, Cindy Ellis immigrated to the United States in 2005. She earned her Bachelor of Music Degree in Music Education and Jazz Voice from Florida International University and her Master's Degree in Music Education from the University of Missouri. Mrs. Ellis is a full time choral director at Miami Arts Studio, a 6th-12th grade public performing arts magnet school in Miami, FL. Since beginning her teaching career at MAS in January 2017, her middle school and high school ensembles have only received Straight Superior and Superior with Distinction ratings at district and state evaluations, and have been featured at numerous venues throughout the country. These featured performances include local venues like the Arsht Center and New World Symphony Hall, and out of county and state: 2023 Florida Music Educators Association Conference, Carnegie Hall (2018 and 2024), Florida (Orlando, 2023), Southern (Kentucky, 2024), and National (Dallas, 2025) Conferences of the American Choral Directors Association.

In 2022, Mrs. Ellis' students performed in Los Angeles for the Summit of the Americas, a meeting hosted by President Joe Biden that brought together 40 Presidents and leaders from the Americas and Caribbean. Additionally, in the last 8 years, her students have recorded and performed and recorded background vocals for Gloria and Emilio Estefan and several music award shows including the AMAs, Latin American Music Awards and the Latin GRAMMY Awards. In 2024 Mrs. Ellis conducted her students at the Miami show of Jacob Collier's DJESSE Volume 4 World Tour, and in 2025, released a single and music video alongside her students and artist Lenier dedicated to all mothers: Te Amo Mamá. While at MAS, the students balance high quality performances and recording sessions through the school record label, MAS Records, Inc., participate in festivals like the Superintendent Honor Choir and FMEA All-State, and demanding academic courses. As Mrs. Ellis' vocal students graduate, regardless what field of study they choose, they carry the determination to strive for their best and keep their latin roots and resilience at the forefront of whatever life throws their way. The musical skills learned in the MAS Vocal magnet have led to students winning YoungArts and Downbeat awards, and earning millions of dollars in music scholarships across the country, including Berklee College of Music, Full Sail, Western Michigan University, NYU, University of Miami, Florida International University, and Stetson (to name a few).

Beyond her school responsibilities, Mrs. Ellis frequently performs, conducts All-State honor choirs and teaches masterclasses for music directors and students from elementary to college throughout North America. As a jazz vocal soloist and alto with the Jason Max Ferdinand Singers, she collaborated with Jacob Collier for performances at the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, NBC's Saturday Night Live alongside Jacob and Coldplay and a full length concert at the 2024 BBC PROMS Music Festival in London, UK.

In 2020, Mrs. Ellis was published by GIA Publications as a contributing author on "Teaching with Heart," and in 2022, she served as instructional design editor and contributing author of "Teaching Beyond the Music," the second edition in the series. Ellis is Miami Arts Studio's 2025 Teacher of the Year, a 2025 Grammy Music Educator Semi-Finalist and 2026 Grammy Music Educator Quarter-Finalist, and currently serves as the World Musics & Cultures Coordinator for the American Choral Directors Association Southern Region.