



The Alliance for Excellent Education  
Presents a Webinar on

## ***The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Teachers, Parents, and the Economy***

Tuesday, April 24, 2012  
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. (ET)

### **Speakers Biographies**

#### **Daniel Cardinali**

*President, Communities In Schools*

Dan Cardinali has led Communities In Schools (CIS) since 2004. Under his leadership, the organization has developed and embraced an evidence-based model of integrated student service provision and has launched a national growth strategy to increase CIS's impact on improving public education. Mr. Cardinali's background as a community organizer has helped CIS continue its steady and measured growth, establish its voice in national education policy debates, and launch an organization-wide quality improvement campaign.

Mr. Cardinali is a 2007 Annie E. Casey Children and Families Fellow. He also currently serves as a trustee for America's Promise Alliance, and as chairman of the board of directors of Peace First. He is a board member of the Harwood Institute of Public Innovation and Child Trends. In May 2011, Mr. Cardinali was appointed by President Obama to the Presidential Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

Trained as a community organizer in Guadalajara, Mexico, Mr. Cardinali served on a team organizing a "squatter" community of 120,000 to secure land rights, running water, and public education. He returned to Washington, DC to receive a one-year research fellowship at the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University. At Partners of the Americas, Mr. Cardinali coordinated its leadership training program, the International Fellowship in Community Development.

Before assuming his current position, Mr. Cardinali served as executive vice president of field operations at Communities In Schools. He holds a BS degree in international relations from Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and an MA degree in philosophy from Fordham University.

**Dana Markow, PhD**

*Vice President, Youth and Education Research, Harris Interactive*

Dana Markow has worked for Harris Interactive since 1997. She has considerable experience working on survey research projects for academia, foundations, and corporations. For these different entities, she has conducted studies related to multiple issues surrounding youth and education. With regard to research with children, these studies include children's media use, the impact of work on parenting and family life, and children's school experiences. Dr. Markow has also conducted custom research among other key youth audiences, such as educators and parents. One of the major projects she has worked on for the past twelve years is the annual *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*, which examines different issues on public education and incorporates the perspectives of parents, students, teachers, and other education professionals.

Prior to joining Harris Interactive, Dr. Markow worked as a research consultant with the Children's Television Workshop and Nickelodeon, where she conducted formative research for the guidance of preschool educational television programs. She earned her PhD degree in psychology from Harvard University and graduated magna cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Thomas Richard Smigiel Jr.**

*Assistant Principal, Granby High School (Norfolk, Virginia); 2008 Virginia Teacher of the Year; Finalist, 2008 National Teacher of the Year*

Thomas "Tommy" Smigiel has dedicated his professional career to helping the children of Norfolk, Virginia be successful in school and their personal lives. In 2000, Mr. Smigiel returned to his alma mater, Norview High School, and taught earth science and leadership for eight years. As an earth science teacher, he helped increase pass rates on state tests from 29 percent to 85 percent. For his work, Mr. Smigiel was recognized as Norfolk Public School's Science Teacher of the Year.

In 2005, he developed a program to help at-risk ninth graders stay in school, which was successful in helping to raise the promotion rate. For three years, he taught leadership to teenagers and helped inspire and empower them to become leaders in their schools and communities. He sums up his philosophy of education with a quote from Flip Flippen, "If you have a child's heart, you have his head." In 2007, he was recognized for his efforts by being selected as Norfolk Public School's Teacher of the Year and 2008 Virginia Teacher of the Year. In 2008, Mr. Smigiel was named one of four finalists for National Teacher of the Year. In the same year, he transitioned to administration and is now in his fourth year as an assistant principal at Granby High School.

After his Teacher of the Year experience, Mr. Smigiel decided to take his advocacy for public schools to a different level. In 2010, he ran for Ward 5 of the Norfolk City Council, defeating an eighteen-year incumbent and becoming the youngest member elected since 1907. Part of his platform was bringing much-needed attention to the city's public schools. He also serves as cochair of the Health, Education, and Families subcommittee. Mr. Smigiel earned a BS degree in middle school science and social studies from Old Dominion University and a MEd degree in school administration from Cambridge College.

**Dennis White**

*President and Chief Executive Officer, MetLife Foundation; Vice President, Corporate Contributions and Social Investment Unit, MetLife*

Dennis White is president and chief executive officer of MetLife Foundation (Foundation) and vice president of the corporate contributions and social investment unit of MetLife. He is responsible for managing Foundation and corporate contributions, company volunteer activities, and directing the social and community investment programs of MetLife and the Foundation.

Mr. White joined MetLife in 1990 to manage the Foundation's program-related investments portfolio. From 1999 through 2008, he was part of MetLife's investment department where he managed social and community investments, housing tax credit activities, and other tax-oriented structured transactions. Prior to joining MetLife, Mr. White worked for the Association on American Indian Affairs, Inc., a private nonprofit group working with tribal governments, as an economic development officer, and for PaineWebber, Inc. as a senior financial analyst.

Mr. White is on the board of directors of Living Cities, Inc. He received his BA degree in political science and economics from Rutgers College and his MBA degree in finance from Rutgers Graduate School of Management.

**Bob Wise**

*President, Alliance for Excellent Education*

Bob Wise is president of the Alliance for Excellent Education and former governor of West Virginia. He currently cochairs the Digital Learning Council with Jeb Bush, former governor of Florida, and chairs the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. He is author of the book *Raising the Grade: How High School Reform Can Save Our Youth and Our Nation*.

Gov. Wise joined the Alliance in 2005, where he continues to build its reputation as a respected authority on high school policy by advocating for reform in America's secondary education system and working to ensure that all students graduate from high school prepared for college, careers, and to be contributing members of society. Gov. Wise has become a sought-after speaker and advisor on education issues; he has advised the U.S. Department of Education, White House Transition Team, and frequently testifies before the U.S. Congress. In 2011, Gov. Wise was named to *The NonProfit Times*' "Power & Influence Top 50," an annual listing of the fifty most influential executives in the nonprofit sector.

As governor of West Virginia from 2001 to 2005, he implemented the PROMISE Scholarship program, significantly increasing college attendance. From 1983 to 2001, Gov. Wise served in the U.S. House of Representatives, where he aggressively worked to preserve federal financial aid for students to attend college.

Gov. Wise earned a BA degree from Duke University and a JD degree from Tulane University School of Law. His board and committee services also include the Public Education Network, America's Promise, and the National High School Center.

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