



National Education Policy Institute (NEPI)

“WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN THE FACTS ARE NOT ENOUGH?”

SPEAKERS & DISCUSSANTS

Arlene C. Ackerman

Dr. Arlene C. Ackerman, CEO, and Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia since June 2008, began her lifelong career in urban education as a teacher in St. Louis, Missouri. Her years of experience as a classroom teacher, a middle school principal and a central office administrator have made her a fearless champion of children’s rights and a national expert on how to close the achievement gap, fill the opportunity gaps and improve urban schools for ALL students. Serving close to 40 years in education, Dr. Ackerman has developed expertise that reflects an extraordinary breadth of knowledge and a wide range of professional experiences—most notably, as an urban superintendent in three major American cities, namely Washington D.C., San Francisco and now Philadelphia. Formerly at Teachers College, Columbia University, she held the Christian A. Johnson Endowed Chair in Outstanding Educational Practice. Before her Columbia appointment, Dr. Ackerman was superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District for five years and CEO/Superintendent of Schools and Chief Academic Officer for the District of Columbia. Arlene Ackerman holds a Doctorate and Master’s degree from Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education, a Master’s degree in Education Administration and Policy from Washington University, and a Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from Harris Stowe State College. Superintendent Ackerman has received numerous honors and awards, and held a series of high-profile seats as a national leader of education reform efforts. In October 2010, the Council of Great City Schools honored her with the Richard R. Green Award which is the nation’s highest individual award in urban education. Most recently, the American Association of School Administrators presented Arlene Ackerman with the Dr. Effie H Jones Humanitarian Award at the Association’s annual conference in February 2011.

Sam Chaltain

Sam Chaltain is a DC-based educator and organizational change consultant. He works with schools, school districts, and public and private sector companies to help them create healthy, high-functioning learning environments.

Previously, Sam was the National Director of the Forum for Education & Democracy, an education advocacy organization, and the founding director of the Five Freedoms Project, a national program that helps K-12 educators create more democratic learning communities. Sam spent five years at the First Amendment Center as the co-director of the First Amendment Schools program. He came to the Center from the public school system of New York City, where he taught high school English and History. Sam also spent four years teaching the same subjects at a private school in Brooklyn.

Sam’s first teaching experience was in Beijing, China, where he joined the faculty of the Foreign Languages department at Beijing Normal University as a visiting lecturer. He taught two American History & Literature courses to third-year undergraduates.

Sam's writings about his work have appeared in both magazines and newspapers, including the Washington Post, Education Week and USA Today. A periodic contributor to CNN and MSNBC, Sam is also the author or co-author of several books, including *We Must Not Be Afraid to be Free: Stories Of Free Expression in America* (Oxford, 2011), and *Faces of Learning: 50 Powerful Stories of Defining Moments in Education* (Jossey-Bass, 2011).

Eric Cooper

Eric Cooper is the President and founder of the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education (NUA). He served in a similar position as Executive Director for the NUA at Columbia University's Teachers College and as Adjunct Associate Professor. Prior to this position, he was the Vice President for In-service Training & Telecommunications for the Pearson Education Group. He has worked in the capacities of Associate Director of Program Development for the College Board, Administrative Assistant in the Office of Curriculum for the Boston Public Schools, and Director of a treatment center for "emotionally disturbed" students. In addition he has worked as a teacher, counselor, and served a year as a Washington Fellow. He has produced documentaries for PBS, The Learning Channel, ASCD, and The College Board.

He is an author for numerous publications in support of social equity and basic justice. He is a frequent op-ed and letter contributor to "The Stamford Advocate," "Greenwich Times," "Education Week," "USA Today," "Newsday," "Birmingham News," "Times-Union," "Los Angeles Times," "New York Times," and "The Chronicle of Higher Education." Stories and positive editorials about the work of his organization have appeared in: "Fort Wayne Journal Gazette," "The News - Sentinel," "Indianapolis Star," "Education Week," "Times-Union," "Hamden Journal," "Poughkeepsie Journal," "Providence Journal," "Reading Today," "Birmingham News," and "Chicago Sun Times." He has been interviewed for NBC, CBS and ABC affiliates, as well as featured on CNN, NPR, the BBC and local radio stations, and has met with the editorial boards of the "Stamford Advocate," "Connecticut Post," "Times-Union," and "Birmingham News."

Among numerous awards he has received is the 2008 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. award from the Israeli Consulate of New York City, the Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien. He has been honored by the Committee on Education and Labor in the House of Representatives, the Big Picture Company, and the National Council on Educating Black Children.

Carol Brunson Day

Dr. Carol Brunson Day is currently the President of the National Black Child Development Institute after serving as the CEO and President of the Council for Professional Recognition from 1985 until 2004. The Council is a Washington, D.C.-based association that serves as the home of the Child Development Associate National Credentialing Program as well as the National Head Start Fellowship Program. Dr. Day was also the liaison for the international exchange between the schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy and the early childhood community in the United States. In addition to her impressive scholarly contributions to the field, Dr. Day is recognized as a leader in the field of early childhood education.

Dr. Day sits on numerous national boards and has spoken at conferences and programs across the United States and internationally. She has authored over 25 publications on subjects such as professional development, diversity and multicultural education, and cultural influences on development, with a long history of interest and expertise on African American culture and heritage.

Denise Forte

Denise Forte is a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development at the U.S. Department of Education. In this role, Ms. Forte is responsible for providing advice to the Assistant Secretary and the Secretary on policy and program issues including the budget, higher education, k-12, disability issues and bridge programs that connect students in secondary school to post-secondary and career opportunities. Prior to this position, Denise spent 11 years on the Committee on Education and the Workforce as a senior policy advisor to the Chairman and as Director of Education Policy, managing the education team. Denise started her policy career in the office of the Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott, from Virginia. Ms. Forte received her M.A. in Women’s Studies with a concentration in Public Policy from the George Washington University and her Bachelors in Computer Science from Duke University.

Keith Greer

Keith Greer, Senior Partner with the firm The Greer Group, LLC., is a former principal of Maricopa County Regional School District, Coolidge, and Casa Grande Union High School. He is recognized as an award-winning administrator noted for his innovative approach to school improvement.

Mr. Greer spent the last 6 years as principal of Casa Grande-one of the largest rural high schools in Arizona with a student population of over 3400. During his tenure, the school achieved increased graduation rates, improved standardized test scores, an 80% reduction in incidences of fighting, a 70% reduction in suspensions and a reduced drop- out rate of 13% from a previous high of 45%. Casa Grande Union High School also has been recognized and awarded for its numerous school improvement achievements. Keith also serves as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Phoenix and Mesa Community College.

Joe A. Hairston

Dr. Joe A. Hairston has served since 2000 as Superintendent of Baltimore County Public Schools, the 26th largest school system in the nation. His results-based leadership has yielded rising student academic achievement throughout his tenure. Many of the strategies Dr. Hairston employs in Baltimore County – including development of a “blueprint” for school system progress, effective use of technology to support student achievement, and key partnerships with the College Board and AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) to promote college attendance – evolved over the course of his noteworthy career. In 2007, the Horace Mann League of the USA elected Dr. Hairston to its 12-member Board of Directors, and in 2011, his fellow Board members elected him Vice President. The League is comprised of 1,000 renowned educators who share the belief that public schools are the cornerstone of democracy. Recognized by presidents and the national media, Dr. Hairston has been awarded dozens of honors, including The *Washington Post*’s Distinguished Educational Leadership Award, the Maryland State Department of Education Vanguard Award, and the 2006 Virginia Tech Graduate Alumni Achievement Award. Dr. Hairston has been recognized as Superintendent of the Year by The Fullwood Foundation and has been profiled in *District Administration*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Scholastic Administrator* magazines. Dr. Hairston earned a doctorate in education administration from Virginia Tech, a master's degree from American University, and bachelor's degree from Maryland State University.

Bruce Hunter

Bruce Hunter directs the legislative efforts of the American Association of School Administrators in Congress and the U.S. Department of Education.

Hunter came to AASA in 1982 as a Legislative Specialist. He has focused on increasing the impact of school administrators on federal legislation through greater involvement in the legislative process.

Hunter began his career in education as a junior high social studies and English teacher in Shoshoni, Wyoming. He also trained head start teachers in west Texas, taught sociology at Eastern New Mexico University and was a policy analyst and grant administrator for the Education Commission of the States in Denver, CO.

Andrew Hysell

Andrew Hysell, Project Director for the Campaign for Healthy Kids, serves as the Associate Vice President for Policy and Advocacy for Save the Children's U.S. Programs. Andrew joined Save the Children in 2006 as the Director of Policy and Advocacy. He serves as the lead for policy change on issues impacting children in rural America. Under his leadership, the Policy and Advocacy team manages federal and state government affairs for Save the Children's U.S. Programs. Previously, at the Connecticut General Assembly, Andrew served as Legislative Counsel to the Connecticut Senate Democrats, focusing on state constitutional and administrative law. He honed his advocacy skills as Regional Advocacy Director for the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, serving on the front lines of the tobacco fight at the state level, assisting several legislative wins, including the passage of the nation's strongest smoke-free air laws in Delaware, Connecticut, and New York. He worked for Congressman Tom Allen (ME-1) in his efforts to advance campaign finance reform during the 105th Congress and Andrew also has experience working on numerous issue and candidate campaigns. An attorney of law, Hysell is a founding member of the Connecticut American Constitution Society and also an elected local Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for his north Capitol Hill neighborhood in Washington, DC.

Susan Nogan

Susan Nogan, Esq, is a Senior Policy Analyst in the National Education Association's Office of Education Policy and Practice, where she analyzes national and state initiatives that would have a negative impact on public education or the rights of members. These include vouchers, tuition tax credits, tax caps, so-called "paycheck protection," fast-track teacher certification (ABCTE) and requirements that districts devote an arbitrary proportion of their budgets to certain prescribed costs (65 percent "solution"). She also provides opposition research on the foundations, advocacy organizations and other entities that promote these initiatives, and evaluates the materials produced by their think tanks.

Prior to joining NEA in 2003, Ms. Nogan served as a federal lobbyist with National PTA, where she chaired a national coalition of education, labor, civil rights and civil liberties, religious and other advocacy organizations that oppose vouchers and tuition tax credits.

Before becoming an advocate for education, Ms. Nogan practiced law in New York City. She earned her law degree and Master's degree in history at New York University, and her undergraduate degree at Duke University.

Ellin J. Nolan

President of Washington Partners, LLC, Ms. Nolan brings the experience of a classroom teacher, a local school district administrator, an elected school board member, a college instructor, five years as a senior staff member of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, and a total of twelve years' activity in legislative advocacy. Her service on Capitol Hill began as a Legislative Assistant to Senator Robert Stafford (R-Vermont). Among her duties was serving as liaison to national education associations. She rose to become the Minority Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources in the U.S. Senate. Ms. Nolan was an active participant in the 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act as well as the regulatory process that helped implement the revised law. Similarly, she worked with numerous organizations seeking continued authorization and funding through the recently enacted No Child Left Behind Act. She has particular expertise in the area of teacher professional development and worked closely with the Congress on the revision and reauthorization of many programs that support pre-service and in-service education for teachers. Ms. Nolan received a B.S. from the University of Michigan in 1969 and a M.S. from George Washington University in 1973.

Betty A. Rosa

Dr. Rosa was elected to a five-year term in April of 2008 as the Regent for the Twelfth Judicial District (Bronx County). Born in New York City but raised for the first ten years of her life in Puerto Rico, Dr. Rosa returned to New York City and attended public elementary and junior high schools in the Bronx before graduating from St. Helena's High School. She received a B.A. in psychology from the City College of New York, holds two Master of Science in Education degrees, one in Administration and Supervision and the other in Bilingual Education, from the City University of New York, and received an Ed.M. and Ed.D. in Administration, Planning and Social Policy through the Urban Superintendents Program at Harvard University. Dr. Rosa worked as a bilingual teacher and reading coordinator in the New York City school system and also served as an assistant principal and principal in special education before becoming principal of I.S. 218, a full-service community school in partnership with the Children's Aid Society. Dr. Rosa was appointed to the position of Superintendent of Community School District 8 in the Bronx. District 8 consisted of approximately 25,000 students and 30 schools encompassing neighborhoods of the South Bronx including Soundview and Hunts Point and the northeast section of the Bronx known as Throgs Neck. One of the schools Dr. Rosa founded, M.S. 101 (Maritime Academy for Science and Technology), became the number one middle school in the City of New York based on New York State examination results. Dr. Rosa also served as the Senior Superintendent of the Bronx and is currently the President of B.D.J. & J. Associated LLC. She was elected for a four-year term to the Alumni Council of Harvard's Graduate School of Education and was appointed to a three-year term to the Principal/Site Administrator Advisory Committee of the American Association of School Administrators. Dr. Rosa also served as a consulting member of the Educational Research Development Institute.

Marty Strange

Marty Strange is Policy Director for the Rural School and Community Trust, a non-profit organization whose mission is to help rural schools and communities grow better together. He has served in that capacity since 1997. He was founder of the Center for Rural Affairs in Nebraska and served as its program director for 23 years. His book, *Family Farming: A New Economic Vision*, is in its second edition as one of the leading critiques of industrial agriculture. He holds a Master's Degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Missouri, and was honored by the Rural Sociological Society's award for Distinguished Service to Rural Life and Common Cause's Public Service Achievement Award.

Carrol A. Thomas

Dr. Carrol A. Thomas is a highly sought-after educational leader who is renowned for his work in inspiring those in communities and government to achieve the best for those who depend on public education. He excites youth to learn, teachers to teach, staff persons to support and administrators to lead. Thomas is charismatic, intelligent and committed to the educational development of children. Thomas has served as superintendent of schools for the Beaumont Independent School District since 1996.

Thomas came to Beaumont from North Forest Independent School District in Houston, Texas, where his work earned him the title of Superintendent of the Year for Region 4. Under Thomas' leadership, North Forest ISD was the first and only school district to move from "Accredited Warned," the lowest level the State places on a district, to "Fully Accredited" in one year.

Shortly after Thomas arrived in Beaumont, he began the design of a new student assignment plan, one that ended years of turmoil over integration in Beaumont. The entire community accepted the plan and it was endorsed by the local Chamber of Commerce, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), as well as many other organizations. The plan, which gives students a choice of schools to attend, was selected by The Coalition for Public Schools in Texas as one of the top three in the state for "Expanding School Choice." Enrollment is on the rise and both staff and student attendance rates have improved drastically; discipline problems are almost nil (contributed to partially by a district police department) and morale has improved throughout the District and community, as seen by a reduction of complaints by staff and parents.

Thomas has lead BISD through a \$100+ million hurricane recovery operation and wrapping up a \$389 million bond issue for facilities improvement. BISD is one of the most fiscally fit districts in Texas and continues to garner millions of dollars in grants to compliment its budget for the nearly 20,000 students and more than 3,000 employees. He is author of a book inspiring educators: *T-Notes, Nuggets of Wisdom for Educators*.

Gregory Thornton

Dr. Gregory Thornton, superintendent of Milwaukee Public Schools, is a 32 year Veteran in Education. Dr. Thornton's near-30 year career in education includes experience in the classroom as a teacher, and in school leadership as a principal at both the elementary and secondary levels. He served previously as chief academic officer of The School District of Philadelphia and has held leadership positions in Montgomery County Public Schools, in Maryland, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Public Schools and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools in North Carolina. As the director of secondary schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Public Schools, Thornton worked to develop initiatives to address issues of diversity and minority achievement and instructional leadership.

Prior to joining MPS, Thornton served as Superintendent of Chester Upland School District in Chester, Pennsylvania, where his focus was on raising student achievement, revising and upgrading the strategic plan, and monitoring progress. During his tenure, Thornton instituted a campaign to market the school district utilizing different methods to engage the community.

A Milwaukee newspaper reporter is quoted as follows, “Thornton’s sense of optimism about the potential of a district that has been beaten down, criticized, and misunderstood by many even in the Milwaukee community is refreshing to say the least. And it’s a real reminder that Milwaukee has the talent, wherewithal, and gumption to push public education in the direction in which it needs to go.”

Horace Williams

Mr. Williams, superintendent of the Cedar Hill, Texas, Independent School District, has been an educator for more than 20 years. He spent a year as superintendent in Diboll, in East Texas, before accepting his new post at Cedar Hill in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. When Mr. Williams came to Cedar Hill schools four years ago, there were two Exemplary schools, three Recognized schools, seven Satisfactory schools and one Unsatisfactory school. Now the district has three Exemplary schools, seven Recognized schools and four Acceptable schools. This includes the new Collegiate High School which has been rated Exemplary since it opened in 2008 and allows high school students to earn 60 college credits at Cedar Valley College. Before returning to the Lone Star state, Williams was Superintendent of the Roosevelt Union Free Schools on Long Island, New York, and a high school principal in Yonkers, NY. Earlier in his career, he coordinated instructional programs for the Harris County Youth Village in Houston.