

SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

SUMMER 2012 PROJECT DIRECTORS MEETING

PRESENTERS

Gregg Bethel- is the Executive Director for School Programs and Partnerships at the New York City Department of Education. He is focused on aligning programmatic and partner supports toward improved student achievement. His responsibilities include oversight of a portfolio of grant and instructional programs, including the Arts, Social Studies, STEM, Libraries, Striving Readers, Service in Schools and Small Learning Communities. Prior to his current role, he led the Office of Postsecondary Pathways and Planning, where he provided leadership to the NYCDOE's ongoing efforts to ensure that all graduates are ready for postsecondary success, in two- and four-year colleges, apprenticeship programs and throughout their careers. He joined the NYCDOE in January 2008 to provide leadership to Mayor Bloomberg's efforts to foster innovation in New York City's portfolio of career and technical education options.

Prior to returning to the NYCDOE, Mr. Bethel was Senior Vice President of the National Academy Foundation. He has served as Assistant Principal of Martin Luther King, Jr. High School in New York City, where he also taught American history and finance. He is former member of the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education in New Jersey. Mr. Bethel is a public school graduate and holds a B.A. in Government & Law and History from Lafayette College, a M.A. in Social Studies Education and a M.Ed. in Educational Administration from Columbia University.

Sean X. Halpin, M.Ed., Director of Student Support Services, Plymouth Public Schools. He has his Master of Education degree from Bridgewater State College (Massachusetts, 1997) and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Fairfield University (Connecticut, 1990). Mr. Halpin is working on his doctoral studies at Northeastern University in Massachusetts and expects to be finished in 2013. In his current role, Mr. Halpin directs and coordinates district-wide general education student support services including supervision of school counselors, ELL program and staff, School Attendance Supervisor and MCAS Tutors. He is also responsible for 504 Plan Coordination, McKinney-Vento Coordination, Home Education Plans and General Education Tutoring Services. Mr. Halpin has held numerous positions in the education field. From 2008-2011, he served as the Director of Guidance and Remediation Services for the Plymouth Public Schools. In this position, he directed and coordinated a system-wide guidance program by infusing meaningful and relevant school counseling services into the educational program. He also oversaw the school counseling program including supervision and evaluation of all counseling staff and the development of the guidance budget. In his capacity he also coordinated, supervised and provided professional development for guidance and adjustment counselors as well as designed, wrote and implemented Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System related grants. From 2001-2008, Mr. Halpin served as a Guidance Counselor at Sandwich High School in Sandwich, MA. During this time he provided academic, personal and career counseling to students on an individual and group basis. Mr. Halpin is also a member of numerous professional associations including the American School Counselors Association, the

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National Education Association and the New England Association for College Admission Counseling.

Michael Martin keeps a full schedule as the project director for The Lincoln High School/Lincoln Center Project in Tacoma, Washington, and as a consultant in the Northwest region concentrating on teacher quality and professional learning issues. With a background as a high school music educator, he has just completed his 10th year of work on current public school reform initiatives, having worked at Seattle's Small Schools Project on Gates Foundation projects for five of those years.

Aron R. Gabriel, Ed.D. is currently finishing his second year as principal of South Iredell High School in Statesville, North Carolina. South Iredell High has approximately 1180 students and should open the 2012-2013 school year with over 1300 students. Along with grade level Small Learning Academies, South Iredell also has an International Baccalaureate Programme that serves as an upper academy for the school. Aron's educational background has centered on the high school and non-traditional areas. He taught English and coached a variety of sports for seven years at two high schools before becoming an assistant principal. After two years as an assistant principal, he became principal of a partnership alternative school merging the school system and a local mental health provider. He served in that capacity for four years before opening an IB Middle Years Programme School, serving for one year as principal before landing at South Iredell High School. Aron's educational niche' is dropout prevention. He completed his doctoral work at Western Carolina University with a dissertation dealing with a dropout prevention classroom he developed while in the alternative setting. Aron firmly believes in the concept of Smaller Learning Communities.

Bryan Paslay is a second year SLC Director at South Iredell High School in Statesville, North Carolina. He received a Bachelor's Degree from the University of North Carolina Charlotte and a Master's in Educational Leadership from Gardner Webb University Prior to South Iredell High School, Bryan spent a total of 11 years at West Iredell High School. During that time, he spent nine years teaching Social Studies with the last two of those years teaching in the school's very first Freshmen Academy. For the final two years at West Iredell High School, he served as the SLC Director building onto the Freshmen Academy and adding a Leadership Academy. Through the work of the SLCs, South Iredell High School students are currently performing at their highest ever on state accountability testing with dramatically lowered retention rates, and never before seen high graduation rates.

Susan Gann joined Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in June 2010 as Project Director for Small Learning Communities (SLC). Her team currently supports twelve Chicago neighborhood schools in transitioning to SLCs. She comes to CPS from Wyandotte High School located in the Kansas City, Kansas, Public School District. Wyandotte High School has been nationally recognized for the sharp implementation of the SLC structure. Wyandotte is an ethnically diverse school with 93% of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. As a math teacher for six years and then a Math Instructional Coach, Susan worked with seven SLCs to improve academic achievement around math. Through data driven conversations, Susan coached teachers around instructional strategies and accountability for student learning. Susan also held other leadership roles, including the AdvanEd Chairperson for two cycles of accreditation and

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co-created Dreams 2 Reality Luncheons, providing career exposure to over 500 students. Prior to joining education, Susan spent 15 years in the business field. She holds a Master's of Science in Education from Pittsburg State University and a Bachelor of Science in Marketing from Missouri State University and is currently working on her Master's in Education Leadership at DePaul University.

Wendy Drury is a counselor, Project NET (RBHS credit recovery program) Lead Teacher, and SLC Project Director at Red Bluff High School in Red Bluff, California. She has been in education for 16 years and is in her twelfth year at Red Bluff. From 1996-2007, she taught English and Spanish while being a Frosh Advisor. Since 2008, she has also been serving students as a counselor. Her credentials include a bachelor's in English with a minor in Spanish from Chico State University, a master's degree in Educational Counseling, and a Pupil Personnel Services Credential from the University of LaVerne. She has also just completed her Tier 1 Administrative Services Credential from Humboldt State University.

FACILITATORS

Julie Bartsch, Ed.D. is a Senior Associate with the Great Schools Partnership. For more than 25 years, Julie has held a number of roles in public education, including teacher, school administrator, school board member, professional development consultant, and college faculty member and researcher. She has coached schools and districts throughout New England and the United States as they worked to improve curriculum, instruction, school leadership, youth empowerment, and school-community partnerships. Julie holds advanced degrees in management and education from Lesley University and the Harvard School of Education. At Harvard, Julie worked on the development of a School Leadership Academy, and at Lesley she coordinated the Principal Certification Practicum. She has written numerous articles on education, published *Community Lessons*, a collection of promising K–12 curricular practices, and served on state and national committees, including the U.S. Department of Education's Blue Ribbon Schools Program, America's Promise Alliance in Massachusetts, and the National Service-Learning Partnership's Service Learning Leaders Circle Steering Committee.

Joe DiMartino is Founder and President of the Center for Secondary School Redesign, which builds on work started at Brown University, including providing substantial technical assistance to SLCP grantees. Joe has been named the national expert on high school redesign by ASCD and was awarded the Distinguished Service to Education Award by NASSP. He has co-authored two books, including *Personalizing the High School Experience for Each Student*, published by ASCD. He also co-edited *Personalized Learning: Preparing High School Students to Create their Futures*, published by Rowman Littlefield and *The Personalized High School: Making Learning Count for Adolescents* published by Jossey-Bass.

Anna Fazekas provides professional development and school-change coaching as a consultant with CSSR. Ms. Fazekas is currently researching methods for using postsecondary student data to inform high school efforts to prepare all students for college and career success. In 2010, Anna co-authored a paper, titled *Building a Pathway to the Future: Maximizing High School Guidance*

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and Advisory Support. Previously, Anna was a science teacher and a freshman academy coordinator in the Chicago Public School District. She is a Teach for America alumna.

Mary Hastings is a Senior Associate with the Great Schools Partnership. Mary was project director for the 2006 grantees of the Maine SLC Five-District consortium and coached several of those schools as well. Her professional interests include equity and diversity in secondary education, improving classroom practice through differentiated instruction and layered curriculum, and developing shared leadership in schools. Mary began her career as a school coach with the Center for Collaborative Education in Boston, where she consulted with K–12 schools across Massachusetts. Mary is also a registered nurse and has worked as a 7–12 science teacher, a middle school principal, and a math and science curriculum leader. Mary grew up in Indiana and earned a B.S. in nursing from the University of Pennsylvania, an M.S. in science teaching from Antioch University, and an M.Ed. in administration and supervision from the University of Hartford in Connecticut.

David Ruff is Executive Director of the Great Schools Partnership, where he has directed numerous programs and projects, including efforts focused on the creation of local accountability systems; curriculum development focused on tying student learning standards to local needs and contexts; school coaching and school-improvement efforts; and the redesign of state and local policy to support student-centered learning. Through these efforts, David has worked directly with classroom teachers, building and district administrators, state education commissioners and their staff, and state legislators. David began his education career as an English teacher. He lives in Portland, Maine.

Ken Templeton, serves as a Senior Associate at Great Schools Partnership. Formerly he was a visiting instructor in the education department at Bowdoin College. While attending the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Ken served as a facilitator for the Redesigning High Schools for Improved Instruction summer institute. He is also a former high school English teacher, with experience teaching in Lewiston and Gorham, Maine, and in Stockport, England. Ken’s primary professional interests are teacher learning, democratic leadership models, and rich, equitable curricula for all students. Ken is a board member of the Maine Humanities Council and a volunteer lacrosse coach. He grew up in New Jersey and received his B.A. from Bowdoin College and his M.Ed. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

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