



Quality Teaching: Individual and Social Approaches

Dec. 7, 2015
11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

PANEL I

JOSHUA STARR

Joshua P. Starr, Ed.D., is a lifelong educator with 22 years of service in public schools. He became chief executive officer of PDK on June 29, 2015. Dr. Starr began his career teaching special education in Brooklyn, N.Y. After attending graduate school, he served in various administrative capacities in urban/suburban districts in the New York metropolitan area, including as director of accountability, interim director of instructional technology and executive director for operations. Dr. Starr served in the New York City Department of Education under Chancellor Joel Klein, first as deputy senior instructional manager in the Office of Programs, overseeing services for English language learners, special education, gifted and talented, instructional technology and early childhood. He then became director of school performance and accountability in the New York City Department of Education. Dr. Starr was superintendent of schools in Stamford, Conn., for six years, and in Montgomery County, Md., for nearly four years. Dr. Starr is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin–Madison, Brooklyn College, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He has always sought to lead teams in applying innovation solutions to longstanding challenges in public education. Through a focus on equity, collaboration, community engagement and teaching and learning, Dr. Starr has been able to help school districts increase student achievement by improving systems that support all students.

RANDI WEINGARTEN

Randi Weingarten is president of the 1.6 million-member American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, which represents teachers; paraprofessionals and school-related personnel; higher education faculty and staff; nurses and other healthcare professionals; local, state and federal government employees; and early childhood educators. She is also president of the Albert Shanker Institute. Prior to her election as AFT president, Weingarten served for 12 years as president of the United Federation of Teachers, representing approximately 200,000 educators in the New York City public school system, as well as home child care providers and other workers in health, law and education. In 2012-13, Weingarten served on an education reform commission convened by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, which made a series of recommendations to improve teaching and learning. She was appointed to the Equity and Excellence Commission, a federal advisory committee chartered by Congress to examine and make recommendations concerning the disparities in educational opportunities that give rise to the achievement gap. For 10 years, while president of the UFT, Weingarten chaired New York City's Municipal Labor Committee, an umbrella organization for the city's 100-plus public sector unions, including those representing higher education and other public

service employees. As chair of the MLC, she coordinated labor negotiations and bargaining for benefits on behalf of the MLC unions' 365,000 members. From 1986 to 1998, Weingarten served as counsel to UFT president Sandra Feldman, taking a lead role in contract negotiations and enforcement. A teacher of history at Clara Barton High School in Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighborhood from 1991 to 1997, Weingarten helped her students win several state and national awards debating constitutional issues. Weingarten's column "What Matters Most" appears in the *New York Times*. Weingarten holds degrees from Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations and the Cardozo School of Law.

DANIEL WEISBERG

As TNTP's Chief Executive Officer, Dan Weisberg oversees TNTP's executive team and all aspects of the organization's operations, strategy and growth. Prior to becoming CEO in June 2015 as part of TNTP's long-term growth strategy, Dan was the Executive Vice President for Performance Management and General Counsel. In this role, he built and led a 130-person team to support the efforts of school systems and states nationwide to recruit, develop and retain effective teachers and principals. Previously, as Vice President of Policy, Dan helped build TNTP into "a leading voice on teacher quality" and co-authored TNTP's acclaimed study on the failures of the nation's teacher evaluation systems, *The Widget Effect*, which has helped to catalyze evaluation reforms in more than 30 states since 2009. More recently, he participated in the writing of *The Irreplaceables* (2012), which explored the teacher retention crisis through the experience of the country's best teachers, and *The Mirage* (2015), which questions the prevailing assumption that we know how to help teachers improve. Before TNTP, Dan served as Chief Executive of Labor Policy and Implementation for the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE), the country's largest public school system. In this role, he led negotiations between the Department and the United Federation of Teachers that resulted in a series of groundbreaking reforms, including the city's highly regarded "mutual consent" system, which gives teachers and schools the primary voice in school staffing. He also led a team that provided labor support to NYCDOE's 1,700 principals and implemented a number of high-stakes talent initiatives. Before joining the NYCDOE, Dan was a Partner in the New York office of Brobeck, Phleger & Harrison, where he led the firm's east coast labor and employment practice. He holds a J.D. from New York University Law School and a BA in Political Science from Columbia College.

Moderator: **STEPHEN SAWCHUK**

Stephen Sawchuk is an associate editor at *Education Week*, the K-12 newspaper of record. He reports on the teaching profession, including preparation, evaluation, pay, and the teachers' unions, and is the author of the popular edweek.org blog *Teacher Beat*. He holds degrees from Georgetown and Columbia universities.

PANEL II

JAMES T. JACKSON

Dr. Jackson is the former Chair and Associate Professor of Special Education at Howard University. He has also worked as a public school teacher in Prince George's County, Maryland and Memphis, Tennessee; and has been on the faculty at Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville and The George Washington University. His area of expertise is in preparing teachers to serve students with special needs. He has conducted professional development workshops in a variety of areas for school districts. His research

interests include identifying stress and its impact on learning and behavior; classroom ecology and its effect on learning; using the arts as a teaching tool for students; effective strategies to promote inclusive education; and teacher training and development. He regularly mentors new teachers and spend time in area classrooms in order to gain valuable perspectives about the teaching experience.

MONIFA MCKIGHT

Dr. Monifa McKnight, 2015 Middle School Principal of the Year winner, has served as principal of Ridgeview Middle School in Montgomery County Public Schools since 2011. Since the beginning of her tenure, she has been determined to create the best learning experience for each child every day who walks through the doors of Ridgeview Middle School. Dr. McKnight lives by the quote of Aristotle, *"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."* These words are evident through her work and in the expectations she holds for all who touch the lives of students at Ridgeview Middle School. Dr. McKnight's experiences as an educator include: classroom teacher, English Resource Teacher, Staff Development Teacher, and Assistant Principal. She holds a B.S. in Elementary Education from South Carolina State University, a M.S. of Science in Educational Leadership from Bowie State University, and a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy from the University of Maryland, College Park.

JOSEPH VINCENTE

Joe Vincente is in his 9th year of teaching Chemistry at East Side Community High School in New York City. He has been Science Team Leader since 2008 and now also works as an instructional coach with his science teacher colleagues. Joe did his undergraduate work in Chemistry at the University of Connecticut and even worked in a chemistry lab, but always knew his real passion was in teaching. His pedagogical interests are in flipped classroom instruction and project based learning. He frequently facilitates professional development for the NY Performance Assessment Consortium, is a Math for America fellow, has presented at NSTA, and published and peer-reviewed short articles online for the American Association of Chemistry Teachers. Vincente recently completed a second Master's degree in Educational Leadership but is still in love with the classroom. He is passionate about connecting young men and women of color with STEM careers.

Moderator: ROB WEIL

Rob Weil is the director of field programs in the educational issues department of the American Federation of Teachers. Before coming to the AFT, Weil taught in Colorado for 20 years. During his last six years in Colorado, he was also the president of the Douglas County Federation of Teachers, which represented approximately 3,000 K-12 teachers. Weil joined the national office of the AFT in 2001. His current responsibilities include managing the AFT's in-the-field efforts regarding school and instructional improvement at the state, district, school and classroom levels. In the past few years, Weil's work has expanded to include international education reform. He is a member of the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which provides guidance and recommendations on educational and worker-related issues.