
Aspen Institute-NewSchools Fellows
Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education

Russlynn Ali

Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, US Department of Education



President Barack Obama nominated Russlynn Ali as assistant secretary for civil rights at the U.S. Department of Education on March 18, 2009, and she was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on May 1, 2009. As assistant secretary, Ali is Secretary Duncan's primary adviser on civil rights and responsible for enforcing U.S. civil rights laws as they pertain to education—ensuring the nation's schools, colleges and universities receiving federal funding do not engage in discriminatory conduct related to race, sex, disability or age.

Until her appointment to the Department of Education, Russlynn Ali had been a vice president of the Education Trust in Washington, D.C., and the founding executive director of the Education Trust-West in Oakland, Calif., since 2001. In those positions, she developed and implemented a long-range strategy to close achievement gaps among public school students in California; worked with school districts to improve curriculum and instructional quality at high-poverty and high-minority public schools; and designed, field-tested and implemented comprehensive audit tools that examined inequities in schools and districts. She also advised legislative and gubernatorial staff as well as senior education experts on education matters in the state in addition to assuming fundraising and operational responsibilities as a member of the senior management team at Education Trust.

In the education arena, Ali was a teacher, served as the liaison for the president of the Children's Defense Fund and as assistant director of policy and research at the Broad Foundation, for which she was also on loan as chief of staff to the president of the Los Angeles Unified School District's Board of Education. She has also taught at the University of Southern California Law Center and the University of California at Davis. In the legal field, Ali was a contract attorney at Bird, Marella, Boxer and Wolpert, deputy co-director and of counsel at the Advancement Project and English, Munger & Rice, and an attorney at Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton, all in Los Angeles.

Ali has authored many reports and publications in the field of education. She has also made numerous presentations on education to education organizations such as the Association of California School Administrators, to advocacy organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, to policymakers such as the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and to schools, school districts and boards of education. She has been a featured guest on several television and radio programs, including the Oprah Winfrey Show, the Roy Avila Show, ABC, NBC and CBS.

Ali is a member of the California State Bar. She was a member of the review board of the Broad Prize in Urban Education, the Governor's Advisory Committee on Education Excellence, to which she was appointed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, and the Curriculum and Instruction Committee of the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education, and she was a fellow of the Aspen Institute's New Schools Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education Fellowship.

Prior to joining the Department, Ali sat on numerous boards of directors and advisory committees, including College Track, the Institute for College Access and Success, and Great Schools.

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Ali received her J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law, where she was awarded the Lowden-Wigmore Prize for Trial Advocacy and was a Julius Miner Moot Court Finalist. She received her bachelor's degree in law and society from the American University. She also attended Spelman College.

Chris Barbic

Founder & Chief Executive Officer, YES Prep Public Schools



As Head of Schools, Chris is the Chief Executive Officer of YES Prep and oversees all of the senior management and school directors. Prior to founding YES Prep, Chris taught for six years in Houston ISD and was a member of Teach for America. In 1995, he earned Houston ISD's Outstanding Young Educator. Chris has earned a number of awards for his contribution to the educational reform movement, including The Do Something Foundation's Do Something Brick Award in 2000. In 2001, he was selected by President Bush to serve on the President's Commission on Excellence in Hispanic Education and in 2006 was awarded Vanderbilt University's Distinguished Alumnus Award. Chris graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1992 with a bachelor's degree in English and Human Development.

Richard Barth

Chief Executive Officer, Knowledge is Power Program Foundation (KIPP)



Richard Barth joined KIPP in December of 2005. As president and CEO of the KIPP Foundation, Barth led the organization through the process of identifying five organizational imperatives to ensure the sustainability of the KIPP network as it grows to over 100 schools in the next five years. In the past three years, he has overseen the expansion of KIPP's leadership development programs, put in place a disciplined approach to managing growth, recruited three new outside directors to the KIPP Foundation board, and secured over \$30 million in new, long term funding commitments. This year, Barth is participating in the inaugural class of the Aspen Institute-New Schools Fellows program. Barth came to KIPP from Edison schools, where he served as President of District Partnerships and managed Edison Schools' partnership in Philadelphia. Prior to joining Edison, Barth was one of the founding staff members at Teach For America. He earned a BA in American History from Harvard University in 1989.

Michael Bennet

United States Senator from Colorado



Michael Bennet, the junior Senator from Colorado, has served most recently as the Superintendent of the Denver Public Schools. As a dedicated public servant with comprehensive experience as a businessman, Michael has a proven record of facing tough tasks at critical times. As Superintendent, Michael worked to improve student achievement and classroom performance, while also overseeing a halt to years of budgetary cuts in the Denver Public Schools. While serving as Chief of Staff to Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper, Michael was credited with leading the way on balancing a historic budget deficit. Prior to his service to the city, Michael was a Managing Director at the Anschutz Investment Company, where he managed the restructuring of over \$3 billion in corporate debt. Representing Colorado as our state's next U.S. Senator, Michael will use his understanding and leadership on complex financial and economic issues to be a voice for Colorado's working families.

Almost four years ago, Michael inherited a School District whose achievement rates were flat and, where, for year after year, budgets were cut. With the help of Denver Public Schools' principals and teachers, Michael has turned this around. Achievement and graduation rates are up, with Denver's kids growing faster than all

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the kids in the state on every single test at every single grade level with the exception of one math test. As Superintendent, Michael worked hard to end the annual cycle of budget cuts at the Denver Public Schools. 2008 was the first in five years that the district did not have to cut its budget, and this year Denver was able to invest an additional \$18 million in its schools and classrooms to enrich the academic environment for children. As a result, programs such as comprehensive Early Childhood Education have been enacted allowing over 2,000 four year olds to now have a full day Early Childhood Education. Additionally, for the first time in Denver's history, over 90% of five year olds have access to full-day kindergarten. These improvements are closing the achievement gap suffered by low-income children.

Michael, working with the Denver Classroom Teachers Association, revolutionized Procomp, a system of differentiated pay that pays teachers more for driving student achievement, serving in a high poverty school, or bringing a special set of talents, like the teaching of math or special education. Although the changes proposed were controversial, nearly 80% of Denver's teachers voted for the new proposal.

Prior to serving as Superintendent of the Denver Public Schools, Michael served for two years as Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper's Chief of Staff. Michael oversaw the balancing of an historic budget deficit, the renegotiation of several collective bargaining agreements, and a complete redesign of the police oversight function. Michael, along with the Mayor, was widely credited with putting together a first rate, diverse team to lead the City through unprecedented fiscal challenges.

Before joining Mayor Hickenlooper's administration, Michael was a Managing Director of the Anschutz Investment Company, where he had direct responsibility for the investment of over \$500 million. He led the reorganization of four distressed companies including Forcenergy (which later merged with Denver-based Forest Oil), Regal Cinemas, United Artists, and Edwards Theaters, which together required the restructuring of over \$3 billion in debt. Michael also managed, on behalf of Anschutz, the consolidation of the three theater chains into Regal Entertainment Group, the largest motion picture exhibitor in the world.

Prior to moving to Denver, Michael served as Counsel to the Deputy Attorney General at the Department of Justice during the Clinton Administration. Michael earned his bachelor's degree with honors from Wesleyan University and his law degree from Yale Law School, where he was Editor-in-Chief of *The Yale Law Journal*. Michael married Susan Daggett, a successful natural resources lawyer, in 1997. Michael and Susan are the proud parents of three daughters, Caroline (9), Halina (7), and Anne (4).

Larry Berger **Chief Executive Officer, Wireless Generation**



Larry Berger is CEO and co-founder of Wireless Generation, an education company that has pioneered the adaptation of emerging technologies to improve PreK-12 teaching and learning. Mr. Berger led the invention of Wireless Generation's mCLASS system, which enables educators to administer early reading and math formative assessments using handheld computers and then immediately receive results, analysis, and support for differentiated instruction. Today, Wireless Generation serves more than 2 million children and hosts one of the largest databases of longitudinal student data in the country.

Under Mr. Berger's leadership, Wireless Generation is continuing to break new ground through the sensitive and innovative application of technology in the classroom. New projects include FreeReading.net, the first open source curriculum to be accepted through an official state adoption; large-scale data systems that capture multiple points of information relevant to a student's academic growth; and knowledge management systems that help educators find solutions to challenges that have been solved in other schools.

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Prior to launching Wireless Generation, Mr. Berger was President of InterDimensions, a Web solutions company. He also served as the Educational Technology Specialist at The Children's Aid Society, where he led the development of "Technology Playgrounds," community computer labs in disadvantaged neighborhoods that are models of using technology to empower young people. Mr. Berger was a Rhodes Scholar, and a White House Fellow working on educational technology at NASA.

Mr. Berger was a 2007 inaugural Fellow for the Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education Program, created by The Aspen Institute and the New Schools Venture Fund. He serves on the Carnegie-Institute for Advanced Study Joint Commission on Mathematics and Science Education, and on the Board of the Peer Health Exchange. In addition, he is a member of the Board of Overseers for the Annenberg Institute on School Reform at Brown University.

Phoebe Boyer
Executive Director, Tiger Foundation



Prior to joining the Foundations, Ms. Boyer identified and secured private funds for The After-School Corporation (TASC), an organization established to enhance the quality and availability of after-school programming. Before joining TASC, Ms. Boyer was the Assistant Executive Director of Inwood House, a social service agency that works with pregnant and parenting teens. She also has several years of experience in the public and private sectors. Ms. Boyer received a Bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University and a Masters in Business Administration from Columbia University. She currently serves as the Board Chair of the New York City Charter School Center and as a board member at Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory. She is a member of the inaugural class of the Aspen Institute NewSchools Fellowship: Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education.

Susan Colby
Partner, San Francisco Office, The Bridgespan Group



Susan Colby is a founding partner of Bridgespan's San Francisco office, where she leads the organization's work in K-12 education and foundation strategy. She focuses on client and knowledge-related activities with a particular emphasis on disadvantaged populations; she has engaged with foundations on major strategy and organization issues and has also consulted to a variety of nonprofit organizations, from smaller, local community-based organizations to large national agencies.

Susan joined the Bridgespan Group from Pharmacia (previously Monsanto), where she served as co-president of the Sustainable Development Sector, an initiative that developed economically, environmentally and socially viable businesses, largely in the developing world. In particular, she worked to develop businesses and distribution channels to help small farmers in the developing world enhance their productivity, advance their personal and community well-being, and protect the environment. Prior to Monsanto, Susan spent 10 years at McKinsey & Company, where she co-founded and co-led the North American Environment Practice, serving clients in the areas of environmental management and strategy. At McKinsey, she also served foundations and environmental nonprofits on a pro bono basis and worked with clients in the financial, consumer goods and energy industries.

She is a co-author of several major articles—“[Zeroing in on Impact](#),” which appeared in the Fall 2004 edition of the Stanford Social Innovation Review; “The Strategic Value of a Shared Understanding of Costs,” based on “[Costs are Cool](#)” (Strategy and Leadership 2005 special report on nonprofit leadership); “[Going for the Gold](#)” in Education Next, Spring 2008; “[Expanding the Supply of High Quality Public Schools](#),” and “[Reclaiming the American Dream](#)” —and of several Bridgespan Group case studies. She has also addressed

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Grantmakers for Education, the Stanford Nonprofit Institute, and other audiences on topics related to business planning and strategic clarity. She is a member of the inaugural class of the Aspen Institute-NewSchools Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education fellows.

Susan has served as an advisor and board member for several nonprofits. She began her consulting career at Bain & Company, after receiving her BA from American University cum laude. She then went on to earn her MBA from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business.

Gretchen Crosby-Sims
Director of Strategic Initiatives, The Joyce Foundation



Gretchen Crosby Sims is Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Chicago-based Joyce Foundation. The foundation makes grants to improve the quality of life in the Great Lakes region, especially through initiatives designed to improve public policies. In this role, she leads efforts across the Foundation's six program areas to identify new opportunities to promote the organization's policy goals and serves on the management team of the organization. From 2003-2008, she led Joyce's education program, which works to close achievement gaps through policy-oriented approaches to improving teacher quality in high-need schools and expanding early childhood education and charter schools. She served as domestic policy adviser on Senator Bill Bradley's 2000 presidential campaign and has worked for the Council on Foreign Relations (New York), CNN (Washington, D.C.), and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Ms. Sims holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in political science from Stanford University and a B.A. from Harvard University.

John Deasy
Deputy Director of Education, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



John E. Deasy serves as a Deputy Director of Education for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He leads the programmatic work on effective teaching. Prior to joining the Gates foundation, Mr. Deasy served as superintendent of the Prince George's County, Md., Public Schools, where he earned a national reputation for his leadership in significantly narrowing the achievement gap between low-income and minority students and their peers. During his time in Prince George's, Mr. Deasy also launched a pay-for-performance plan that was approved by the Board of Education and developed jointly with labor, making the district a leader nationally in efforts to reward teachers for gains in student achievement.

Previously, Mr. Deasy served as superintendent of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District in California and of the Coventry Public Schools in Rhode Island. In all three districts, he championed rigorous and ambitious learning opportunities for youth, fair teacher and administrator evaluations, pay-for-performance, staff development and training, and data-based decision-making.

Mr. Deasy brings nearly three decades of extensive successful experience in education to the Gates foundation. He has been a Broad Fellow, an Annenberg Fellow, a State Superintendent of the Year, a presenter at numerous state and national conferences, and a consultant to school districts undertaking high school reform and district-wide improvement strategies. He has spoken and written extensively on education and serves on numerous boards.

Lauren Dutton
Independent Consultant

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Lauren is an independent consultant to educational nonprofits and foundations. She serves on the Board of Directors for KIPP Bay Area Schools and for Peer Health Exchange, and on the Bay Area Advisory Board for New Leaders for New Schools.

Lauren's background is in entrepreneurship, strategy development and operations, garnered through 20 years of leadership roles in varied socially entrepreneurial ventures focused on improving education and youth development.

Lauren spent six years as a Partner at NewSchools Venture Fund, where she focused on investment strategy and management assistance to portfolio ventures in the Charter Accelerator Fund. Prior to joining NewSchools, Lauren was Vice President for Development at Edison Schools, the country's largest private manager of public schools. In this role she was primarily responsible for launching charter schools in California.

Previously, Lauren served as Director of New Site Development for City Year, where she led the expansion of the Boston-based urban service corps to seven other cities. In addition, she was the founding Executive Director of Teach For America in Oakland, California. She began her career as a management consultant with Bain & Company.

Lauren received her bachelor's degree from the University of California at Berkeley and her MBA from Stanford Graduate School of Business, where she worked with other student leaders to launch the Public Management Initiative on Social Entrepreneurship. She spent an additional year at Stanford as a Research Associate in the Center for Entrepreneurial Studies.

James Forman, Jr.

Associate Professor of Law, Georgetown University

Co-Founder and Chairman of the Board, Maya Angelou Public Charter School



Professor James Forman, Jr. is a graduate of Brown University and Yale Law School. While attending law school, he was active in BLSA and was a book reviews editor for the *Yale Law Journal*. Following graduation, he served as a judicial clerk for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Professor Forman worked for six years with the Public Defender Service in Washington, D.C., where he represented juveniles and adults in serious felony cases. In 1999, Professor Forman was promoted to training director for new attorneys at the agency and developed the inaugural training program for the independent CJA bar. Professor Forman's interest in educational programs for at-risk and court-involved youth led him to start, along with a colleague, the Maya Angelou Public Charter School in 1997. The school is recognized as one of the most successful programs of its kind in the country, combining rigorous education, job training, counseling, mental health services, life skills, and dormitory living for school dropouts and youth who have previously been incarcerated.

Professor Forman teaches and writes in the areas of criminal procedure and education law. Professor Forman serves on the board of the American Constitution Society, the Children's Defense Fund, and the Maya Angelou Charter School.

David Harris

President & Chief Executive Officer, The Mind Trust

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David Harris serves as The Mind Trust's President and Chief Executive Officer. Working closely with Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson, Mr. Harris designed and launched The Mind Trust. Previously, Mr. Harris served as Mayor Peterson's Charter Schools Director, where he built one of the nation's most highly regarded charter school offices. As Charter Schools Director, Mr. Harris created from scratch a full-scale chartering operation, including a rigorous application process for new charter schools; a comprehensive accountability system to monitor charter schools' results and report them widely to parents and the public; and a vigorous outreach effort to induce capable people and organizations to start charter schools in Indianapolis. The initiative received Harvard University's prestigious Innovations in American Government Award in 2006 and has been widely cited in the national media for its high level of rigor and transparency. In 2007, Mr. Harris was selected along with 24 other education leaders for the Aspen Institute and NewSchools Venture Fund's inaugural Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education Program.

Previously, Mr. Harris served as an Assistant Deputy Mayor for Planning. From 1997 to 1999, Mr. Harris practiced law with the Indianapolis firm of Baker & Daniels. While at Baker & Daniels, Mr. Harris was one of the chief researchers and drafters of the Peterson Plan, the Mayor's 1999 strategy for running city government. He also worked as a Governor's Fellow under Governor Evan Bayh and was a Lyndon B. Johnson intern in the Office of Congressman Andrew Jacobs, Jr. He received a bachelor's degree in political science from Northwestern University in 1992 and a law degree from Indiana University School of Law in 1997. Mr. Harris serves on the boards of the Nicholas H. Noyes Jr. Memorial Foundation, the RCA Tennis Championships, and Ivy Tech Community College of Central Indiana.

Kaya Henderson
Deputy Chancellor, District of Columbia Public Schools



Kaya Henderson, Deputy Chancellor for the District of Columbia Public Schools, focuses on organizational strategy, human capital and external relations. As she works to create a more effective Human Resources structure for DCPS, Ms. Henderson draws from her past success in leading similar transformations in urban districts such as Memphis, Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Miami, New York, Oakland, and Philadelphia.

Prior to her appointment as Deputy Chancellor, Ms. Henderson served as the Vice President for Strategic Partnerships at The New Teacher Project (INTP), where she oversaw the organization's work on improving teacher hiring for school districts from a process, policy and capacity-building perspective. She also launched alternative certification programs--including the DC Teaching Fellows Program--in districts. Her work contributed to the organization's two major reports: "Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High-Quality Teachers Out of Urban Classrooms," and "Unintended Consequences: The Case for Reforming Staffing Rules in Urban Teachers Union Contracts."

Before enacting district-level reforms at The New Teacher Project, Ms. Henderson was impacting teacher hiring and school performance through her work at Teach For America. She served the organization as a Recruiter, National Director of Admissions, and the Executive Director for Teach For America-D.C., where she was responsible for 170 teachers in over 50 D.C. Public Schools.

Ms. Henderson's foundation for education reform came from the classroom. As a Teach-For-America corps member, she taught middle-school Spanish in the South Bronx, spending her

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summers overseeing the professional development of new teachers at summer institutes. She holds a BS in Foreign Service and MA in Leadership from Georgetown University.

Hosanna Mahaley Johnson
President, Atlanta Education Fund



Hosanna Mahaley Johnson has spent her entire career as an education leader, first in the classroom as a Mathematics teacher, then as an aide to Mayor Richard M. Daley, and at the helm of several of the Chicago Public Schools' key initiatives. She joined the school system in 2001. Johnson served as Duncan's Deputy Chief of Staff, Chief of Staff for the Education then, ultimately as the

Chief of Staff for the entire system of over 400,000 students, 623 schools, and 28,000 employees. She simultaneously led the Office of New Schools, which oversaw the Renaissance 2010 initiative, Mayor Daley's bold plan to create 100 new community-driven schools by the year 2010. She currently serves as the President of the Atlanta Education Fund, whose mission is to monitor, support, and advocate for a high-quality education for all of Atlanta's K-12 public school students.

She has earned Master's degrees in both Mathematics and Education Administration, and most recently obtained an Executive MBA at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. She also participated in Harvard Business School's Public Education Leadership Program.

Johnson has been recognized for her desire to pioneer innovation, enforce accountability, and maintain high expectations on behalf of children. She has received numerous awards, including the "*Kathy Osterman Award for Superior Public Service*," "*Teacher of the Year*" and "*Outstanding Alumnae of the Decade*" for her commitment to excellence and most recently was named one of *Crain's "40 under 40"*.

She has served on the board or been active in the following organizations: Education Sector, New Leaders for New Schools; City Year Chicago; Gates High School Redesign; National Association of Charter School Authorizers; Chicago Church of Christ, CEOs for Cities; City Club of Chicago, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Hosanna is a public school graduate and her children attend public schools. She currently resides in Atlanta, GA.

Kristen Kane
National Purposes Director, Federal Communications Commission

Kristen Kane most recently served as the Chief Executive Officer of Ladies of Launch, an early stage new media company whose mission is to support women entrepreneurs. Prior to that, Kristen worked at the New York City Department of Education where she served as Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff to Chancellor Joel Klein from 2005-2007; in that capacity she was responsible for the implementation of the *Children First* reform strategy as well as oversight of daily operations. Between 2003-2005 she served as Chief Executive of the Office of New Schools, which opened 178 new small schools and charters in New York City under her leadership. She was a founding Board Member of the NYC Center for Charter School Excellence.

Before joining the New York City Department of Education in 2002, Kristen worked at the NewSchools Venture Fund as a summer associate, served as a vice president and equity research analyst at JPMorgan covering the education industry, and worked at Salomon Smith Barney. She has an MBA and Certificate in Public Management from the Stanford Graduate School of Business and a BA from Yale University.

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Dan Katzir

Managing Director, The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation - Education



Dan Katzir is managing director of The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, a national venture philanthropy established by entrepreneur and philanthropist Eli Broad to advance entrepreneurship for the public good in education, science and the arts. Katzir leads The Broad Foundation's education work, which is focused on dramatically improving urban K-12 public education through better governance, management, labor relations and competition.

Katzir has more than two decades of leadership in the K-12 education sector. Broad hired Katzir to develop his foundation's new education portfolio in 1999, and over the past decade, Katzir has overseen the growth of the foundation's education work to more than \$350 million in grant commitments. He was instrumental in developing and launching the foundation's four national flagship initiatives: The \$2 million Broad Prize for Urban Education, The Broad Superintendents Academy, The Broad Residency in Urban Education, and The Broad Institute for School Boards.

Early in his career, Katzir consulted with the international management consulting firm Bain & Company, where he developed and implemented business strategies for Fortune 500 companies. In 1991, Katzir became chief operating officer for Teach for America, where he managed what was then an organization with a budget of \$7.5 million, 15 offices, 70 full-time staff and 1,200 teachers.

Seeing the tremendous benefit of applying best practices in management and operations from the business industry to the education industry, Katzir went on to serve as the first executive director of the UCLA School Management Program, a joint venture of UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Anderson School of Management that provides executive management training to public school educators. Katzir also served as the founding regional director of Sylvan Learning Systems in Los Angeles, managing 33 reading tutorial centers in the Los Angeles Unified School District, all of which showed significant student achievement gains.

Katzir serves on the board of The Broad Center for the Management of School Systems, which runs The Broad Superintendents Academy and The Broad Residency. He also serves on the advisory boards of the Los Angeles Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. He is an inaugural Fellow in the Aspen Institute-NewSchools Venture Fund Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education Fellowship Program.

Katzir has a bachelor's degree in history from Dartmouth College, where he graduated *summa cum laude*. He also has an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School.

Katzir is based in Los Angeles.

Jeremy Nowak

President, The Reinvestment Fund



Jeremy Nowak is the President of The Reinvestment Fund (TRF). TRF has invested \$1 billion in housing, community arts centers, schools, commercial real estate, and sustainable energy projects. TRF's most recent venture is policymap.com, a national mapping tool with more than 4,000 data elements. In addition TRF, Mr. Nowak is a board member of the Philadelphia Federal Reserve Bank. He also chairs the Board of

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Mastery Charter School Foundation, a network of four inner city charter middle & high schools; and Alex's Lemonade Stand, a charity that has raised more \$25 million for pediatric cancer research during the past four years. The author of numerous articles, recent publications examine policy options for distressed cities and the role of art and culture in neighborhood regeneration. He was a Fellow at the Aspen Institute, in a program for entrepreneurial leaders in education and is a member of the Harvard (Kennedy School) executive session on cities and social enterprise.

Dr. Anthony (Tony) Recasner
President, FirstLine Schools



Tony Recasner has been working to reform public education in New Orleans for almost twenty years. He is President of FirstLine Schools, Inc., co-founder of New Orleans Charter Middle School, the city's first charter school, which opened in 1998, and founder of S. J. Green Charter School, established in 2005.

Under Tony's leadership, both schools have received national recognition and support for their innovative practices; i.e., challenging and engaging academic curriculum, while effectively addressing students' social and emotional needs.

Tony is active in a variety of charitable and education organizations. He currently serves on the boards of New Schools for New Orleans, Children's Hospital, the Greater New Orleans Foundation and the local Teach For America advisory board. Tony has served as board chairman of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory and the Institute of Mental Hygiene, and he is a founding board member of the Louisiana Public Charter Schools Association and the Louisiana School and District Accountability Commission.

Tony is a native of New Orleans, Louisiana. He has a M.S. degree and Doctorate in Psychology from Tulane University and a B.A. degree in Psychology from Loyola University in New Orleans.

Tony is married with one child.

Ref Rodriguez
Chief Executive Officer & President, Partners for Developing Futures



Chief Executive Officer and President, prior to joining Partners for Developing Futures, Ref was founder and Co-Chief Executive Officer of Partnerships to Uplift Communities (PUC), a charter school management organization serving communities in the Northeast San Fernando Valley and Northeast and Downtown Los Angeles. Under his leadership PUC developed 10 schools and became a well regarded charter management organization in California. Ref's original inspiration for starting a charter school was to offer high quality learning experiences for youth in the predominantly Latino working class community where he grew up. His outrage for being considered "fortunate" for having graduated from college because of his socio-economic background is what drives him to create and support schools where college graduation is an expectation for all. Before joining the charter school movement, Ref worked in

the business sector as a teacher and administrator in Catholic parochial schools. He is the first of five children of Mexican immigrants to graduate from college.

Ref currently serves as Vice Chair of the Board of the California Charter Schools Association. He is a fellow of the Aspen Institute-NewSchools Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education, Class of 2007. He was Executive-in-Residence at the School of Education, Loyola Marymount University where he developed a

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Master's and California Administrative Credential program for aspiring leaders in charter schools (Charter School Leadership Academy). Ref holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Fielding Graduate University in Santa Barbara, California.

Jon Schnur

Chief Executive Officer & Co-Founder, New Leaders for New Schools



Jon works with the New Leaders for New Schools team and community to accomplish our mission - driving high levels of learning and achievement for every child by attracting, preparing, and supporting the next generation of outstanding principals for our nation's urban schools. Since co-founding New Leaders for New Schools, he has led the development of the organization's strategy, management team and board, core values, partnerships, and fundraising. Jon has served as Special Assistant to Secretary of Education Richard Riley, President Clinton's White House Associate Director for Educational Policy, and Senior Advisor on Education to Vice President Gore. He has developed national educational policies on teacher and principal quality, after-school programs, district reform, charter schools, and preschools. Jon graduated from Princeton University and a Wisconsin public high school.

Jim Shelton

Assistant Deputy Secretary for Innovation and Improvement, US Department of Education



Jim Shelton is the Assistant Deputy Secretary for innovation and improvement, managing a portfolio that includes most of the Department's competitive teacher quality, school choice and learning technology programs, housed in the Office of Innovation and Improvement.

Previously, he served as a program director for the education division of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, managing the foundation's national programs and work in the northeast region of the United States. Shelton has also been a partner and the East Coast lead for NewSchools Venture Fund and co-founded LearnNow, a school management company that later was acquired by Edison Schools. He spent over four years as a senior management consultant with McKinsey & Company in Atlanta, Ga., where he advised CEOs and other executives on issues related to corporate strategy, business development, organizational design, and operational effectiveness. Upon leaving McKinsey, he joined Knowledge Universe, Inc., where he launched, acquired and operated education-related businesses.

Shelton holds a bachelor's degree in computer science from Atlanta's Morehouse College as well as master's degrees in business administration and education from Stanford University.

Shelton currently resides in his hometown, Washington, D.C., with his wife, Sonia, and two sons, Justice and Jameson.

Elisa Villanueva Beard

Chief Operating Officer, Teach For America



As the Chief Operating Officer at Teach For America, Villanueva Beard leads the executive director team of 26 to maximize our impact in each community while ensuring her team is managing to achieve Teach For America's national goals. Elisa Villanueva Beard served as the executive director in the Rio Grande Valley for four years. During her tenure as the executive director, she grew the funding base by over 17-fold, created a functioning community advisory board of ten members, and oversaw

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the more than doubling of the size of the corps. Villanueva Beard was a 1998 Teach For America corps member who taught first and second grade bilingual in Phoenix for three years and served as her school's basketball coach, grade level chair, and member of the school site-based committee. Villanueva Beard attended DePauw University and graduated with a Bachelor's in Sociology.

Joanne Weiss

Director, Race to the Top Fund, US Department of Education



Joanne Weiss has a record of success in investment strategy and management assistance that includes a portfolio of investment ventures at the New Schools Venture Fund, a national nonprofit venture philanthropy firm, during the last eight years. She also led the organization's research agenda and oversaw operations. Throughout her career, Weiss has helped to pioneer innovative work to increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes. Prior to joining New Schools Venture Fund, she was CEO of Claria Corporation, an e-services recruiting firm that helped emerging-growth companies build teams quickly and well. Weiss has spent

20 years in the design, development, and marketing of technology-based products and services for education. She was senior vice president of product development at Pensare, an e-learning company that created business innovation programs for the Fortune 500 market. Prior to Pensare, she was co-founder, interim CEO, and vice president of products and technologies at Academic Systems, a company that helps hundreds of thousands of college students prepare for college-level work in mathematics and English.

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