



The Alliance for Excellent Education Presents  
A Webinar on

## Principles for a Comprehensive Assessment System

February 25, 2010 ♦ 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm EST

### Speaker Biographies

#### **Maria Ferguson**

Vice President for Policy, *Alliance for Excellent Education*

Maria Ferguson is vice president for policy at the Alliance for Excellent Education, where she directs the policy-development work. Before joining the Alliance, Ms. Ferguson served as director of the National School Boards Foundation, a nonprofit organization that works in conjunction with the National School Boards Association (NSBA) to strengthen and support school board leadership in states and local communities. In that capacity, Ms. Ferguson directed the foundation's operations and initiatives and led the NSBA's efforts to restructure the foundation's stewardship plan, governance structure, and budget. Before joining NSBA, Ms. Ferguson was a consultant specializing in research, communications, and strategic planning and worked with a wide range of clients including Target Corporation, Brookings Institution, the U.S. Department of Education's Regional Education Laboratories, Sidwell Friends School, and several national foundations.

Before becoming a consultant, Ms. Ferguson was director of field operations for New American Schools, and she served as director of communication and outreach services for the U.S. Education Department's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, supporting the national education agenda of President Clinton and U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley. Ms. Ferguson earned her BFA from New York University in 1986. She has also done MBA course work at the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business.

#### **Joan Herman, PhD**

Director, *National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing, UCLA*

Joan Herman is director of the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at UCLA. Her research has explored the effects of testing on schools and the design of assessment systems to support school planning and instructional improvement. Her recent work has focused on the validity and utility of teachers' formative assessment

practices in science. She also has wide experience as an evaluator of school reform.

Dr. Herman is noted in bridging research and practice. Among her books are *Tracking Your School's Success: A Guide to Sensible School-Based Evaluation* and *A Practical Guide to Alternative Assessment*, both of which have been popular resources for schools across the country. A former teacher and school board member, Dr. Herman also has published extensively in research journals and is a frequent speaker to policy audiences on evaluation and assessment topics. She is past president of the California Educational Research Association; served on the National Academy's Committee on the Design of Science Assessment; has held a variety of leadership positions in the American Educational Research Association, National Organization of Research Centers, and Knowledge Alliance; and is current editor of *Educational Assessment*.

### **Gary Phillips, PhD**

Vice President, *American Institutes for Research*

Gary Phillips is a vice president at American Institutes for Research. He served as the acting commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education from 1999–2002. Prior to that, Dr. Phillips served as the deputy commissioner. Previous responsibilities at NCES included overseeing the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the National Adult Literacy Study (NALS), and the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS). He also served as the architect and executive director of President Clinton's Voluntary National Test (VNT).

Dr. Phillips has published or presented over two hundred papers, taught dozens of advanced graduate-level statistics courses, and presented hundreds of workshops on advanced statistical and psychometric topics. His areas of interest are in structural equation models, hierarchical linear models, item-response theory models and Bayesian inference. He is nationally and internationally known for his expertise in large-scale assessments and complex surveys.

### **Robert Rothman**

Senior Fellow, *Alliance for Excellent Education*

Robert Rothman joined the Alliance for Excellent Education in September 2009 as a senior fellow. Previously, he was a senior editor at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, where he edited the Institute's quarterly magazine, *Voices in Urban Education*. He was also a study director at the National Research Council, where he led a committee on testing and assessment in the federal Title I program, which produced the report *Testing, Teaching and Learning* (edited with Richard F. Elmore) and a committee on teacher testing.

A nationally known education writer and editor, Mr. Rothman has also worked with Achieve and the National Center on Education and the Economy, and was a reporter and editor for *Education Week*. He has written numerous reports and articles on a wide range of education issues, and he is editor of *City Schools* (Harvard Education Press, 2007) and author of *Measuring Up: Standards, Assessments and School Reform* (Jossey-Bass, 1995). He has a degree in political science from Yale University.