

Presenters Biography Book

Monday, October 26:

- Opening Remarks: Deborah Bergeron, Director, Office of Head Start (OHS) and Early Childhood Development (ECD), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); Ruth Ryder, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Policy and Programs – Formula Grants in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), US Department of Education (ED)
- Julia (Julie) Pile, President, ParentCamp
- Laura Gilchrist, Vice President, ParentCamp

Tuesday, October 27:

- Introduction: Melissa Lim Brodowski, Deputy Director, Office of Early Childhood Development (ECD)
- Opening Remarks: Deborah Bergeron
- Moderator: Mort Sherman, Associate Executive Director for Leadership Network, The School Superintendent Association (AASA)
- Presenters:
 - Kimbrelle Barbosa Lewis, President, National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
 - Thomas Parker, Superintendent, Allentown School District
 - Mike Brophy, Superintendent, West Valley School District
 - Minerva Pardo, Family Engagement Coordinator, West Valley School District
 - Julie Bloss, Principal, Grove Early Childhood Center
 - Nathan D. Quensnel, Superintendent, East Hartford Public Schools

Wednesday, October 28:

- Introduction: Melissa Brodowski
- Moderator: Deborah Bergeron
- Presenters:
 - Shannon Christian, Director, Office of Child Care (OCC), ACF
 - Liz Darling, Commissioner, Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), ACF
 - David Kelly, Special Assistant, Children's Bureau (CB), ACF
 - Karen Remley, Director, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HHS
 - Jennifer Burnszynski, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), HHS
 - Michael Warren, Associate Administrator, Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA), HHS
 - Laurie VanderPloeg, Director, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), ED

Thursday, October 29:

- Introduction: Melissa Brodowski
- Opening Remarks: Deborah Bergeron
- Moderator: Elaine Zimmerman, Region I Regional Administrator, Office of Regional Operations, ACF
- Presenters:
 - Anita Black, Program Officer, Greater Rochester Health Foundation and Co-Chair, Funders Group on Parent Organizing, Family Engagement, and Leadership Development
 - Rosazlia (Rose) Grillier, Parent Leader and Advocate, Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) and United Parent Leaders Action Network (UPLAN)
 - Sandra Gutierrez, Founder and National Director, Abriendo Puertas
 - Tecoria Jones, Parent Leader and Advocate with the Birth Parents' National Network, Children's Trust Fund Alliance, South Carolina
 - Mary Cameron Perillo, Parent Leader and Advocate, Washington State Association for Head Start (WSA), Save the Children Action Network (SCAN) and Mom's Rising
 - Kwesi Rollins, Vice President for Leadership and Engagement, Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL)

Friday, October 30:

- Deborah Bergeron

Presenters

Monday, October 26



Deborah Bergeron (OHS and ECD) – presenting each day

Dr. Deborah Bergeron serves as the Director of the Office of Head Start (OHS) and the Office of Early Childhood Development (ECD). Known as "Dr. B" to former students and teachers, she has spent three decades in pre-K–12 public education as a classroom teacher and elementary and high school administrator. In the course of her career, Dr. B also started, grew, and ultimately sold her own educational services company. She holds a bachelor's degree from Texas State University. She earned a master's in education leadership and doctorate in education policy from George Mason University.

During her tenure as a school administrator, she specialized in school improvement. Her focus was on academic achievement and school climate. Dr. B will use her experience as an elementary principal and her strong background in pre-K–12 instructional leadership to provide unique insights into how Head Start can support our most vulnerable children to become school ready. She hopes to spend a great deal of her time visiting Regional Offices and specific Head Start programs. Dr. B most looks forward to spending time with all of the children, teachers, and program directors who are her inspiration!

Find more information, see the [OHS website](#) and the [ECD website](#).



Ruth Ryder (OESE)

Ruth Ryder is the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Policy and Programs – Formula Grants in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) at the U.S. Department of Education. OESE has responsibility for implementing programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, in this role, Ms. Ryder oversees a broad range of management, policy, and program functions related to formula and discretionary grant programs under the ESEA.

Ms. Ryder was previously the deputy director of the Office of Special Education Programs in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, which she joined in 1988. In that position, she provided national leadership for moving special education accountability to a more results-oriented focus.

In addition, Ms. Ryder focused attention on ensuring that the needs of children with disabilities were addressed in the major initiatives of the Department, such as the Every Student Succeeds Act, family engagement, school climate transformation and early learning.

Prior to joining the Department, Ms. Ryder was a program administrator in a Washington state school district. There she had responsibility for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I and Title II programs, state-remediation, gifted education, outcome-based education, and state- and district-wide testing programs. She also administered an ED-funded demonstration project, examining integrated service delivery models for including children with disabilities in general education. Additionally, Ms. Ryder has been a special education consulting teacher and a general education classroom teacher. Ms. Ryder has a bachelor's degree in psychology and elementary education and a master's degree in special education.

For more information, see the [OESE website](#).



Julia (Julie) Pile (ParentCamp)

Julie Pile first became engaged in her children's school when her daughter was in kindergarten. The PTA was looking for help with their website. She had just completed an overhaul of her employer's website and felt she could contribute her talents. In that she was a full-time working mom and the website could be done outside of school hours, it was a way she could help without being physically present at the school. Through those first years of attending PTA meetings, she felt she was not part of the "in crowd" and was sure other parents felt the same. She was determined to make a difference and make it so that all parents/families felt welcomed at PTA functions.

Eventually she became President of the PTA and at the same time was invited to participate in a program sponsored by the The Prichard Committee for Educational Excellence called The Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership. This program gave her the knowledge and tools to start working even more closely with her children's schools.

Julie can be often be found on Twitter chats leading discussions on getting more families, guardians, mentors and the community involved in education. Opening doors and changing cement walls to glass walls. She was elected to the Boone County School Board in 2018 and has served as a Parent Ambassador in the Boone County School System. Also in 2018, she was named to the inaugural class of the EdTrust Fund Parent Fellowship class. In 2017, Julie was named the inaugural recipient of the Beverly Nickels Raimondo Kentucky Parent Leadership Award named after the found of the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership. In 2015 she was recognized as the Bammy Award People's Choice Parent Leadership recipient. She has served in multiple PTA positions including Vice President of Communications for the Kentucky State PTA and past President of the recently formed Boone County High School PTSA.

For more information, see the [ParentCamp website](#).



Laura Gilchrist (ParentCamp)

Laura Gilchrist is a teacher turned consultant who is on a mission as ParentCamp Vice-President to teach every family-school-community how to come together in joyful connection and collaboration as ONE TEAM, ONE ECOSYSTEM for kids. The big goal is Family-School-Community-Integration and nationwide research about the impact of Family-School-Community Collective Efficacy.

Laura is passionate about teachers and teacher agency. She loves working with them and they love working with her. As CEO of Kid Champions Consulting Laura helps teachers and schools humanize and transform teaching and learning, whether it's face to face and/or virtual.

Laura taught amazing middle schoolers for 20 years in Lee's Summit, Park Hill and for most of her career in North Kansas City. Laura was a MO State Teacher of the Year TOY Finalist in 2015 and received the Christa McAuliffe Pioneer in Education Award from the KC Northland Chamber of Commerce the same year. In a quest to explore education ecosystems and follow her heart, Laura hopped over the state line to coach incredible teachers for 3 years in Wyandotte County in USD 202. Additionally, she has been honored to witness and be part of the Kansans Can Redesign Project.

This ParentCamp foundational quote is the basis of Laura's work. "Everything needed to help kids thrive is already within your family-school-community ecosystem." Laura is passionate about nurturing, building and tending to "The Ecosystem." She knows building trust and connections are necessary for human happiness and for future collaboration.

In fact, since 2011 Laura has been doing just that. For three and a half years, Laura organized and held monthly KCEdu meetups with the help of many wonderful teams and partners, bringing KC's educators, ed organizations and community and industry together for kids. Laura attended and supported educators at over 30 Edcamps and she co-organized multiple Edcamps including EdCampKC at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, one of her most cherished organizing memories.

Laura values curiosity, presence, trust, non-judgment and Walking the Talk. Laura wants every child/learner to have the privilege of feeling seen, heard and valued for the divine soul they are and to wake up surrounded by a deeply connected ecosystem of caring adults through which love, opportunities, resources, information and belonging flow freely to kids.

Laura believes we can transform our family-school-communities for kids from our SCHOOLS, using the Virtual ParentCamp Model and the Family-School-Community Integration System. Laura lives in Kansas City with her husband and their 3 churlish chihuahuas, who miss "the kids." Rumor is she's a big KC Chiefs fan.

For more information, see the [ParentCamp website](#).

Tuesday, October 27



Morton (Mort) Sherman (AASA)

Morton Sherman has more than 30 years' administrative experience in raising academic standards, closing achievement gaps, and uniting stakeholders. He has served in public education for over 40 years, 25 as a public school superintendent of schools.

Now serving as the AASA Associate Executive Director for Leadership Network, he is responsible for programs which support aspiring and sitting superintendents. Recent initiatives include the creation of the AASA Collaborative, The Urban Superintendents Academies in cooperation with Howard University and the University of Southern California, Superintendents Consortium on Personalized Learning and the Aspiring Superintendents Program.

Sherman's service includes: superintendent for eight years in Cherry Hill, N.J., where he was a founding member of the Southern New Jersey Standards Initiative and the Delaware Valley Minority Achievement Consortium. Sherman was superintendent for South Orangetown Central School District in N.Y. for five years; superintendent and principal at the Norwich Free Academy in Conn. for four years; Superintendent in Tenafly, N.J.; and assistant superintendent in Westport, Conn. He began his career as a middle and high school English teacher.

As superintendent of the Alexandria City Public Schools in Va., from 2008-2013, Sherman helped implement significant improvements, including: academic plans for secondary students, professional learning plans tied to student outcomes and the district strategic plan, an International Academy for English Language Learners, revised professional evaluation systems, introduction of AVID and IB, the creation of a Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Centers, a School-Based Health Clinic and a pre-K initiative.

For more information, see the [AASA website](#).



Kimbrelle Barbosa Lewis (NAESP President)

A school administrator for more than 14 years, Tennessee principal Kimbrelle Barbosa Lewis recognizes the importance of leadership diversity in meeting student needs and supporting teachers and leaders. Because of this outlook, she has dedicated her career to her school community and to helping her peers in education.

A member of National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) for 14 years, Barbosa Lewis has long been a volunteer leader with the association. She served as director at

large, minority level, from 2015-18 and chair of NAESP's Diversity Task Force. Barbosa Lewis takes on her latest leadership role of NAESP president starting Aug. 1, 2020.

For more information, see [NAESP website](#).



Thomas Parker (Superintendent, Allentown, PA)

Since joining the Allentown School District in 2017, Mr. Parker has focused on preparing students to be college and career ready with an emphasis on Middle School Transformation, a critical component to student success. Under Mr. Parker's leadership, ASD received the First Place Magna Award for Equity Programs for the work at Newcomer Academy, a PAsmart grant for technology and introduced a dual degree program in partnership with LCCC.

Before joining the Allentown School District, Mr. Parker served as the Superintendent of Ecorse Public Schools in Ecorse, MI from 2013-2017 where he restructured the district to become more efficient and financially solvent. He implemented several districtwide initiatives that focused on improving student achievement with special emphasis on closing the achievement gaps among underachieving groups. His numerous programs resulted in Ecorse being recognized one of the only districts in Michigan with a 100% school to home technology program.

Mr. Parker's career experience includes positions as High School and Middle School Principal, Founding Principal of two Academies, Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, Interim Curriculum Leader, Teacher and Program Coordinator of Horizons Upward Bound.

Mr. Parker serves on the boards of the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, DaVinci Discovery Center of Science and Technology and Muhlenberg College Board of Associates. He is a member of the Steering Committee for Allentown Vision 2030. Mr. Parker maintains memberships in numerous professional associations including the American Association of School Administrators, Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials, Pennsylvania School Board Association and the Urban Superintendents Association of America.

Mr. Parker holds an Education Specialist (ES) in Educational Leadership degree from Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI. He has his Master of Arts in Education Foundation and Policy from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, and earned his Bachelor of Arts in history and secondary education from Howard University in Washington, D.C. Contact: superintendent@allentownsd.org.



Mike Brophy (Superintendent, West Valley School District, WA)

Mike Brophy is currently serving in his 10th year as the Superintendent of West Valley School District in Yakima, WA. Prior to this position, Dr. Brophy served for 10 years as an assistant superintendent, and 11 years as a high school principal. A former high school teacher and football coach, Mike treasures the relationships he has made as the highlight of his career. He currently serves as the co-chair of the AASA Personalized Learning Cohort, and has led West Valley to receiving state and national recognition for Early Learning, and Career/College Readiness. West Valley is a high-achieving district, and belongs as well to the Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools.



Minerva Pardo (Family Engagement Coordinator, West Valley School District)

Minerva Pardo is the Family Engagement Coordinator for the District. She has different responsibilities and all of them are aimed to support all students succeed at school and beyond. As a National Trainer for “Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework”, she diligently works to embed the framework in and around all our schools. For over a year, she is leading an Initiative in the district named “Stronger Together Mas Fuertes Juntos”. The group’s main mission is removing systemic barriers and increasing opportunities for each and all students. She has recently become part of the third National Cohort with the Flamboyant Foundation to work collaboratively with the community implementing real family engagement.



Julie Bloss (Principal at the Early Childhood Center, Grove, OK)

Principal Julie Bloss serves as the lead learner and reader leader at Grove Early Childhood Center in rural Grove, Oklahoma. This early childhood facility hosts approximately 300 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students. With over 30 years of experience, Mrs. Bloss has worked in a variety of roles including school administration, school counseling, early childhood teaching and college instruction. Mrs. Bloss actively represents early childhood

education on many state and national committees including the National Association of Elementary School Principals and Scholastic.



Nathan D. Quesnel (Superintendent, East Hartford, CT)

Nathan Quesnel is the Superintendent of East Hartford Public Schools in East Hartford, Connecticut. Nate first came to East Hartford in 2002 and was a high school English teacher, Coach, High School Assistant Principal and Middle School Principal before stepping into his current position. He is a graduate of the University of Connecticut, BS, MA, Southern Connecticut State University, 6th Year, and Central Connecticut State University, 093 certification. He is currently pursuing his Doctorate at the University of Connecticut.

Nate attributes the success he has enjoyed to the quality of people and leaders he calls colleagues. Beyond his district work, he has also co-chaired several high-level state committees including Governor Malloy's Common Core Task Force in 2013 and more recently, Governor Lamont's Learn from Home Task Force in 2020. He has been recognized as Statewide Outstanding Leader and a 40 under 40 recipient. Most recently, he was awarded the Outstanding Superintendent, Alumni award by the University of Connecticut, Neag School of Education.

Mr. Quesnel is the proud father of six children with lucky seven on the way. He enjoys spending his free time with his family.

Wednesday, October 28



Shannon Christian (HHS)

Shannon Christian serves as the Director of the Office of Child Care (OCC) at HHS' Administration for Children and Families. She is a former Associate Commissioner of the former Child Care Bureau at ACF, where she advanced President Bush's Good Start, Grow Smart early childhood initiative, and shaped the office's research agenda to better support state policy and spending decisions.

Committed to effective prevention strategies, Shannon oversaw the launch of Illinois' home visiting program and was an active board member of Be Strong Families, a Chicago-based national nonprofit. Earlier in her career, Shannon was part of former Wisconsin Governor (and HHS secretary) Tommy Thompson's welfare reform team, serving as head of the planning

section in the state Health & Social Services Department's Office of Policy and Budget, and as Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Workforce Development.

Shannon has an MPP from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, a certificate in nonprofit management from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Business, and an undergraduate degree in economics and international relations from California State University, Chico.

For more information, see the [OCC website](#).



Liz Darling (HHS)

Elizabeth Darling is the commissioner at the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). ACYF has two bureaus under Darling's leadership – the Children's Bureau and the Family and Youth Services Bureau. In addition to her Senate-confirmed position in the Trump Administration, she also serves as the acting associate commissioner at the Family and Youth Services Bureau within ACYF.

Darling was most recently the president and chief executive officer of OneStar Foundation, which was created to support the state of Texas by strengthening the nonprofit sector. Before that position, she was the chief operating officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service within the federal government.

Prior to those responsibilities, she served as deputy secretary at the Maryland Department of Human Resources. In that capacity she had oversight of child care, child support, child welfare, domestic violence and family assistance programs, in addition to overseeing the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, food stamp and Medicaid programs.

Darling's current position as ACYF commissioner represents her second appointment at HHS. During the Bush Administration she was the founding director of HHS' Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, an office that continues to provide valuable support, including for ACF programs.

Before coming to HHS for the first time, Darling served as the vice chairman of the Texas Department of Human Services, overseeing welfare-to-work programs under the landmark 1996 welfare reform act.

Elizabeth Darling has a bachelor of science in education from Baylor University and is an adoptive mother, with three children and two grandchildren.

For more information, see the [ACYF website](#).



Karen Remley (CDC)

Karen Remley, MD, MBA, MPH, FAAP, is the Director for the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD). She has more than 30 years of experience in public health and health care, with leadership roles in the public and private sectors. Her “north star” has always been children and families, and she has shaped her career around helping every family have the best opportunity for health and well-being.

Prior to joining NCBDDD, Dr. Remley served as Senior Advisor to the COVID-19 response for the Office of the Commissioner, Virginia Department of Health, where she was instrumental in increasing and assuring testing for COVID-19 to ensure it was widely available across the Commonwealth of Virginia. She also worked as a Professor of Pediatrics at Eastern Virginia Medical School. Dr. Remley has served on many national committees and commissions working on public health education, health equity, and patient safety, including her roles as Chief Executive Officer of the American Academy of Pediatrics; Commissioner of Health for the Commonwealth of Virginia under two governors; Chief Medical Director of Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield Virginia; and Chief Executive Officer of Physicians for Peace. In 2018, she served as the Inaugural Senior Fellow at the de Beaumont Foundation, a foundation dedicated to pragmatic solutions to improve public health.

Dr. Remley earned an MBA from the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University, an MPH at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and her MD from University of Missouri in Kansas City. She completed her pediatrics residency at St. Louis Children’s Hospital-Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

For more information, see the [NCBDDD website](#).



Jennifer Burnszynski (HHS)

Jennifer Burnszynski is the Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Human Services Policy in HHS’ Office of The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE). She provides executive leadership of HHS’s human services policy development and research and coordinates across the federal government on issues including poverty and economic mobility, early childhood education, reentry, child welfare, fatherhood, family strengthening, and youth development. She is the HHS Executive Lead for the U.S. Interagency Council on Economic Mobility, which is coordinated by her office. She previously served in HHS’ Office of

Child Support Enforcement. Her prior experience includes working for the Minnesota Legislative Commission on the Economic Status of Women, the Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department, and the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. She holds a B.A. from Gettysburg College and a M.A. from the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

For more information, see the [ASPE website](#).



Michael Warren (HRSA)

Dr. Michael Warren became Associate Administrator of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration, on October 15, 2018. MCHB's mission is to improve the health of America's mothers, children and families. Its Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Program provides health care and public health services for an estimated 56 million people, including pregnant women, infants, children, including children with special health care needs, and their families in the United States: 91% of all pregnant women, 99% of infants, and 54% of children nationwide benefitted from a Title V-supported service.

Dr. Warren is a board-certified pediatrician. Before assuming his current role as MCHB's Associate Administrator, Dr. Warren served as the Deputy Commissioner for Population Health at the Tennessee Department of Health, Assistant Commissioner for Family Health and Wellness, and as the Director of Maternal and Child Health. Prior to joining the Department of Health, he served as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at Vanderbilt and as Medical Director in the Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination.

Dr. Warren graduated Summa Cum Laude with Honors in Psychology from Wake Forest University and earned his medical degree from the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University, where he was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. He completed his pediatrics residency, Chief Residency, and fellowship in Academic General Pediatrics at Vanderbilt, where he also obtained a Master's in Public Health. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Dr. Warren has served as President for the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP), the national professional organization for maternal and child health professionals. He was also appointed by the United States Department of Health and Human Services to the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Infant Mortality (SACIM).

For more information, see the [HRSA website](#).



Laurie VanderPloeg (ED)

Laurie VanderPloeg is the director of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), at the U.S. Department of Education. VanderPloeg ensures the effective implementation of OSEP's legislative mission, advises the assistant secretary on federal education policy related to individuals with disabilities, and provides leadership in addressing issues of American education for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities through OSEP activities and within the context of the policies of OSERS, the Department, and Congress.

Prior to joining the department, VanderPloeg served as director of special education at Kent Intermediate School District (Kent ISD) in Michigan. Also at Kent ISD, she served as assistant director for monitoring, compliance and parent support. Prior to Kent ISD, she served as a local supervisor of special education, and a special education teacher in the Grand Rapids Public Schools. VanderPloeg also served as an adjunct professor at Grand Valley State University in the special education administration program. She is a parent of an adult with disabilities.

VanderPloeg graduated from Grand Valley State University with a master's in special education administration and a bachelor's degree from Grand Valley State College. She holds administrative approvals as both supervisor and director of special education and certification in learning disabilities, cognitive impairment, emotional impairment, and K–8 regular education.

For more information, see the [OSEP website](#).



David Kelly (CB)

David P. Kelly, JD, MA, serves as Special Assistant to the Associate Commissioner of the U.S. Children's Bureau. For over a decade he oversaw CB's work with state and tribal courts and the legal community. Prior to joining the federal government, David was an Assistant Staff Director at the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law and a Senior Assistant Child Advocate at the New Jersey Office of the Child Advocate. He began his career as a staff attorney at the Youth Advocacy Center of Covenant House New Jersey where he represented homeless, runaway and at-risk youth on a variety of legal matters and led the organization's policy initiatives, he later became the Center's Director of Legal and Clinical services.

For more information, see the [CB website](#).

Thursday, October 29



Elaine Zimmerman (ACF)

Elaine Zimmerman is the Region I Administrator for the Administration of Children and Families, representing the six states of New England. Her agency oversees work in child support, child care, refugee resettlement, child welfare, TANF, youth homelessness and runways, family economic stability, and early childhood development, and other human service innovations.

Previous to this, she served as the Executive Director of the Connecticut Commission on Children where she designed state children's initiatives and crafted model policy to improve child outcomes. She reported to the CT legislature on strategy, policy and budget recommendations. Her expert trend analysis, constituency development, and strength in framing issues, assisted in the passage of Connecticut's School Readiness law, Early Reading Success, Connecticut's Blueprint in Reading, the Child Poverty Reduction bill, the State Prevention Council, the Children and Disaster Act, the Safe Learning Act, the Parent Trust Act and An Act Concerning the Mental, Emotional and Behavioral Health of Youths.

Ms. Zimmerman is recognized for her policy acumen and commitment to community capacity. She brings in broad and unexpected stakeholders to child policy discussion and ensures family engagement and broad public access to information. Keenly focused on family civics, model policy and civil rights, she weaves the three together in her leadership role for children.

Ms. Zimmerman envisioned and created the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) to assure that parents were an active and informed constituency for children. Noting that parents are distanced from policy discourse, she created a democracy school for families that substantively teaches how change occurs for children in the states. For this work, she was given the Good Housekeeping Award for Women in Government.

Nationally, she was the past Staff Chair to the Human Services Committee of the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) for all fifty states and serves on NCSL's policy committee on food and hunger. She also serves on the Nemours Foundation Board and the Pew Home Visitation Advisory Committee.

Ms. Zimmerman is the author of several articles on family and work, child development, parent leadership, and community building. She is a published poet, essayist, and political analyst. Ms. Zimmerman has a B.A. with a dual major in Cultural Anthropology and Comparative Literature from the University of California, Berkeley. She also has a Masters in Community Mental Health from the University of California, Berkeley. Her family resides in Hamden, Connecticut.

For more information, see the [ACF website](#).



Anita Black (Greater Rochester Health Foundation)

Anita joined the Health Foundation in 2016. Part of the Healthy Futures team, Anita has extensive experience working with children and families and strengthening family systems. She is passionate about advancing equity and partnering with community. Prior to the Health Foundation, Anita has served in multiple leadership roles to drive systemic change for children and families, including serving as project director for Healthy Start and as a clinical social worker for varying organizations. Anita is a New York State Licensed Clinical Social Worker and holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Skidmore College, and master's degrees in child development and family studies from Syracuse University, and clinical social work from the University of Maryland. Anita is a teacher and student of yoga and meditation.

For more information, see the [Greater Rochester Health Foundation website](#).



Sandra Gutierrez (Abriendo Puertas)

Sandra Gutierrez is the Founder and National Director of Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors. Ms. Gutierrez led the development of Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors-the nation's first evidence-based, comprehensive training program for Latino parents with children 0 to 5. Prior to her work with Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors, Ms. Gutierrez developed a series of training programs to support children and families involved in the child welfare system for Parents Action for Children. She brings over forty years of experience with legal, children's advocacy and community service organizations. Her multi-faceted career has included founding the first service organization to assist Central American Refugees, developing health education programs for the United Farm Workers of America and leading campaigns to promote the benefits of preschool to the Latino community. In addition, for seven years, she served as a founding member and State Commissioner for First 5 California where she established the Advisory Committee on Equity. Ms. Gutierrez serves as an Advisory Board member for the Too Small To Fail Initiative. In March 2014, Ms. Gutierrez was named by the White House as a César E. Chávez Champion of Change, and in February 2015 she received the James Irvine Foundation Leadership Award.

For more information, see the Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors [website](#) and the Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors [National Survey](#).



Tecoria Jones (Birth Parents National Network, South Carolina)

A native of Columbia, South Carolina, Tecoria Jones has been a parent advocate for ten years. Her work in this field began as a Parent Peer Support provider for families with children who have mental health concerns. The path to this position started because of an intervention service stemming from an abuse case for corporal punishment. Tecoria says “The home visitor helped me so much. She helped me see myself, something no one else had done.” It was this spark of connection that provided the impetus for Tecoria’s commitment to parent advocacy and family engagement. Her lived experiences include an Kaiser Permanente ACEs score of 10 and time in foster, kinship and congregate care. Tecoria approaches her commitment to parents, family and communities authentically with an understanding of trauma and the resilience of hope.

Tecoria is a trainer in Adverse Childhood Experiences and the Protective Factors Framework. Other experiences of note over the last ten years include PRISMA Children’s Hospital Family Advisory Council; School Improvement Council co chair/chair; Birth Parent National Network; Birth & Foster Parent Partnership; SC Children’s Trust Child Wellbeing Coalition, Leadership Team and the Family Voices Parent Council working with SC DSS. Tecoria was the first parent who spoke with SCDSS stakeholders and has given testimony for the Joint Citizens and Legislative council. She spoke by invitation at governor’s mansion for the proclamation of April being Child Abuse Prevention month in South Carolina. She is a trained mediator and Circle Keeper. Tecoria has a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies: Social Studies, Criminology, Urban Geography, Politics and International Studies.



Kwesi Rollins (IEL)

A member of IEL’s Senior Leadership Team, Kwesi Rollins guides IEL’s portfolio of programs designed to develop and support leaders with a particular emphasis on Family and Community Engagement, Early Childhood Education and Community-based Leadership Development. Kwesi directs the District Leaders Network on Family and Community Engagement and Leaders for Today and Tomorrow, an initiative that designs and delivers professional learning and support opportunities for school and district leaders.

Kwesi has years of experience working with local communities and state agencies to improve cross-sector collaboration and service delivery systems supporting children, youth and families. Mr. Rollins provided technical assistance and training to a range of state and county agencies,

school districts, local schools and community-based organizations in projects funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Working with young people is also a personal passion for Kwesi who has special expertise in resiliency and youth development. He has been recognized as the Big Brother of the Year in the District of Columbia and is an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the National Capitol Area. He holds an MSW degree from the University of Maryland at Baltimore School of Social Work where he was a Maternal and Child Health Leadership Training Fellow. For more information, follow Kwesi on Twitter at @kwesibaby58 or see the [IEL website](#).



Mary Cameron Perillo (WSA, SCAN and Mom's Rising)

Mary Cameron Perillo is a vocal child advocate, and is frequently invited to speak with Legislators in both Washington State and Washington DC. She works with non-profits Save the Children Action Network (SCAN), Moms Rising, Strolling Thunder, The Children's Alliance and Washington State Association for Head Start and ECEAP (WSA).

Mary Cameron attended Western Washington University and The Sorbonne. She is the Mom of two vivacious girls and lives in Everett with her husband, Mike.

In addition to her advocacy and work with PLTI, Mary Cameron works as an Operations Manager for a local woman-owned human resources company.



Rosazlia (Rose) Grillier (COFI and UPLAN)

A visionary, overcomer, and survivor. While handed a death sentence, confined to a wheelchair. Weighing more than 480 lbs., she has battled cancer and multiple serious illnesses. This mother of two amazing daughters and nevertheless determination sits on the board of COFI & is co-president emeritus of COFI/POWER~PAC IL (community organizing & family issues/parents organized to win, educate & renew-policy action council), the advocacy arm of COFI.

She has received numerous awards and recognition including being named: Chicago Hero, honored nationally by Allstate and the King Family. As well as the 2018 Dr. King drum major innovation service award.

She has worked in partnership with many entities to bring positive change to the issues that have negatively impacted families and communities, locally, citywide, statewide and nationally. She is one of the founding governing council members of UPLAN (United Parent Leaders Action Network).

Rosazlia is determined to encourage collaborations that empowers a vision for positive change “worldwide.”



MaryJo Alimena Caruso (FRIENDS National Center for CBCAP)

MaryJo Alimena Caruso is a Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator for the FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse and Prevention (CBCAP). MaryJo has over 25 years’ experience in service delivery and training and technical assistance for child welfare and human service professionals and families. MaryJo has a Master's Degree in Counseling and Education with an emphasis in disability issues. Prior to joining FRIENDS, she developed an evidence-based volunteer respite program which been replicated nationally in faith and community organizations. MaryJo has experience in statewide and national initiatives with program planning and design, curricula and resource development, and working to support parent and practitioner partnerships and parent advisory councils.



Melissa Lim Brodowski—introductions throughout the week

Melissa Lim Brodowski is the Deputy Director for the Office of Early Childhood Development (ECD) at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). In this role, she provides leadership and guidance to support early childhood initiatives across ACF and with federal partners and other stakeholders. Through various positions, she has overseen grant programs, technical assistance, research and evaluation activities, interagency coordination, and public-private partnerships related to early childhood, home visiting, and child maltreatment prevention. She has over 20 years of experience working in the field of health and human services. Prior to her federal career, she was a Management Analyst at the Alameda County (CA) Department of Children and Family Services and a substance abuse counselor working with pregnant and parenting women. She received her BA in Psychology from Temple University, her MSW and MPH from the University of California at Berkeley, and her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, Baltimore, School of Social Work. She is a first generation Filipino-American and lives in Arlington, VA with her wonderful husband and two amazing teenage daughters.

Contributors

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United Parent Leaders Action Network

Start Early

We also thank all the parent leaders, federal staff, and technical assistance providers who helped facilitate and take notes for the breakout sessions during the October 26 and October 29 events.