



## ***Strategic Interventions for Student Success***

U. S. Department of Education, Smaller Learning Communities Program

April 25–27, 2012

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### **PRESENTERS**

**Thomas Acampora** works as an Organizational Facilitator for Talent Development at the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University. He advocates and implements a research-based model designed to transform troubled schools into sites of students' success. A former teacher with a history degree from Hamilton College, Thomas began teaching social studies after graduation. He taught for five years in Baltimore City and while teaching he won numerous awards and honors, including the History Channel's Save Our History Teacher Award in 2006 and Maryland History Teacher of the Year in 2008. He has recently been named an Emerging Leader in Education for the 2011–2012 school year by Phi Delta Kappa, the International Association of Educators.

**Eric Backman** serves as Assistant Principal and the SLC Project Director at Casa Grande High School (Petaluma, California), where he has worked since 2005. Prior to becoming an administrator, he taught social studies for fifteen years in both public and private high schools. He is an adjunct faculty member of Sonoma State University where he teaches classes in education. Eric received his bachelor's degree in history from San Diego State University and a master's degree in U.S. history from San Francisco State University. His credential in education leadership is from Sonoma State University. He is a father, husband, runner, drummer, and works on local efforts to conserve the Petaluma River and wetlands.

**Donna Beegle, Ed.D.** With a rare depth of knowledge about poverty barriers, communication issues, and cultural competency, Dr. Donna Beegle is a highly experienced public speaker, discussion leader, trainer, and author of numerous publications. Born into generational poverty, Donna is the only member of her family who has not been incarcerated. She dropped out of high school at 15 to marry, and at 25 found herself to be a divorced mother of two with only six months of ninth grade completed. Ten years later Donna had gained self-confidence, a G.E.D., an A.A. in journalism, a B.A. in Communications with Honors, an M.A. in communications and a doctorate in educational leadership. Over the past 22 years, Donna has guided many community leaders, sharing strategies and tools to break poverty barriers. Her efforts to address poverty issues are featured in a PBS documentary *Invisible Nation*. Other recent honors include: Speaker of the Year by the New Mexico Bar Foundation and 2011 Individual Award from Oregon Ethics in Business. Donna's work will be featured on an April 2012 CNN special, *The Other America*. She has authored two books, *See Poverty...Be The Difference* and *An Action Approach To Educating Students In Poverty* and currently serves as President of Communication

Across Barriers, a consulting firm devoted to improving relationships and opportunities across class, race, gender, and age barriers.

**Deborah Childs-Bowen, Ed.D.** has educational experience in coaching for school improvement. In her varied roles as teacher, principal, director of professional development, university professor and consultant, she developed expertise in standards-based instruction, strategic teaching, assessment literacy, and instructional leadership for student success and educator capacity building. She is well-versed in current research yet grounded in practical application for results. Deborah was President of the National Staff Development Council/Learning Forward. As an experienced professional developer she consults with Robert Marzano through ASCD. Her passion for developing equitable learning conditions drives her vision to improve the effectiveness of educators.

**Nettie Legters, Ph.D.** is a Research Scientist at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools and serves as Co-Director of the Center's Everyone Graduates Initiative. A recognized leader in secondary education research and reform, Nettie offers nearly two decades of experience in conducting field scans, mixed-methods studies, program development, and technical assistance focused on implementation, scale-up, and impact of secondary education reform, school organization, improving graduation rates, early warning systems, and dropout prevention. Her extensive publications and presentations reach a wide variety of audiences in national, state, regional, and district forums, and include keynote presentations for Dropout Prevention summits sponsored by the America's Promise Alliance and The Civil Rights Project. She is co-author, with Robert Balfanz, of the widely cited *Locating the Dropout Crisis* report and currently directs a five-year implementation study of ninth grade academies operating at scale in Broward County, Florida, as part of a federally funded evaluation led by MDRC.

**Carol Miller Lieber** is a Senior Consultant for ESR. Facilitating academic success and healthy development for every student has been at the heart of her 45-year career as a secondary teacher, school founder, principal, curriculum writer, clinical professor, and professional development consultant. Currently, Carol supports secondary principals, leadership teams, and faculty in their efforts to establish shared instructional practices, an accountable and restorative approach to discipline, and an equitable, data-informed system of case management and academic learning supports and interventions. She is the author of many books and articles, most recently, *Making Learning REAL*, *Getting Classroom Management RIGHT*, and "Increasing College Access through School-Based Models of Postsecondary Preparation, Planning, and Support."

**Joanne Murphy's** vision for inclusion is that all students with disabilities will chart their own college and career path and make meaningful contributions to society in their adult lives. Joanne is the Special Education Curriculum Leader for the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD). Her experience includes co-teaching as a Resource Specialist Program (RSP) teacher and serving as a program facilitator. Joanne chairs a Special Education Task Force to ensure that a Linked Learning experience is a reality for students with disabilities at all LBUSD high schools. She is also conducting doctoral research in self-determination with an LBUSD Cohort 7 school.

**Terry Salinger, Ph.D.**, Managing Director and Chief Scientist for Literacy Research at the American Institutes for Research (AIR), has conducted research for nearly 15 years focused on

interventions for struggling readers of all ages; teacher knowledge of instructional practice in reading; and measurement of literacy skills through both standardized and informal assessments. Terry's professional experiences prior to joining AIR in 1997 include serving as the Director of Research at the International Reading Association; leading the development of tests within the NTE/PRAXIS series and conducting research on classroom-based assessment approaches at Educational Testing Service; and teaching graduate and undergraduate courses at the University of Texas at El Paso and the University of Cincinnati. She began her career with 10 years of experience as a New York City public school teacher, during which time she also did clinical intervention with adult struggling readers.

**Pamela Seki**, Director of Long Beach Unified School District's Curriculum, Instruction & Professional Development and Program Assistance for Language Minority Students, designs curricula and provides professional development-focused instruction to accelerate students' academic achievement. Her career, dedicated to English Learners' and equity/access, includes extensive experience teaching high school English Learners and bilingual Spanish-speakers. Currently, she leads LBUSD's Common Core State Standards transition team, ensuring that *all* students will be college and career ready, "a promise to our children that we intend to keep." Teaching is her art, a venue to share her creativity, passion, and belief that all students can and should experience success!

**Michele Tissiere**, Director of Professional Services for ESR, has kept professional learning for teachers and instructional leaders at the core of her 30-year career as a literacy specialist, teacher, senior administrator, and consultant. Michele works with districts and schools in the areas of vision and culture; student-centered teaching and learning; climate, discipline, and behavioral supports; and youth development. Through embedded coaching, Michele supports schools to use data sources to inform curriculum design, assessment practices, and universal instructional and academic supports and interventions in the classroom. Michele co-authored a concept paper titled "Leading a Learning-Focused Culture: A Foundation for Successful School Leadership" and recently co-authored *Getting Advisory Right: Tools for Supporting Effective Advisories*.

**Deon Toon** is a Site Coordinator with Communities in Schools of the Nation's Capital. As Site Coordinator for Browne Education Campus, Deon is currently working with students who have been targeted as having issues in attendance, behavior, and coursework and may be at risk for dropping out of high school. She hopes that her fervor to ensure that students from urban neighborhoods graduate from high school and college encourages those students to expect more from themselves and their peers. Deon has worked, as a Social Worker with Child Protective Services and a School Counselor in a high school in Delaware.

**Nader Imad Twal**. As SLCP and Linked Learning Project Director for Long Beach Unified School District, Nader is committed to equipping, empowering, and energizing all teachers within SLCs to deliver the most rigorous and relevant content to engage all students. Having spent eight years as a classroom teacher, five within an SLC, and two as a site-based SLC Coordinator before assuming his role as Project Director, Nader brings the perspective of the practitioner to the systems level. He is committed to cultivating the passion of all students to achieve by providing the robust professional development to teachers and collaborating on processes to systematize inclusion.

**Scot Wigert** currently serves as a math teacher, department chair, and SLC teacher lead at Casa Grande High School in Petaluma, California, where he is now completing his ninth year. Over a span of 21 years he spent seventeen years as a high school math teacher and wedged four years in the middle as a technical trainer for a telecommunications company. Scot received his undergraduate degree in biophysics from UC Berkeley and his secondary teaching credential from San Francisco State University. When not attending meetings after school, he is on his mountain bike as the head coach of the Casa Grande Mountain Bike Team.

## 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 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 coached Fort Kent Community High School for the past four years, and now coaches several Maine high schools taking part in a Smaller Learning Communities Grant. 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.

**Amy Parkhurst** is passionate about developing programs that connect at-risk youth to the world of work. She has 20 years of leadership experience working with organizations and communities to link service providers, schools, CBOs, funders, and other stakeholders through strategic initiatives aimed at improving life prospects for youth. She has held leadership positions at Juma

Ventures, a social enterprise in San Francisco; at the Center for Community Health; at a UCLA research center; and at Worksystems where she managed all youth Workforce Investment Act funds and strategic initiatives for the Portland metropolitan area. This year Amy launched —Emerge NW, a workforce development consulting practice.

**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.

**Jenni Villano** has been a teacher, counselor, principal, and district administrator in Oregon and Colorado for over 30 years, where she worked intensively to provide opportunities for all students to achieve and continue their education, especially students who were off-track and disengaged. Recently retired, Jenni was the Regional Director of District-wide Options in Portland, Oregon, where she implemented systemic accountability and support for alternative education options. She has designed and implemented multiple education models, including a reconnection center for disengaged youth, an exemplary program for expelled youth, and a nontraditional middle school.

## **OTHER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM MEMBERS**

**Wendy Douglas-Nathai** is the Project Coordinator for the SLCP technical assistance team at The Millennium Group International in Sterling, Virginia. She supports all aspects of the SLCP project including project management and logistical planning. Prior to joining TMG Wendy worked at AED's (currently FHI 360) Center for School and Community Services in NYC as a Senior Program Associate providing support on a variety of projects, in the area of project management, business, proposal development, and qualitative research. Wendy has a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and a Master of Science in human resource management.

**Michelle Feist** serves as the Project Director of the SLCP technical assistance team at The Millennium Group International (TMG) where she works with the 214 SLCP grantees that have received funds to improve their high school programs. Michelle has a wide array of expertise in secondary school reform and systemic, district-wide change initiatives. She specializes in supporting national, multi-site reform efforts where she helps districts implement uniform, yet customized, reforms. Michelle has managed and coordinated a number of high profile national networking groups, including the National High School Alliance and the Urban Middle Grades Reform Network. Prior to working at TMG, Michelle worked at AED (currently FHI 360) where she directed the TA team for the SLCP project, served as Deputy Director of the technical support team for the Carnegie Corporation's Schools for a New Society initiative and Director of the Professional Development for DC Middle Start.

**Leslie Rennie-Hill, Ed.D.**, Senior Consultant to the TMG SLCP technical assistance team, brings over 35 years experience from various public education roles to her consulting practice. She has served as a teacher, administrator, professor, consultant in middle and high schools, community colleges, and university programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Over the past 14 years, Leslie has focused on secondary school reforms and the creation of systems of multiple pathways to college and career. She works both inside and outside the system: she initiated the high school system reform of the Portland Public Schools in her position as Chief of High Schools and also provided technical assistance for Carnegie Corporation Schools for a New Society and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant recipients. Leslie studies strategies to increase the academic success and college-going rates for historically underserved student populations at the intersections of urban school system reform, youth development, and change management.

**Jean Thomases**, Program Planning Consultant for the SLCP technical assistance team, has worked on community-based services for youth and families and high school reform for over 30 years. She currently works as a consultant focusing on programs and schools that address the educational challenges facing older youth. Prior to working as a consultant, Jean was Associate Executive Director of Good Shepherd Services and was responsible for the development of a broad network of community-based services. In 1996 she was awarded the Annie E. Casey Children and Family Fellowship. In 1999 she coauthored a monograph entitled *CBO Schools: A Crucial Education-Youth Development Link*.

**Constancia Warren, Ph.D.**, is a Senior Program Director at FHI 360 where she works on secondary school reform and leadership development. Prior to FHI she was a consultant to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and also worked as a Senior Program Officer at Carnegie Corporation of New York leading the Corporation's efforts in urban high school and district

reform. Warren also worked at the Academy for Educational Development (AED) leading teams providing evaluation, technical assistance, and other support to a series of school initiatives across the country, including Carnegie's Schools for a New Society initiative, and directed the Support Center for Educational Equity for Young Mothers. Before joining AED, Connie worked at the Center for Public Advocacy Research, and for the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning of the New York City Board of Education. Warren holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from Bryn Mawr College and a doctorate in political science and education from Columbia University.

**Patrice Williams** is a Senior Program Associate for The Millennium Group International in Sterling, Virginia, and currently supports the Smaller Learning Community Program (SLCP) by conducting monitoring and promising practice site visits, aggregating data, organizing meeting logistics, and providing other team support as needed. Ms. Williams has 10 years of experience in the education field and prior to TMG she worked at the Academy for Educational Development (now FHI 360) Center for School and Community Services on school-level evaluations and restructuring, data analysis, professional development facilitation, and coordination of projects. She has five years' experience teaching in the public school system. Ms. Williams holds a Bachelor of Arts in family studies and a Master of Arts in elementary education.