

Governor’s Birth to Third Grade Symposium

SPEAKER & PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

Pat Chamberlain

Pat Chamberlain is currently working as a consultant with school districts and agencies on issues related to optimizing the educational opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse children and their families. She received her B.S. from University of Illinois-Champaign in Spanish and a M. S. in Bilingual Education from Northern Illinois University. She teaches graduate courses in Bilingual Special Education at the University of Illinois-Chicago and in Bilingual/ESL Early Childhood at the Erikson Institute in Chicago. She has worked in a variety of capacities since 1975 including as a bilingual teacher, a professional development specialist, a bilingual special education supervisor, and a director of Early Learners programs. She has recently been working with World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) in the development of the new Early Learning Standards. She also has served on various state level policy advisory groups.

Amy Jo Clemens

Amy Jo Clemens joined the Illinois State Board of Education as the Assistant Superintendent of Innovation and Improvement in August 2013. As a longtime high school science teacher, principal and most recently, regional superintendent, Amy Jo Clemens brings 25 years of experience to her role in the K-12 education agency.

As chief of the State Board’s Center for Innovation and Improvement, Ms. Clemens will oversee the agency’s work with Illinois’ lowest-performing schools, the Statewide System of Support and federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title Programs that support students from low-income families and those with special learning challenges. Assistant Superintendent Clemens will serve as one of the Board’s primary liaisons with the newly-established Center for School Improvement. She also oversees statewide programs and collaborative initiatives to support college and career readiness.

Terra Ellingson

Terra Ellingson serves as a school-based professional development facilitator for the New Schools Project at the Erikson Institute. Ms. Ellingson has extensive experience as a PreK, kindergarten, and primary teacher in both New York City and Chicago. More recently, she has served as a K-3 reading coordinator and senior advisor to the Office of Literacy at Chicago Public Schools, as well as a coordinator of teacher professional development and principal networks for University of Illinois-Chicago partner schools.

Jane Fleming

Professor Fleming joined the Erikson Institute’s faculty in 2008. She came to Erikson from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). Dr. Fleming has worked to “urbanize” traditional teacher education courses to help new teachers develop deeper understandings of the role of language, culture, and community in teaching and to address the academic and social development of a wide range of learners.

She also conducts research on the impact of culturally relevant children’s literature on reading development. She has recently completed a review of high-quality picture books with city settings and positive images of urban culture that may be especially useful for fostering the early reading skills of children in urban public school classrooms. Dr. Fleming has taught at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Northwestern University, and DePaul University as well as at UIC. She is also a former middle school teacher and elementary reading specialist.

Eric Gershenson

Mr. Gershenson's chief professional endeavors have been as an attorney, practicing for more than thirty years with a primary focus on employment, housing and consumer protection matters. He has been actively engaged on significant issues in public education for more than thirty years. He served on the Board of Oak Park Elementary School District for eight years (1990-1998) and was its President for three years. In that capacity, he participated in strategic planning and other processes to establish educational policy and priorities for this economically and racially diverse district of more than 5500 students.

He served as a principal organizer and the first Chair of the Collaboration for Early Childhood. This is a public/private partnership which is building an integrated, high quality system of early childhood services and supports for the families of Oak Park and River Forest capable of preparing every child to enter kindergarten healthy, safe, and ready to succeed and eager to learn.

Theresa Hawley

Dr. Theresa Hawley is the Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD). With over 20 years experience in early childhood, she is an expert in developing programs and systems that support the school readiness and social competence of young children in poverty. Before joining the Governor's Office, Theresa was the founding Project Director of Educare of West DuPage and a consultant to early learning programs and community collaborations across Illinois. She received her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Notre Dame and her Doctorate in Developmental Psychology from the University of Michigan.

Reyna Hernandez

Reyna Hernandez is the Assistant Superintendent of the Center for Language and Early Child Development at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Reyna joined ISBE in 2011 after working at the Latino Policy Forum in Chicago where she researched early childhood and immigration public policy. During her time at the Forum, she helped inform the development of the state's policy to serve English language learners in preschool. In 2011, she also served as an adjunct professor at DePaul University's College of Education in the Bilingual Bicultural Education Master's Degree Program.

Hernandez's prior experience serving youth and families includes working as a Community Education Parent Facilitator in Waukegan School District 60's Parent Information and Support Center, where she helped bridge resources and communication between families, schools, the municipality, and partner organizations. Hernandez graduated *cum laude* with a Bachelor of Arts in Government from Harvard University and holds a J.D. from New York Law School.

Lisa Hood

Dr. Lisa Hood is a Senior Policy Analyst and Researcher in the Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University. Currently, she is the project director for the Leadership to Integrate the Learning Continuum (LINC) Project. Currently, staff with the LINC Project are conducting a study of the Danielson Framework for Teaching in PreK-3rd grade classrooms. Project staff are also working with faculty and their partners in principal preparation programs to integrate content and field experiences in early childhood education, special education, and English Learners in redesigned preparation programs as well as to build program evaluation capacity for conducting continuous improvement processes.

Dr. Hood brings research and program evaluation experience at all levels of the P-20 education system working under both state and U.S. Department of Education funded grants. Dr. Hood received her B. A. in Psychology and Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Julie Kallenbach

Julie Kallenbach has 34 years of experience in the field of early childhood as a teacher, diagnostician, and administrator. Her current position is Director of Early Learning Initiatives in Elgin School District U-46, a large urban, culturally and linguistically diverse school district of 40,000 students. She completed her Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction at Northern Illinois University where she focused on research on the literacy environments in child-care settings.

Debra Kasperski

Debra Kasperski is the Director of the National Board Resource Center (NBRC) at Illinois State University where she manages the Illinois Support System for National Board Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). She developed the online support systems for NBPTS candidates, for training and assessing NB mentors, and for NBCT leaders and administrators using *Take One!* as a professional development tool.

Ms. Kasperski graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a BS in Special Education-Behavioral Disorders, Learning Disabilities, Social Emotional Disorders and Educable Mentally Handicapped and received her MS in Curriculum and Instruction. Debra achieved National Board Certification in Early Childhood & Young Adulthood/Exceptional Needs in 2000 and renewed it in 2009. Debra is a member of the Illinois P-20 Council which serves as an advisory team to the Governor of Illinois and the P-20 subcommittee - Teacher and Leader Effectiveness.

Kristie Kauertz

Dr. Kristie Kauertz, Doctor of Education, is a graduate of Colorado College, American University, and Teachers College at Columbia University. She is a Research Assistant Professor of P-3 Policy and Leadership at the University of Washington (UW) and leads the soon to be announced National P-3 Center at UW. She specializes in education reform efforts that address the continuum of learning from birth through 3rd grade.

Kristie's expertise is based on her work with more than 40 states and dozens of school districts around the country. Kauertz was also a lead author on the *Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches*, a tool to guide school, district, and community alignment efforts. She co-authored the original Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks and a book on improving the early care and education teaching workforce. She is co-editor of *Early Childhood Systems: Transforming Early Learning*, published March 2012.

Staci Mandros

Staci Mandros has worked for McLean County Unit District No. 5 since 2006. She is a former special education teacher, and currently the district's summer school director and Child-Parent Center (CPC) coordinator. As coordinator, Ms. Mandros provides professional development for staff, facilitates parent workshops, assists families by connecting them with community resources, and works to increase parent involvement in their children's education.

This fall, Staci will join Parkside Elementary School as their building principal.

Christine "Chris" Maxwell

Christine Maxwell directs the New Schools Project at the Erikson Institute. In this capacity, she provides leadership for partnering with Chicago public schools to advance the quality of PreK–3rd grade education. For the 15 years prior to joining Erikson in 2009, Dr. Maxwell co-developed and served as a curriculum coordinator and principal of an innovative non-graded public school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for children ages three through 14.

She was previously a professor of teacher education at Winthrop University in South Carolina and the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee where she also co-directed the Milwaukee Early Schooling Initiative.

Susie Morrison

Susie Morrison has served as the Deputy Superintendent in Illinois since 2007 and serves as a senior ISBE executive and chief advisor to the Illinois State Superintendent. She had been an educator in Illinois for more than 30 years and has experience as a junior and senior high school teacher, K-12 administrator and the Illinois Director for AdvancED at the University of Illinois.

She has held many leadership positions during her career at the Illinois State Board of Education including Division Administrator for School Improvement, Division Administrator for Middle and Secondary Education, Director of the Illinois Administrators Academy, Director of Gifted Education, Title I and State Director for Education-to-Careers. In her current role, Morrison provides leadership and coordination to the State's education reform agenda and represents the State Superintendent on numerous state and federal committees and with many stakeholder groups.

Gail Nelson

Gail Nelson serves as the Quality Ratings and Improvement System (QRIS) Policy Director for the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD). OECD manages Illinois' federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant, and as QRIS Policy Director, Nelson provides strategic direction to the development and implementation of the new cross-system quality rating and improvement system, ExceleRate Illinois. Before joining OECD, Gail served as Executive Director of the Carole Robertson Center for Learning, a community-based child and family development agency on Chicago's west side. She received her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and her Master's Degree from the University of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration.

Mary O'Brian

Dr. O'Brian has served as administrator for sponsored programs at Illinois State University's Center for the Advancement and Support of Educational Initiatives. Her responsibilities included collaborating with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) on statewide initiatives relating to the implementation of Response to Intervention and the New Illinois Learning Standards. For nearly two decades, Dr. O'Brian has served as an instructor at the Illinois State University, specializing in special education assessment and administration.

At the public school level, she served as director of special services for Peoria Public Schools District 150, coordinating numerous special education services, and supervised staff, including school psychologists, school social workers, and a variety of specialists. She also served as a program supervisor and technical assistant for the Livingston County Special Services Unit, where she was involved in student assessment, services, and program evaluations. Dr. O'Brian has a Doctorate in special education, a Master's degree in school psychology, and a Bachelor's degree in special education from Illinois State University.

Amy Perona

Amy's path to education started nearly sixteen years ago in Early Intervention/Birth-to-Three working with families and children with disabilities. Today after having taught in the Early Childhood, K-8, 9-12 and post-secondary classroom Amy has landed at Illinois State University working as Policy Analyst and Research Assistant for the Center for the Study of Educational Policy. A 2005 graduate of the University of Illinois with a Master's of Science degree in Secondary and Continuing Education, Amy successfully completed a quantitative thesis entitled "Task Performance of Mild to Moderately Mentally Retarded High School Students Using a Least-To-Most Restrictive Prompt System." Her work at the University of Illinois led to her decision to attend DePaul University, College of Education and enroll in the Educational Leadership doctoral program. In 2009 Amy completed the course requirements and received her Type 75 Administrative certificate. Today Amy is preparing for the defense of her dissertation titled "The Lived Experience of High School Students Labeled as Learning Disabled: A qualitative inquiry into identity, self-concept, self-advocacy, and hope."

Vicki Phillips

Vicki Phillips has been working for the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) since January 2011, and has been intimately involved in ISBE's efforts around educator preparation redesign for Early Childhood, Elementary, and Middle Grades Education as well as Principal, Superintendent, and Teacher Leader Preparation. She is leading work with stakeholders to craft redesign recommendations for the Special Education Teachers and Directors of Special Education endorsement. She has also been on the front lines of the laudable efforts ISBE has made towards improving educator evaluation systems which include student growth for all teachers, principals and assistant principals. Vicki has multiple years of experience as a certified teacher, school counselor and an administrator including a high school principal in West Central Illinois.

John Price

John Price is a career educator who received his undergraduate degree from Stanford University, and his Master's degree in Educational Leadership from University of Illinois at Chicago. John began working for Chicago Public Schools in 2001, teaching third grade at Bret Harte Elementary School in Hyde Park. From Hyde Park, John went to the Back of the Yards neighborhood, serving at Chavéz Multicultural Academic Center as an Intern Principal. In 2006, John was selected as Principal at Audubon Elementary School in Roscoe Village. During his first five years at Audubon, John focused on creating and sustaining an inclusive school community for students with significant disabilities.

John was honored to serve on Mayor-Elect Rahm Emanuel's Education Transition Committee. In November 2011, John moved into district leadership, serving as a Deputy Chief and Chief of Schools. As Chief, John served the elementary schools in Bronzeville, Hyde Park, and Woodlawn. During his time there the network focused on improving early childhood literacy and saw dramatic growth for students. He currently serves as Chief of Schools for Network 4, serving 30,000 students in the Logan Square and Lincoln Park neighborhoods.

Jodi Scott

Jodi Scott is Regional Superintendent of Schools for Henderson, Mercer and Warren Counties. She is a member of the Illinois Early Learning Council and has worked in the field of early childhood for the past 20 years. Jodi serves in many leadership roles in early childhood education and her Regional Office of Education (ROE) houses the area Preschool for All programs, as well as, the area's Prevention Initiative program.

Sarah Silverman

Sarah Silverman is the Program Director for Teacher and Leader Effectiveness in the Education Division of the National Governor's Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices. Dr. Silverman serves as an advisor to senior state officials on issues of educator performance management, charter school policy, and early childhood care and education. She leads the Education Division's work on teacher and leader effectiveness, which includes teacher and principal performance management, personnel systems, and connections between early childhood and K-12 education.

Prior to joining NGA, Dr. Silverman was a Project Director at TNTP, where she advised states and local education authorities (LEAs) on teacher evaluation policy reform. Prior to her tenure at TNTP, she served as the Director of Evaluation & Assessment and Chief Information Officer for a charter management organization. She has also contributed to development of the Ohio Improvement Process for school turnaround and other statewide policy initiatives in Ohio. Dr. Silverman has a Master's degree in educational psychology and a Doctorate in educational policy and leadership from The Ohio State University.

Jose Torres

Dr. Torres was named Superintendent of School District U-46 in 2008. In partnership with the Board of Education and U-46 staff, Dr. Torres developed *Destination 2015*, the district's five-year accountability plan that includes benchmarks and targets to help U-46's more than 40,000 students achieve academic success. Additionally, Dr. Torres currently serves as the Chair of the Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce, which represents more than 700 businesses in the Elgin area.

Jose Torres was named a recipient of the 2014 Dr. Effie H. Jones Humanitarian Award by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the School Superintendent's Association, and was one of three educators from across the nation to receive the award. Prior to joining U-46, Dr. Torres served as a Regional Superintendent in the Chicago Public Schools. Before coming to Illinois, he had served in school districts in California, Maryland, Washington, D.C. and at U.S. Department of Defense schools. Dr. Torres holds a Bachelor of General Studies, a Master of Education and a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration from the University of Maryland.

Wilma Valero

For the past seven years Wilma Valero has been the English Language Learners (ELs) Director of School District U-46, the second largest bilingual program in Illinois. She leads a department that supports over 426 EL teachers who serves over 8,660 students. A more recent achievement has been the largest implementation of a Dual Language Program in the nation. As a result of this work, in 2012, the district was nationally recognized by the California Association of Bilingual Education (CABE) with the Promoting Bilingualism Award District of Distinction. Wilma has worked in District U-46 for the last 24 years. During this time she has worked as a bilingual teacher, reading specialist, reading interventionist, and administrator for the EL program.

Wilma attended the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, a Master's in Elementary Education and a Master's in School Administration and Supervision. She also has received an endorsement in ESL and in Bilingual Education.

Kathy Villano

Kathy Villano is the Project Director for the Early Childhood Developmental Enrichment Center (ECDEC) Preschool for All and FIND Prevention Initiative programs in northwest Cook County. Under Kathy's leadership, ECDEC piloted the original Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS) and piloted the revised IELDS. She was on the working committee for each of the revisions of the play-based Assessment in a Natural Context: Miniwheel of Developmental Milestones, the original Illinois Early Learning Standards, the Prevention Initiative Implementation Manual development workgroup and, through her role on the Early Learning Council, the Early Learning Challenge Grant.

Villano has been part of the ISBE New Program Mentor initiative, the Illinois Early Learning Council Executive Committee and co-chair of the Public Awareness Committee, the Illinois Birth-Five Evaluation Advisory Committee, the ISBE Prevention Initiative Special Projects Advisory Committee, and the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE) Advisory Committee. She is also an I-TEACHe Train the Trainer and has presented at local, state and national conferences, in addition to mentoring other agencies in grant writing.

Mallory Warner-Richter

Mallory Warner-Richter, Research Fellow at the Human Capital Research Collaborative (HCRC), is currently the Project Manager for the Midwest Child-Parent Center Expansion project at HCRC. She has a Master's degree in Public Policy from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at University of Minnesota, and a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Concordia College. Prior to joining the HCRC staff, Mallory served as program manager for the Pearson Teacher Fellowship and Evaluation and Research Coordinator at Jumpstart for Young Children, a Boston-based early literacy

intervention for low-income preschool children. During her graduate studies, Mallory consulted for the Minnesota Department of Education's annual study of school readiness, and worked as a research assistant for the Chicago Longitudinal Study. She has also consulted as a data analyst and copy editor with Minneapolis-based Search Institute on their recent publication, *A Fragile Foundation, 2nd edition*.

Mary Ellen Wodzisz

Mary Ellen Wodzisz is the Project Manager for WestEd's Illinois Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS). Prior to joining WestEd in 2013, Mary Ellen taught kindergarten through fourth grade for 15 years. She also served as a professional trainer who designed, developed and delivered professional development for teachers and administrators.

Mary Ellen earned her Bachelor of the Arts in Elementary Education at Concordia University in River Forest and her Master of the Arts in Teaching and Leadership at St. Xavier University, Chicago

Cindy Zumwalt

Cindy Zumwalt is the Division Administrator for Early Childhood Education at the Illinois State Board of Education. She oversees high quality early childhood education programs for families and children birth through age five to ensure all children enter school ready to learn. She is also overseeing the development and implementation of the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) with the goals of supporting the alignment of early childhood and elementary school systems, identifying gaps in school readiness, and providing information to drive more effective classroom instruction. She has a long career in early care and education at the state level including over 22 years with the Illinois State Board of Education.