



The Alliance for Excellent Education Presents a Briefing on

Linked Learning: Pathways to College and Career Success

Friday, March 5, 2010 ♦ 9:00 am – 11:30 am
Washington Court Hotel, Ballroom 2/3
Washington, DC

Speaker Biographies

Edwin Diaz

Superintendent, Pasadena Unified School District (CA)

Edwin Diaz is superintendent of the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD), serving Altadena, Pasadena, and Sierra Madre. Since March 2007, Mr. Diaz has led organizational improvements, innovative reforms, and strategic partnerships to enhance student achievement in PUSD. During Mr. Diaz's tenure, student achievement has improved, as demonstrated by a 35-point increase in the district's Academic Performance Index.

To accelerate student achievement at the secondary level, Mr. Diaz reconstituted the district's lowest-performing high school, implemented the Excellent Middle Schools reform program, and introduced innovative programs such as the college and career pathways initiative and dropout recovery program. Mr. Diaz's focus on organizational efficiency and effectiveness resulted in a restructuring that reduced costs by more than \$2 million. Through partnerships with external organizations, he has attracted resources to support high-priority initiatives.

Mr. Diaz has more than thirty years of experience in California public schools. While superintendent of the Gilroy Unified School District (GUSD), student performance improved substantially, reversing a three-year trend of declining test scores. He also served as assistant superintendent for human resources at the Oak Grove Elementary School District, executive director of human resources and secondary education for GUSD, principal of Gilroy's Mt. Madonna Continuation High School, a social science teacher, and varsity football coach. Mr. Diaz has won numerous awards and accolades for his work in public education, including the California State University of Los Angeles Distinguished Educator award, the LULAC Educator of the Year award, and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Educator of the Year award.

A native of Gilroy, California, Mr. Diaz was the first in his family to attend college. He earned a bachelor of arts degree in psychology from California State University, Chico and a master of arts degree in education from San Jose State University.

Gary Hoachlander, PhD

President, ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career

Gary Hoachlander is president of ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career. Established in April 2006 by the James Irvine Foundation, ConnectEd is dedicated to advancing practice, policy, and research designed to help prepare young people for college *and* career. ConnectEd's primary mission is supporting the development of Linked Learning: Pathways to College and Career Success. The Linked Learning approach brings together strong academics, demanding technical education, and real world experience in a wide range of fields, such as engineering, arts and media, biomedicine, and health.

Beginning his career in 1966 as a brakeman for the Western Maryland Railroad, Dr. Hoachlander has devoted his professional life to helping young people learn by doing—connecting education to the opportunities, challenges, and many different rewards found through work. Dr. Hoachlander is also chairman of MPR Associates, Inc., an educational research and development organization closely affiliated with ConnectEd. Both organizations are headquartered in Berkeley, California.

Dr. Hoachlander earned a bachelor of arts degree from Princeton University and holds MA and PhD degrees from the department of city and regional planning at the University of California, Berkeley.

Veronica E. Melvin

Executive Director, Alliance for a Better Community

Veronica Melvin serves as executive director of the Alliance for a Better Community (ABC), a coalition of leading organizations and civic leaders promoting equity for Latinos in education, health, economic development, and civic participation throughout the Los Angeles region.

As its first executive director, Ms. Melvin has led the organization in various community based advocacy campaigns that range in topics from seeking greater access to quality preschool, to alleviating extreme overcrowding through the construction of new schools, to ensuring that the district is graduating students prepared for college, career, and life. ABC convenes the Los Angeles Partnership for Multiple Pathways that raises awareness and promotes policies that advance real-world rigorous learning. ABC also assists schools and communities with transforming low-performing schools into centers of excellence where parents and students have a choice in attending one of a variety of career-themed schools.

Ms. Melvin earned a BA degree in political economy from the University of California, Berkeley and a master of public policy degree from the University of California, Los Angeles's school of public affairs.

Lori Meyer

Vice President, Collaborative Communications Group

Lori Meyer is vice president of Collaborative Communication Group's research and policy analysis efforts, with an emphasis on moving research to action in order to drive change. Ms. Meyer brings a deep and broad network to the education community, having worked with a variety of associations and nonprofit organizations. Her experience includes the design and development of research studies, serving as the lead author and public panelist on policy reports, providing professional development to education stakeholders, and strategic advice and consulting to a variety of policymakers and organizational leaders.

As part of the Collaborative team, Ms. Meyer has contributed research, editing, and writing for the award-winning *Leading Learning Communities* publication and the Aspen Institute's Commission on No Child Left Behind. She has worked with the National Academy Foundation to provide extensive research on current investments in education in New Orleans and Los Angeles, and is currently partnering with the

Alliance for Excellent Education to better understand high school reform efforts in California. Previously, Ms. Meyer served as director of research for the Alliance where she focused on research and federal policy in the area of high school reform.

Rick Miller

Deputy Superintendent, P-16 Policy and Information Branch, California Department of Education

Rick Miller works at the California Department of Education as deputy superintendent for the P-16 policy and information branch, which focuses on developing policies and practices to close the state's achievement gaps from Pre-K to higher education. In this position, Mr. Miller develops policy recommendations on promising ways to improve student achievement throughout California. His branch is responsible for identifying best practices and developing strategies to better use data and share solutions, child development, learning support, and the state's longitudinal data system. In addition, Mr. Miller oversees internal and external communications for the California Department of Education.

Prior to joining the California Department of Education, Mr. Miller worked at Microsoft Corporation developing communications strategies on privacy, security, and overall corporate image from 1999 to 2003. From 1997 to 1999, he served as a strategic communications advisor to the chancellor of the California State University (CSU) system. Before working at CSU, Mr. Miller spent five years at the U.S. Department of Education in Washington DC, where he served as press secretary to Richard W. Riley, secretary of education in the Clinton administration.

Patricia Rucker

Legislative Advocate, California Teachers Association

Patricia Rucker is a California Teachers Association (CTA) legislative advocate focused on the areas of teacher credentialing, professional development, language acquisition, career technical education, and federal issues related to elementary and secondary education. Ms. Rucker has also worked for CTA as an instruction and professional development consultant where she served as a resource to CTA staff in the development of chapter training programs and provided advice to leaders and members on problems involving CTA policy, member rights, and organization and communications.

Before working with CTA, Ms. Rucker taught elementary school and high school English in Sacramento, California. She also served as a lecturer at the School of Education at California State University (CSU), Sacramento and at the University of California, Davis's School of Medicine SASP project. Other key roles Ms. Rucker has played in education reform include serving as a member of the State Superintendent's P-16 Council and the Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) program advisory committee at the California Postsecondary Education Commission, a coconvener for the Coalition for Multiple Pathways policy workgroup; and board member for the Center for Polytechnical Education.

Alma Salazar

Vice President, Education and Workforce Development, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

Alma Salazar is vice president of education and workforce development for the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce where she oversees and directs the Chamber's educational and workforce development programs and initiatives, including LA Cash For College, LA Youth at Work, and Principal For a Day. Ms. Salazar is also responsible for helping to direct higher education and workforce development policy.

Since 2000, Ms. Salazar has worked to build business and educational partnerships to improve academic achievement and life-long learning for Los Angeles area students. She advises and supports local high schools in the integration of education reform initiatives and high school redesign efforts. Serving as an

intermediary, Ms. Salazar looks to create and support effective collaboration among local educational agencies and the workforce development system to influence policies that strengthen ongoing connections among P–16, community colleges, four-year universities, and businesses and industries.

Ms. Salazar graduated from California State University, Long Beach with a bachelor's degree in speech communication and a master's degree in public policy and administration.

Anne Stanton

Program Director, James Irvine Foundation

Anne Stanton was appointed program director in November 2003, with principal responsibility for the Foundation's youth program. Prior to joining the Foundation, Ms. Stanton served as executive director of Larkin Street Youth Services in San Francisco from 1994 to 2003. During her tenure, she led the organization's growth from a \$3.5 million budget with fifty employees to an \$8.7 million budget with a staff of 115, operating eighteen programs from ten sites which together serve three thousand homeless and runaway youths each year.

Before joining Larkin Street, Ms. Stanton served as associate executive director of Covenant House in New York City. She serves on the board of directors of the Association for Corporate Growth/San Francisco and the local board of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. In 2005, Ms. Stanton was appointed by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell to the newly established Superintendent's California P–16 Council, which works to add rigor and relevance to California's schools, and to better prepare students for careers or college.

Ms. Stanton holds BFA and MSW degrees, both from New York University. She is a graduate of Harvard Business School's Strategic Perspectives in Non-Profit Management and the Center for Social Innovation at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business.

Bob Wise

President, Alliance for Excellent Education

Bob Wise is president of the Alliance for Excellent Education and former governor of West Virginia. He is author of the book *Raising the Grade: How High School Reform Can Save Our Youth and Our Nation* and chair of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Since joining the Alliance in February 2005, Governor 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.

As governor of West Virginia from 2001 to 2005, he fought for and signed legislation to fund the PROMISE Scholarship program and created the Governor's Helpline for Safer Schools. During his administration, West Virginia saw a significant increase in the number of students completing high school and entering college. From 1983 to 2001, Governor Wise served in the U.S. House of Representatives representing the 2nd district of West Virginia, where he aggressively worked to preserve federal financial aid for students to attend college.

Governor Wise serves on the board of directors of the Public Education Network and C-Change. He is an advisory committee member for several organizations including, the Springboard Project, Campaign for Educational Equity, Editorial Projects in Education, the National High School Center, the Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools, and the Moffitt Cancer Center. Governor Wise earned a BA degree from Duke University and a JD degree from Tulane University School of Law.