
Aspen Institute-NewSchools Fellows
Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education

Russlynn Ali

Vice President, The Education Trust

Executive Director, The Education Trust – West



Russlynn Ali is the Vice President of the Education Trust and founding director of the Education Trust—West, the west coast partner of the EdTrust. The organizations work for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels, with an emphasis on serving Latino, African American, Native American and low-income students.

Ali has held several senior positions at various organizations serving youth education, including: liaison to the president of the Children’s Defense Fund in Washington, DC; chief of staff to the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education President; and deputy co-director of the Advancement Project.

Ali attended Spelman College and graduated from the American University with a bachelor’s degree in Law and Society. She also holds a law degree from Northwestern University School of Law. Ali practiced corporate and civil rights law and served as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Southern California School of Law prior to her non-profit advocacy career.

Ali is a member of the State Bar of California and serves on the boards and advisory committees of a number of education related organizations, including the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education’s Curriculum and Instruction Committee and the California Governor’s Committee on Education Excellence.

Chris Barbic

Founder & Head of Schools, YES Prep Public Schools



Christopher Barbic is currently the Founder and Head of Schools of YES Prep Public Schools. Chris graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1992, with a bachelor’s degree in both English and Human Development. Upon graduation, he joined Teach For America and taught for six years in Houston ISD. In 1995, Chris was named Houston ISD’s Outstanding Young Educator, an award given to the district’s best teacher under the age of 29.

In 1998, Chris founded YES Prep, an open enrollment State of Texas charter school for grades 6th-12th. Students at YES Prep are required to gain acceptance into a four-year college or university in order to receive a high-school diploma. YES Prep has grown to four campuses serving 1,500 students and is in the process of creating the public school system in Houston that prepares the most low-income students fro college-graduation.

YES Prep – Southeast was recently ranked #87 in *Newsweek’s* issue of the top 100 high schools in the nation. The school has also been featured in the *Houston Chronicle*, *Houston Press*, *002 Magazine*,

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Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education, KTRK-TV (ABC), ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings, KHOU-TV (NBC), and KTRH Radio.

Chris received the 2000 Do Something Brick Award, was appointed to President Bush's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans in 2001, received The Gleitsman Foundation's 2004 Citizen Activist Award, and received the 2006 Vanderbilt University Peabody College Distinguished Alumnus award. This year, Chris was appointed by Governor Perry to serve a four-year term on the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC). Chris is the first charter school person to ever serve on the Board.

Chris lives in Houston, TX, with his wife Natasha and their two children, Tatiana (5) and Ramiz (3).

Richard Barth

CEO, Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP)



In December 2005, Richard Barth joined the KIPP Foundation as Chief Executive Officer.

Formerly Barth was President of District Partnerships for Edison Schools. In this role, Richard was responsible for partnerships that served approximately 44,000 students in 72 schools, generating \$160 million in annual revenues.

In the summer of 2005, Edison entered into a new partnership with Hawaii Public Schools working with seven schools on Oahu and Maui. With this partnership Edison began working in three of the ten largest districts in the country.

Prior to assuming this role in February of 2005, Richard served as Senior Vice-President for Edison Schools in Philadelphia. Richard was responsible for the success of 20 schools serving 12,000 students in grades K-8. The 20 Edison schools in Philadelphia represented the single largest new school launch in the company's history, and the effort was and remains among the most scrutinized public-private partnerships in the education field.

Prior to joining Edison, Richard helped start Teach For America, the national teacher corps and subsequently spearheaded Sylvan Learning Systems entry into the New York City. Richard graduated from Harvard University in 1989. Richard is married to Wendy Kopp and they have three sons.

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Michael Bennet
Superintendent, Denver Public Schools



Michael F. Bennet was unanimously appointed Superintendent of Denver Public Schools (DPS) in July 2005. Under Bennet's leadership, the district developed The Denver Plan, a strategic plan to address the challenges faced by DPS. The plan is a compilation of research-based, best practices created to guide the district in its effort to bolster student achievement. In its first year of implementation, The Denver Plan has guided DPS in the creation of unique professional development opportunities for teachers and principals, alignment of the curriculum, a balanced budget, and implementation of Student-Based Budgeting.

Bennet comes to DPS from the City and County of Denver where he served as Chief of Staff to Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper. In this role, Bennet helped assemble and lead a diverse and accomplished leadership team which closed a budget gap, balanced two consecutive budgets during Denver's worst recession in history, conducted successful bargaining negotiations, and gained public support for city ballot initiatives. Bennet moved to Denver in 1997, to serve in the private sector as a managing director for the Anschutz Investment Company, where he was responsible for restructuring billions of dollars of debt and lines of business, as well as investing of over \$500 million.

Since arriving in Denver, Bennet has maintained strong ties to the community with connections to Denver neighborhoods, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. He lives in the Congress Park neighborhood, and his two school-age daughters attend Denver Public Schools. Bennet began his career as a personal assistant for then Ohio Governor Richard F. Celeste and later worked as a law clerk for Judge Francis D. Murnaghan on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit. Following a brief tenure at the Washington law firm of Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering, Bennet served as Counsel to the Deputy Attorney General in the Clinton Administration. Bennet earned his bachelor's degree in history with honors from Wesleyan University and his law degree from Yale Law School where he was Editor-in-Chief of the Yale Law Journal.

Larry Berger
CEO, Wireless Generation



Larry Berger has been active in the education and technology fields for more than fifteen years. As CEO and co-founder of Wireless Generation, he has led the invention of the patent-pending mCLASS[®] software system for early reading and math assessment, which has transformed the way educators collect and use assessment data, creating a culture of continuous feedback in classrooms. The mCLASS software streamlines the assessment process and increases the value of data by delivering it immediately in handheld- and Web-based reports for teachers and administrators, with recommendations and tools for linking data to instruction.

Prior to launching Wireless Generation, Larry was President of InterDimensions, a Web solutions company based in New York and Boston. He also served as the Educational Technology Specialist at The Children's Aid Society, where he led the development of four "Technology Playgrounds" in

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Harlem and Staten Island, community computer labs in disadvantaged neighborhoods that have served as models of using technology to empower young people. Larry also developed (with Wireless Generation co-founder Greg Gunn) The Hole in The Web, an online extension of Paul Newman's "Hole In The Wall Gang" Camp for children with cancer and blood diseases.

As a White House Fellow, Larry worked on Educational Technology at NASA, where he authored a vision of NASA's 21st century educational technology agenda, and did the conceptual design and early development of NASA BioBLAST, a curriculum module for high school biology.

Larry has published numerous articles on education technology and the use of handheld computing to support diagnostic instruction. In addition, he is the co-author of I Will Sing Life, a book about the poetry writing program he developed and taught for children with serious illnesses, and of Up Your Score: The Underground Guide To The SAT, a best-selling SAT review book that he wrote when he was in high school.

He serves on the board of directors of the non-profit Peer Health Exchange, which trains college students to teach a comprehensive health curriculum in public high schools that otherwise lack health education.

Larry holds a B.A. summa cum laude from Yale and was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University.

Phoebe Boyer
Executive Director, Tiger Foundation



Phoebe Boyer is the Executive Director of the Tiger Foundation, where she is responsible for the overall management of the foundation. Founded in 1990 by Julian H. Robertson and the employees of Tiger Management, an investment firm location in New York City, the Tiger Foundation's mission is to break the cycle of poverty in New York City by offering support to non-profit organizations serving the City's neediest families. In addition, she acts as Senior Staff for Julian H. Robertson's family foundation, Robertson Foundation, directing its national education reform efforts.

Prior to joining Tiger, Ms. Boyer identified and secured private funds for The After-School Corporation (TASC), an organization established by George Soros for the sole purpose of enhancing 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. While there, she was responsible for the overall administration and financial management of the \$6 million multi-service organization. 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 on the Boards of the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory and Cool Culture.

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Susan Colby

Partner & Head of San Francisco Office, The Bridgespan Group



Susan Colby is a Partner and head of Bridgespan's San Francisco office. She works with a range of clients: with foundations on issues of foundation-wide and program strategy, as well as organizational issues; and has consulted to a variety of nonprofit organizations, from smaller, local community-based organizations to large national agencies. Through this work, she has developed strong expertise in K-12 education.

Susan serves on Bridgespan's editorial board, which guides the firm's knowledge strategy, and has co-authored several articles based on her consulting work, including “Zeroing in on Impact,” with Nan Stone and Paul Carttar, which appeared in the Fall 2004 edition of the Stanford Social Innovation Review, and “The Strategic Value of a Shared Understanding of Costs,” based on “Costs are Cool,” (Strategy and Leadership 2005 special report on nonprofit leadership).

She joined the Bridgespan Group from Pharmacia (previously Monsanto), where she served as co-president of the Sustainable Development Sector, a for-profit business development initiative that developed economically, environmentally and socially viable solutions to promote agricultural sustainability. In particular, she worked to develop businesses and distribution channels to help small farmers in the developing world enhance their productivity 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.

Susan has served as an advisor and board member for several nonprofits. She most recently served on the board of Earth Force, a nonprofit that works with youth to create and implement lasting solutions to environmental issues through civic engagement in their communities.

Susan 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

Education Program Manager, Joyce Foundation



Gretchen Crosby Sims is the director of strategic initiatives at the Chicago-based Joyce Foundation, a regional foundation with \$900 million in assets that makes grants of approximately \$8 million a year in the area of education. The Foundation works to close the achievement gap that separates low-income and minority children from their peers by expanding their access to educational opportunities in early childhood, improving the quality of teachers they encounter in school, and exploring such innovations as small schools and charter schools. Approximately 75 percent of Joyce's grants are dedicated to improving federal, state, and district policies so that high-need schools in Chicago, Cleveland, and Milwaukee can attract and retain first-rate teachers. Efforts include research, policy development, model programs, advocacy, and evaluation related to: reform

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of recruiting and hiring systems; reform of teacher evaluation and compensation systems; new teacher support; alternative routes to teaching; and principal quality.

Ms. Sims holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in political science from Stanford University and a B.A. from Harvard University. She served as domestic policy adviser for education and family issues to Senator Bill Bradley in his 2000 presidential campaign and has worked for the Council on Foreign Relations (New York), Cable News Network (Washington, D.C.), and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

John Deasy
CEO, Prince George's County Public Schools



John Deasy is Chief Executive Officer of Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland's second largest school system and the nation's 18th largest district. He leads an organization that offers more than 133,000 children an innovative, technology-infused curriculum that has produced significant academic gains.

The Prince George's County Board of Education unanimously approved his selection as schools chief on March 2, 2006. During his tenure as Superintendent of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District in California, Dr. Deasy led district-wide reforms aimed at a highly focused set of strategies on the improvement of teaching and learning. These successful reforms have resulted in dramatic improvement of student achievement for all categories of students and the closing of the achievement gap. All Title 1 schools are reporting historically high student achievement and resulting in numerous national and state awards. In addition, both in Santa Monica and elsewhere where Dr. Deasy has been a leader, he has led the development of standards-based administrator and teacher evaluation models, pay-for-performance, staff development and leadership training, development of a data-driven system for decision-making and implementation of research-based whole school reform initiatives. Most notably has been the redesign of large high schools into small learning communities. Having begun his work when the district was posting a multi-million dollar operating deficit, Dr. Deasy guided the district to post a multi-million dollar operating surplus, which is just one indicator of the accomplishments achieved through a highly collaborative style of leadership.

Prior to this role, he served as Superintendent of the Coventry Public Schools in Rhode Island for five years. Dr. Deasy also served as a high school principal in two communities, director of personnel, and assistant superintendent of schools. Earlier in his career, he taught biology, chemistry, calculus, and English at the high school level, coached high school sports, and served as an assistant high school principal in New York.

He has and continues to be a faculty member in university doctoral programs in several states. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Biology and Chemistry Education and a Master of Arts in Education Administration from Providence College, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Education from the University of Louisville.

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Dr. Deasy is a Broad Fellow, has been an Annenberg Fellow, State Superintendent of the Year, a presenter at numerous State and National conferences, a consultant to school districts undertaking high school reform and district-wide systemic improvement initiatives, and serves on numerous boards including Operation Public Education at the University of Pennsylvania and The Change Leadership Group at Harvard. He works for many community and national organizations as community service, including the National Diabetes Association and his local parish. He is the author of numerous articles and research papers.

Dr. Deasy is married and has three children. Mrs. Deasy, a nurse practitioner and program manager in a diabetes clinic, is the author of *Prevention and Education of Diabetes in the African-American Community*.

Lauren Dutton

Formerly of City Year, Edison Schools and NewSchools Venture Fund



Lauren's background is in entrepreneurship, strategy development and operations, garnered through nearly 20 years of leadership roles in varied socially entrepreneurial ventures focused on improving education and youth development. She currently consults with various educational nonprofits and foundations and serves on the Board of Trustees for KIPP Bay Area.

For the past six years, Lauren Dutton was 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 founder and Executive Director of Teach For America in Oakland, California, and she began her career as a management consultant with Bain & Company in San Francisco.

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. She is married and has two young boys, and lives in Oakland, CA.

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James Forman, Jr.

Associate Professor of Law, Georgetown University

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



James Forman, Jr. was raised on civil rights, but as an adult he has taken the tradition in new directions. Forman's parents met in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a major force in the civil rights movement in the 1960's. His father, James Forman, Sr., was SNCC's executive secretary; his mother was a civil rights activist and nurse.

So when as a young man Forman entered Yale Law School, it was only natural that he wanted to be a civil rights lawyer. But his trajectory since then illustrates an important lesson about civil rights in the 21st century, and about where as a professor Forman wants to move the struggle.

As a law student, Professor Forman spent both summers working for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. He clerked for Judge William Norris on the Ninth Circuit and Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, however, Forman grew increasingly troubled by the embarrassing records of inadequate legal counsel he saw in countless criminal appeals. Abandoning the more traditional civil rights career he seemed born for, he went to work at a public defender in Washington, D.C.

As a lawyer principally defending kids from the District's high poverty neighborhoods, however, Forman soon began to confront the limits of his role as criminal defense lawyer. He began working with David Domenici, son of U.S. Senator Pete Domenici, on a solution. They asked Forman's clients what they needed, and the answer was "work." So they began an after-school program that offered kids who had had trouble in the criminal justice system a job and tutoring. Soon realizing that an after-care program was not enough, Forman took a leave of absence, and in 1997 he and Domenici launched See Forever, a private tuition-free school, funded by private foundations, and directed, again, toward helping kids in trouble. A year later, See Forever opened the Maya Angelou Public Charter School (named for Forman's godmother).

In 2003, Forman and Domenici received funding to expand to three additional schools in the District over the next seven years. The initial expansion has been a success; in the fall of 2004, Maya Angelou opened a second campus in partnership with the D.C. Public School system. A third campus—a middle school—will open in the fall of 2007. In addition, See Forever plans to soon begin working with the District government to take over the school at Oak Hill, the secure detention facility for incarcerated D.C. youth. See Forever intends to partner with the District to take one of the worst facilities in the country and turn it into a national model of high quality services for incarcerated young people.

Forman's goal as a scholar is to bring the lessons he has learned in criminal justice and at the Maya Angelou School back to law school. At Georgetown, he teaches and writes in the area of Criminal Procedure, Race and Crime, Juvenile Justice and Education Law and Policy. His recent publications include: *Do Charter Schools Threaten Public Education?* (Univ. of Illinois Law Review); *The Rise and Fall of School Vouchers: A Story of Religion, Race and Politics* (UCLA Law Review); *The Secret History of School Choice: How Progressives Got There First* (Georgetown Law Journal); *From Martin Luther King to Bill Cosby:*

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Race and Class in the 21st Century (Villanova Law Review); *Community Policing and Youth as Assets* (Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology); and *Juries and Race in the Nineteenth Century* (Yale Law Journal).

Based on his scholarship and teaching, Forman was recently featured as one of 10 outstanding young scholars by the magazine *Black Issues in Higher Education*.

David Harris
President & CEO, The Mind Trust



David Harris is President and Chief Executive Officer of The Mind Trust, a new education nonprofit focused on fostering education entrepreneurship in Indianapolis. Mr. Harris designed and developed The Mind Trust and in late 2006, working closely with Mayor Peterson, launched the organization. Prior to starting The Mind Trust, Mr. Harris spent five years working in Mayor Peterson's administration building one of the nation's most highly regarded charter school offices. As Indianapolis 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 plan 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.

Previously, Mr. Harris served as an Assistant Deputy Mayor for Planning for Mayor Peterson. 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 National League of Cities Education Policy Advisors Network, the RCA Tennis Championships, and Ivy Tech Community College of Central Indiana.

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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 (TNTP), 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 summers overseeing the professional development of new teachers at summer institutes. She holds a BS in Foreign Service from Georgetown University, where she is also completing a Master's in Leadership at the McDonough School of Business. Ms. Henderson lives in the District and is active in local education organizations.

Hosanna Mahaley Johnson
President, Atlanta Local Education Fund
Former Executive Officer for the Office of New Schools, Chicago Public Schools



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

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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: New Leaders for New Schools; City Year Chicago; Gates High School Redesign; National Association of Charter School Authorizers; Chicago Church of Christ, CEOs Cities; City Club of Chicago, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

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

Kristen Kane
COO, New York City Department of Education

Kristen Kane is Chief Operating Officer of the New York City Department of Education. Previously, she served as Chief of Staff to Chancellor Joel Klein and Chief Executive of the Office of New Schools, which opened 178 new small schools and charters in New York City under her leadership. She is a founding Board Member of the NYC Center for Charter School Excellence.

Before joining the New York City Department of Education in 2002, Kane worked at the New Schools 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.

Dan Katzir
Managing Director, The Broad Foundation



Dan Katzir has worked with numerous school districts, universities, corporations and community organizations to improve leadership in urban K-12 schools. Katzir is the former Executive Director of the UCLA School Management Program, a university-based nonprofit school leadership initiative run jointly by UCLA's School of Education and School of Management. Katzir was the founding Los Angeles Regional Director for Sylvan Learning Systems and was the Chief Operating Officer for Teach For America. Katzir also was a consultant with Bain & Company, an international management consulting firm that assists Fortune

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500 companies with business strategy and operational performance. Katzir received his B.A. from Dartmouth College and M.B.A. from Harvard Business School.

Jeremy Nowak
President, The Reinvestment Fund



Jeremy Nowak is the President of The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), a development financial institution that manages \$400 million in assets. The mission of the Fund is to create economic opportunity and build wealth for low wealth communities and families.

TRF provides financing for housing, small businesses, commercial real estate projects, community facilities, and energy conservation. The Fund has financed more than 15,000 housing units, \$6 million square feet of commercial real estate, 320 businesses, 20,000 charter school seats, and 10,000 child care slots. TRF is also a thought leader in the creative use of data to facilitate investment into distressed urban markets.

Mr. Nowak is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Mastery Charter Schools, a network of four inner city high charter high schools in Philadelphia. He is the Board Chair for Alex's Lemonade Stand, a charity that raises money for pediatric cancer research. He serves on the Mayor's (Philadelphia) Commission for Children and the Governor's (Pennsylvania) Commission on Working Families.

He has served as the Board Chair of Opportunity Finance Network (1990-1994), the trade group for CDFIs and as the Treasurer of First Nations Oweesta Corporation, a national organization that provides development finance resources to Native American reservations (2003-2007). He also served a three year term as a member of the Consumer Advisory Board of The Federal Reserve Bank in Washington DC.

The author of numerous reports and articles on community development and related issues, Mr. Nowak holds an undergraduate degree in philosophy (Penn State University, Phi Beta Kappa, 1973) and a doctorate in cultural anthropology (New School for Social Research, 1986). He was also awarded an honorary doctorate from Villanova University.

His most recent publications examine policy options for America's most distressed cities (co-authored with Edward Hill and published in *The Brookings Review* – summer 2000), provide historical background on the role of religious institutions in community revitalization (collection edited by E.J. Dionne and published by Brookings Press- 2001), and conceptualize urban renewal in the light of environmental sustainability (forthcoming – 2007; University of Pa Press). He has been an editorial board member of *The Economic Development Quarterly*.

Jeremy Nowak is married and is the father of two children.

Tony Recasner
CEO, Middle School Advocates
Head of School, New Orleans Charter Middle School
Head of School, Samuel J. Green Charter School



Tony Recasner is co-founder and leader of New Orleans Charter Middle and S. J. Green Charter Schools. New Orleans Charter Middle School was the first charter school in the city.

Tony is active in a variety of charitable and education organizations. He serves on the Boards of the Louisiana Charter School Association, New Schools for New Orleans, the Institute of Mental Hygiene, Children's Hospital, the Greater New Orleans Foundation, and the Bureau of Governmental Research.

Tony has also served as board chairman of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, and was a founding member of the Louisiana School and District Accountability Commission.

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

Tony is married with one child.

Ref Rodriguez
Founder & Co-CEO, Partnerships to Uplift Communities



Ref Rodriguez is the founder and co-chief executive officer of Partnerships to Uplift Communities (PUC Schools), a charter school management organization serving communities in the Northeast San Fernando Valley and Northeast Los Angeles. Ref's original inspiration for starting a charter school was to offer high quality learning experiences for middle school students residing in Cypress Park, the working class community northeast of downtown Los Angeles where he grew up. Prior to venturing into the charter school movement, Ref worked in the business sector and as a teacher and administrator in parochial schools. He is one of five children of Mexican immigrants. He is the first (but not the last) in his family to graduate from college.

Ref is the Vice Chair of the Board of the California Charter Schools Association and serves on the boards of the Boys and Girls Club of Los Angeles and the Small School Alliance. In 2005, he was appointed, by the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles, as a City Commissioner in the area of rent stabilization.

Ref holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the Fielding Graduate University in Santa Barbara, California. He recently began studies on a second doctoral degree as a student in the inaugural class of the Executive Work-Based Learning Program offered jointly by the Wharton School of Business and Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. His research interests include teacher leadership and charter schools that are closing the achievement gap for Latino students. Ref is a native Angelino.

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Jon Schnur
CEO & 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
Program Director, Education Division, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



James H. Shelton III is the program director of the Education Division at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in which capacity he manages all grants in the eastern United States, new school creation and replications, and college access. Prior to joining the foundation, he was a partner and the East Coast lead for the NewSchools Venture Fund. Earlier, he co-founded LearnNow, a school management company that later merged with Edison Schools. Mr. Shelton also spent over four years as a senior management consultant with McKinsey & Company. He 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.

Elisa Villanueva Beard
COO, 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 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.

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Joanne Weiss
Partner & COO, NewSchools Venture Fund



Joanne Weiss is Partner and Chief Operating Officer at NewSchools Venture Fund, where she oversees the organization's operations, as well as investment strategy and management assistance for many of NewSchools' ventures nationally and on the west coast. As part of this work, she serves on the boards of Aspire Public Schools, Education for Change, Green Dot Public Schools, Leadership Public Schools, New Leaders for New Schools, Revolution Foods, Rocketship Education and Teachscape.

Prior to joining NewSchools Venture Fund, Joanne was CEO of Claria Corporation, an e-services recruiting firm that helped emerging-growth companies build their teams quickly and well.

Before her tenure at Claria, Joanne spent twenty 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, Joanne 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.

In the early 1990s, Joanne was Executive Vice President of Business Operations at Wasatch Education Systems, where she led the product development, customer service, and operations organizations for this K-12 educational technology company. She began her career as Vice President of Education R&D at Wicat Systems, where she was responsible for the development of nearly 100 multimedia curriculum products for K-12 schools.

Joanne has a passion for education, and has spent much of her career pioneering innovative ways of using technology to increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes. She holds a degree in biochemistry from Princeton University.

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