

Positive Alternatives to Suspending and Expelling Misbehaving Students in Early Childhood Education

Nov. 4, 2015

Noon to 2:00 p.m.

LISE FOX

Lise Fox is a professor in the Department of Child and Family Studies at the University of South Florida in Tampa, and she is a co-director of the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities. She is a faculty member with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center and was the principal investigator of the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children. Fox, one of the primary developers of the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children, is a co-author of the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool and the author of numerous articles and chapters related to the implementation of positive behavior support and the pyramid model within early care and education programs. Fox is actively engaged in research, training and technical assistance efforts related to the use of evidence-based practices in early education and care classrooms, professional development and coaching of early educators.

TALA MANASSAH

Tala Manassah is the deputy executive director of the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, where she has worked since 2009. Previously, she was the founding executive director of the Middle East Children's Institute, which, in 2008, became one of the Clinton Global Initiative's member commitments. She is the author of "From Rage to Interlocution," which was included in the anthology *A Community of Many Worlds: Arab Americans in New York City*. Manassah earned her B.A. in philosophy and M.A. in humanities at the University of Chicago.

RALPH SMITH

Ralph Smith is the managing director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, an effort to increase rates of third-grade reading proficiency for children from low-income families that includes a network of more than 160 campaign communities in 42 states and more than 50 leading civic and private sector partners. Previously, Smith taught Corporations and Securities Law and Education Law and Policy as a member of the law faculty at the University of Pennsylvania for two decades, during which time he also served as the chief of staff and the chief operating officer for the School District of Philadelphia and as a senior adviser to Philadelphia's mayor on children and family policy. Smith led efforts to design and implement the school district's landmark voluntary desegregation plan, negotiate some of the nation's first education reform-driven teacher contracts, and develop Children Achieving, a districtwide blueprint supported by the Annenberg Challenge. Smith is the founding director of both the National Center on Fathers and Families and the Philadelphia Children's Network, and a national leader of the responsible fatherhood movement.

KEN ZARIFIS

Ken Zarifis is the president of Education Austin, a merged local of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, in Austin, Texas. He was an eighth-grade language arts teacher at Burnet Middle School for 12 years before leaving the classroom in 2010 to lead Education Austin. His experience at Burnet, where meeting student behaviors was often reduced to referrals, suspensions and removals, motivated him to address systematic inequity through union engagement with the district. Zarifis' work philosophy is that success is dependent upon open, honest communication that develops strong, productive relationships to benefit workers, students and the broader community. Education Austin has worked diligently to keep the line of communication open with administration to build a productive relationship that has improved pay, contracts rights and workplace conditions districtwide. Additionally, the local has worked with district and community partners on social justice issues like immigration reform, LGBTQ rights and community schools. Zarifis has successfully secured two AFT Innovation Fund grants to create community-based projects in which teachers, support personnel, students, parents and the wider school community are part of the decision-making process in their neighborhood schools. Education Austin is currently expanding its community school model to include alternative behavior models to support the needs of students and break the school-to-prison pipeline.

Moderator: TISH OLSHEFSKI

Patricia "Tish" Olshefski currently serves as senior assistant to the secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of Teachers. In addition to overseeing the responsibilities of the secretary-treasurer's office (e.g., contributions, policy resolutions, committee appointments, budgets), she serves as lead staff for the AFT's early childhood education working group, directs the staff of the AFT's Health & Safety Program, and represents the AFT's secretary-treasurer and president on various boards and committees, including Education International's Early Childhood Committee, the Transportation Trades Department and various AFL-CIO committees. Olshefski previously served as the director of the AFT's paraprofessionals and school-related personnel department and as liaison to the PSRP program and policy council. AFT publications she has been responsible for developing include "Right from the Start: Transition Strategies for Developing a Strong preK-3 Continuum," "Setting Standards for a Profession" and "Building Minds, Minding Buildings: Turning Crumbling Schools into Environments for Learning."