



ALBERT SHANKER INSTITUTE

THE GOOD SCHOOLS SEMINARS

CREATING SAFE & SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS II: NEXT STEPS

AN ALBERT SHANKER INSTITUTE SEMINAR SERIES

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Washington Court Hotel, Washington, DC

PRESENTERS

JILLIAN AHERNS

Jillian Ahrens is 3rd vice president of the Cleveland Teachers Union, a union representing nearly 5,000 of Cleveland's teachers, paraprofessionals, and other related-service personnel. Ahrens, a 17 year veteran of the CTU Executive Board, currently serves as co-director of Grievances and is on the negotiations team. In addition to her union duties, Jillian is a first grade teacher for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District at Memorial K-8 School. Jillian, who has taught first grade for over 9 years in CMSD, has been recognized as a Master Teacher by the state of Ohio. She holds a Bachelors of Arts in Elementary Education from Mount Union College and a Masters of Arts in Teaching and Learning from Nova Southeastern University. In 2013, Ahrens was honored by the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) with the Mary Utne O'Brien Award for Excellence in Expanding the Evidence-Based Practice of Social and Emotional Learning.

BERSHERIL BAILEY

Bersheril Bailey is a senior consultant at American Institutes for Research (AIR), and part of AIR's Education division. She works with state education agencies and intermediate school districts to develop systems that increase academic achievement for all students. She provides technical assistance to build their capacity to design statewide systems of support as well as to ensure alignment and coherence of all components of the system. She works closely with the Michigan Department of Education to facilitate a collaborative, cross-office team to develop a state strategy to close the achievement gap, as well as to develop policies and tools to reduce suspensions and expulsions. As a member of the department's Dropout Challenge team, she has presented on the topic of dropout prevention at state and national conferences. Bailey has worked in elementary, middle, and high schools as a special education teacher, teacher consultant, assistant principal, director of alternative programs, and high school principal. She implemented and supervised Smaller Learning Communities and a magnet academy for mathematics, science, and engineering. Her most notable accomplishments include creating and supervising innovative high school programs for students who struggled to succeed in traditional high school settings. Bailey has extensive experience and training in classroom management and school improvement and in creating positive school climate and culture. She was chosen Employee of the Year in 2006 by the superintendent and school board in her district. Bailey earned a master's degree in educational administration from Michigan State University.

ERIN BEHNHAM

Erin Benham, president of the Meriden Federation of Teachers and executive committee vice president of the Connecticut AFT has taught in the Meriden School District for the past 36 years and is presently a Literacy teacher at Lincoln Middle School. Behnham and Superintendent Dr. Mark Benigni were awarded the Connecticut AFT President's award in 2013. In addition, Behnham was appointed to the Connecticut State Board of Education by Governor Dannel Malloy in 2014.

MARK BENIGNI

Dr. Mark Benigni is an experienced K-12 public educator who has led schools and a school system to increased student growth through collaboration and innovation. He was recently recognized as a 2015 Education Week Leaders to Learn From. He has served as Mayor of the City of Meriden for four terms, as well as a city-wide city councilor for four years. In addition, he served on the Education Cost Sharing Task Force for the State of Connecticut, co-chairs the Connecticut Association of Urban Superintendents, and is the chair of the State Education Resource Center.

MARTIN BLANK

Martin J. Blank is president of the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) in Washington, DC. He leads IEL in its mission to equip leaders to work together across boundaries to build effective systems that prepare children and youth for college, careers, and citizenship. Blank has been associated with IEL since 1985, focusing his work on building bridges between schools and other institutions with assets that can support student success. He also serves as the director of the Coalition for Community Schools, which is staffed by the IEL. The Coalition is an alliance that brings together leaders and organizations in education, family support, youth development, early childhood, community development, government and philanthropy. Partners advocate for schools as centers of their communities where school and community resources are organized to support student success, strengthen families, and build healthier communities. Blank is the co-author of *Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools and Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Pro-family System of Education and Human Services*. He was Project Director for the preparation of Learning Together, a comprehensive map of the revitalized community schools movement across the country. He is the former Chair of D.C. VOICE, an education reform collaborative, and of the Management Team of the Early Childhood Collaborative. He has a B.A. from Columbia University, 1965, and a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center and served as a VISTA Volunteer in the Missouri Bootheel

BURNIE BOND

Burnie Bond is director of programs at the nonpartisan, nonprofit Albert Shanker Institute, where she works on a range of projects related to the institute's key issue areas of educational excellence and equity, unions as advocates for quality, and the support of democracy and democratic institutions, both at home and abroad. Previously, she served as assistant director of the American Federation of Teachers' Educational Issues Department. In that capacity, she monitored educational research on programs and teaching strategies to raise student achievement—especially for “at-risk” students in low-performing schools. She also worked on several related issues, including improving beginning reading instruction, research on and implementation of school turnaround strategies, standards-based reform, Title I, multicultural education, and efforts to improve the reliability and utility of educational research. She is a former staff assistant in the Office of AFT President Albert Shanker, where she served as coordinator of the AFT's Education for Democracy Project, a program to promote a rigorous history and civics curriculum, and was formerly the director of research and publications for the International Affairs Department of the AFL-CIO, where she worked on international trade and labor rights issues. She also served on the 1992 Clinton Transition Team at the United States Information Agency.

LEO CASEY

Leo Casey is executive director of the Albert Shanker Institute. Before assuming this position, he served as vice president for Academic High Schools for the United Federation of Teachers. Casey is the son of two New York City public school teachers. He attended Antioch College in Ohio, the University of Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania and the University of Toronto in Canada, where he earned a Ph.D. in political philosophy. After a stint in political organizing, Casey began his teaching career in 1984 at Clara Barton High School in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn where he taught classes in civics, American history, African-American studies, ethical issues in medicine, and political science for 15 years. For 10 years in a row, his classes—entirely students of color, largely immigrant and largely female—won the New York City championship of the national We the People civics competition; his students also won the New York state championship four times and placed fourth in the nation twice. He was recognized in the *Congressional Record* for the achievements of his classes in the competition. In 1999, Casey became a full-time UFT special representative for high schools. He was elected vice president for Academic High Schools in Oct. 2007. As vice president, he taught a class in global studies every day at Bard High School Early College in Manhattan. Casey has won several awards for his teaching, and was named national Social Studies Teacher of the Year for the American Teacher Awards in 1992.

DENINE GOOLSBY

Denine A. Goolsby began her career as a teacher in the East Cleveland City School District and remained there for twelve years. During her tenure there, she taught students in grades one, three, four and six. In 1990, she earned a Master's Degree in Educational Administration and Principal's Certification from Kent State University. She holds a Superintendent's License from Ashland University. Goolsby accepted an administrative position with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools. While in the district, she served in the capacities of elementary associate, assistant middle school principal, elementary principal, and middle school principal. Through collaboration with the staff, she led the middle school to receiving recognition as a National School to Watch. Since 2008, Goolsby has

served as a regional superintendent, an academic coach, and is presently serving as the executive director of Humanware SEL/CTAG for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. She received a Bachelor of Science Degree from Kent State University with a concentration in Elementary Education in 1977.

LORRETTA JOHNSON

Loretta Johnson is secretary treasurer of the American Federation of Teachers. Previously she served as AFT Executive Vice President; president of AFT-Maryland; president of the Baltimore Teachers Union's paraprofessional chapter; and chair of the AFT Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel program and policy council. Before becoming AFT executive vice president, Johnson was an AFT vice president for 30 years. She began her career in 1966 as a teacher's aide at a Baltimore elementary school, where she earned \$2.25 an hour and received no benefits. To improve the work situation of paraprofessionals, she organized them into the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU). In 1970, she negotiated the union's first contract, which had a grievance procedure as its hallmark. That experience laid the foundation for Johnson's union activism. Johnson, who received her teaching degree through the Career Opportunities Program at Coppin State University in Maryland, has also been a pioneer in the development of innovative career ladder and professional development programs for paraprofessionals and school-related personnel

MICHAEL LAMB

Mike Lamb joined Turnaround for Children in 2013 as director of district engagement and in 2014 was promoted to executive director, Washington, D.C. Lamb comes to Turnaround from the U.S. Department of Education, where in 2009 he was appointed special assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, and helped lead the Office of Civil Rights' strategic planning process and technical assistance efforts. In 2011, he became senior policy advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education on school turnaround, high school redesign, and Title II programs and policies. Lamb worked as an organizer on Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential campaign and spent his most treasured years to date teaching 7th and 8th graders at a turnaround school in the Harold Ickes Homes, a housing project on Chicago's South Side. Lamb graduated *cum laude* from Duke University with a B.A. in Public Policy Studies, while earning his teaching certificate

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.

EDMUND OROPEZ

Mr. Edmund R. Oropez serves as the Chief Officer for Teaching and Learning in the Austin Independent School District (AISD). In this role, he oversees the four associate superintendents for high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools, and the 129 campus principals / directors. He also leads the Division of Learning Support Services, Division of School, Family and Community Education and the Division of Academics and Special Programs. These divisions include programs such as dropout prevention, guidance and counseling, college readiness, after school initiatives, athletics, attendance, discipline, curriculum, special education, bilingual education, advance education, AVID, Turnaround Schools, and Positive Behavior Support. Previously, Oropez served as the Associate Superintendent for High Schools, overseeing the instructional programs and operations for over 11 comprehensive high schools, three schools of choice, three specialized high schools, two In-District Charter schools, and all AISD Athletic Programs. He was also the AISD Director of High School Operations, Executive Principal for High Schools, and principal at Sidney Lanier High School as well as principal in Weslaco ISD. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Texas at Austin in Political Science, a Masters Degree in Educational Administration from the University of Texas Pan-American, and is currently working on a doctorate in Educational Administration at the University of Texas at Austin. Mr. Oropez is also a member of the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

MARY CATHRYN RICKER

Mary Cathryn Ricker, a National Board Certified Teacher, is currently executive vice president of the American Federation of Teachers. She is the past president of the St. Paul Federation of Teachers, a 4000+ member union serving the teachers and educational assistants in St. Paul Public Schools. Prior to being elected president, she was a classroom teacher in middle school English/Language arts for 13 years in St. Cloud, MN; Camas, WA; and Seoul,

South Korea. She also taught for 5 years in St. Paul Public Schools. She was recently elected to the Education Minnesota Governing Board and she previously served on Education Minnesota's statewide Professional Advocacy member committee. She is a local delegate to the St. Paul Area Trades and Labor Assembly and serves on the board of the Minnesota AFL-CIO. In 2005, Ms Ricker was the Minnesota recipient and national semi-finalist of the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. She was selected as one of eight teachers to film a national professional development video series called *Write in the Middle* for teachers of writing funded by the Annenberg Foundation. She has been invited to present teaching and writing strategies at the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English annual conference, the National Council of Teachers of English annual convention, and the National Writing Project annual conference. She is a member of and was past Middle School Chair on the board of the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English.

GEORGE SUGAI

George Sugai is Carole J. Neag Endowed Professor in Special Education in the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut with expertise in behavior analysis, classroom and behavior management, school-wide discipline, function-based behavior support, school-wide positive behavior supports, and educating students with behavioral disorders. He has been a teacher in the public schools, treatment director in a residential program, and program administrator. Dr. Sugai conducts applied school and classroom research and works with schools to translate research into practice, especially at the school-wide, district, and state levels. He is currently co-director (with Rob Horner and Tim Lewis) of the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (www.pbis.org) at the University of Connecticut and University of Oregon, co-director (with Mary Beth Bruder) of the Early Childhood Personnel Center (www.ecpcta.org), and Director of the Center on Behavioral Education and Research (www.cber.org) in the Neag School of Education.

RANDI WEINGARTEN

Randi Weingarten, elected president of the American Federation of Teachers in 2008, has been president of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), which represents more than 140,000 active and retired educators in the New York City public school system, since 1998. She is also a board member of New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and a member of the AFT Executive Committee. A vice president of the New York City Central Labor Council of the AFL-CIO, she heads the city Municipal Labor Committee, an umbrella organization for some 100 city employee unions. Weingarten serves on a number of boards, including the New York Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH); the Anti-Defamation League, New York Region; the United Way of Greater New York; The International Rescue Committee; and the newly formed Math for America. She is also on the advisory boards of Operation Public Education at the University of Pennsylvania and the Haan Foundation for Children.

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 behavior management was largely limited 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.