

## **Summer 2014 Colocation Conference Bios**

### **Andrew Blumenfeld**

Andrew recently completed his first year as Teach for America corps member, teaching fifth grade at Crown Preparatory Academy in the West Adams district of Los Angeles. His school is co-located and in a unique partnership with LAUSD's 24th Street Elementary School. He is a founding member of the nonprofit Students for Education Reform, and the Vice President of the La Cañada Unified School District Board of Education. He graduated from Princeton University in 2013, where he studied education policy, and is currently pursuing his Masters in Urban Education Policy & Administration at Loyola Marymount University.

### **Rebecca Bunn**

Becca Bunn is an independent consultant with approximately 15 years of education reform experience. Her areas of focus include charter-district collaboration, new school start-up processes, personalized learning, and school turnaround initiatives. Most relevant to this conference, Becca brings a deep understanding of co-location issues as a result of having provided support to numerous campus redesigns involving multiple schools sharing a common facility. Becca formerly worked as President of The Riordan Foundation and Rx for Reading, two affiliated and education-focused philanthropic organizations located in Los Angeles, and served in a variety of roles in the New York City Department of Education, where she specialized in high school redesign, charter school approval and oversight, and new school development. Becca also carries the perspective of a classroom teacher who taught for several years in inner-city Boston and New York City public schools. She received her Masters in Education and BA in Government, both from Harvard University.

### **Delia Castillo**

Dr. Delia Castillo's formal teaching career began in 2000 at the secondary level teaching instrumental music. During this time, Delia founded two successful instrumental music programs, respectively at Nimitz Middle School in Huntington Park, CA and Orchard Academies in Bell, CA. In 2010, in collaboration with a group of LAUSD teachers, Delia revised and implemented the Public School Choice Plan for two of the small LAUSD schools on the co-located campus of Orchard Academies in the city of Bell. In 2011, she co-authored two Public School Choice 3.0 plans that were approved by the LAUSD Board of Education in April of 2012 and that were implemented at two of the small schools (VAPA and STEAM) on the campus of the Legacy Complex in the city of South Gate. She joined the Charter Schools Division of the LAUSD in August of 2012, where she is currently an advisor, and recently completed a doctorate in Education (Ed.D) with an emphasis in learning technologies from Pepperdine University. She was a protégé in cohort 9 of the California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrator (CALSA) Mentoring Program.

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### **José Cole-Gutiérrez**

José is passionate about helping all youth have access to a high quality public education; especially given the transformative impact education has had on his own life. He currently serves as Director for the Charter Schools Division of the Los Angeles Unified School District. In his role, José is responsible for leading the team striving to foster high quality educational options through exemplary charter school authorizing. LAUSD is the largest school district authorizer of charter schools in the country with about 264 schools serving over 130,000 students. Prior to joining LAUSD, José served as general manager for the Los Angeles region of the California Charter Schools Association where he supported the development of quality charter schools and increased accountability measures, and collaborated with districts to enhance policy and practice. He served for nearly seven years as Academic Programs Director for PUENTE Learning Center in Los Angeles before joining the Association. During his tenure at PUENTE, José taught in and managed the academic programs serving approximately 2,000 children, youth, and adults daily. Prior to joining PUENTE Learning Center, he served as an adjunct professor at Cypress College, where he taught interdisciplinary ethnic studies courses. José earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Stanford University with honors in Education and a Masters in Education from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. Active in community and civic life, José volunteers in various capacities, including service as a board member for NACSA, Advance!, a college counseling and preparation program, and as an advisory board member for the Center on Educational Governance at USC and the Charter and Autonomous School Leaders Program at CSU Dominguez Hills. He and his wife Jennifer are the proud parents of six beautiful children.

### **Jan Davis**

Jan Davis has been engaged in the field of education for over 34 years. She has been with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) for 29 years in the positions of high school teacher (Dance, Physical Education, Biology & Health), coach, Assistant Athletic Director, Dean, High School Assistant Principal, High School Principal, Director of Secondary Programs (Office of Instruction) and in her current position as Administrator of Operations, Educational Service Center (ESC) West. Prior to her employment with LAUSD, she taught K-8 physical education in private schools in Detroit, MI and Los Angeles. She has also had the pleasure to teach part-time in the Education Department at Loyola Marymount University.

### **Linda Del Cueto**

Linda Del Cueto has served students for more than 32 years, starting as an English teacher at Nimitz Junior High in Huntington Park in 1982 and continuing in a variety of capacities including categorical program advisor, assistant principal, principal and director. In 2004, Mrs. Del Cueto assumed the role of Assistant Superintendent of Staff Relations, serving as the District's Chief Negotiator. During her tenure, Mrs. Del Cueto negotiated the LAUSD/UTLA Pilot School Memorandum of Understanding in 2007, establishing the first 10 Pilot Schools in LAUSD. Subsequently, Mrs. Del Cueto assumed the role of area superintendent in Local District 8, 1 and ESC North. In 2013, Mrs. Del Cueto was selected to implement the Harvard University Public Education Leadership Program/LAUSD work around empowering innovative school

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community models to create student engagement and increased student achievement, focusing on autonomy and accountability for the Pilot School model.

Mrs. Del Cueto has been recognized by ACSA Region XVI as Superintendent of the Year and California State University, Los Angeles as Distinguished Educator. She attended LAUSD schools and is a proud graduate of Eagle Rock High School.

### **Keith Dell'Aquila**

Keith Dell'Aquila is the Director of Teacher Engagement for the California Charter Schools Association. At CCSA he directs the Associations efforts to engage teachers in advocacy efforts on behalf of their schools and students. Prior to joining CCSA, Keith taught Humanities at PUC CALS Charter Middle School for six years. While teaching at PUC, Keith helped develop and pilot a new teacher evaluation and development system and mentored beginning teachers. He is a founding member of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation National Teacher Advisory Council.

### **Monique Galvez**

From her experiences teaching tennis and as a teacher's assistant in pre-school, Monique knew she would enjoy pursuing a career in education. She has worked at LAUSD for the last 14 years, as a middle school teacher, an elementary math coach and intervention specialist. For the last four years, she has worked as an advisor at the Charter Schools Division. She enjoys working with diverse and innovative K-12 schools and supporting the CSD core value of making decisions that put the interests of students first. This past year, Monique earned a Masters in Education and an Administrator Certificate of Eligibility. She focuses on strengthening an area of the CSD mission she feels most passionate about by expanding opportunities for the sharing of promising practices so that all students can maximize their potential.

### **Gina Hughes**

Dr. Hughes has worked for the Los Angeles Unified School District for more than 27 years as a National Board Certified Teacher (2001-2011), District Intern Advisor, Specialist, and Professional Development Coordinator. Her expertise in teacher development is grounded in the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and her years of experience working for the Beginning Teacher Support & Assessment (BTSA) program and the Teacher Support Unit. Subsequent to Dr. Hughes' district office experience; she earned her "stripes" in the field as a school site administrator at several hard-to-staff middle schools in Local District 7. As an Assistant Principal, she sharpened her leadership skills by helping to create positive school culture for students, parents, and staff. She was also responsible for designing and leading professional development for the all teachers based upon areas of need and local district initiatives. During her tenure as a site administrator, Dr. Hughes earned her doctorate in Educational Leadership at Azusa Pacific University in May 2010. Her dissertation is entitled, Effective School Practices and Academic Performance in Urban Charter Schools: A Subgroup Analysis Across Principals, Teachers, and Parents. In 2010 she joined the Charter School Division where she provides charter school oversight, charter school renewal, and charter

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petition review. She also leads the work of the Charter Schools Division's Promising Practices team whose goal is to engage the public school community by encouraging the use of different and innovative teaching methods.

### **Kenya Jackson**

Kenya Jackson is a married mother with three boys! She is a Teach For America 00' Alum with fourteen years of teaching and leadership experience in New York City Public Schools and Los Angeles Charter Schools. Currently, she is the Director for View Park Preparatory Accelerated Charter Middle School, an Inner City Education Foundation Public School.

### **Mark Kleger-Heine**

Mark Kleger-Heine joined Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's office in 2007 to help launch the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools and is now the organization's Chief Operating Officer. Mr. Kleger-Heine joined the Partnership after four years at McKinsey & Company, the global management consulting firm. At McKinsey, Mr. Kleger-Heine counseled senior executives in nonprofit, government and advocacy organizations on major strategic issues they were facing. He also advised senior management at large biotech and medical device companies.

Prior to McKinsey, Mr. Kleger-Heine was the Deputy Director for Project GRAD Los Angeles in the northeast San Fernando Valley. He also has worked in several community-based nonprofit organizations working in partnership with public schools, and he began his career teaching math to 4th, 6th, 8th and 9th graders in Brooklyn, New York. Mark graduated summa cum laude from Yale University with a degree in Psychology. He is a graduate of the Broad Residency, received an MBA from Columbia Business School and an MPA from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University with a concentration in Domestic Policy.

### **Emily Liu**

Emily just finished her second year of teaching 8th grade math and science at ICEF View Park Preparatory Accelerated Charter Middle School in South Los Angeles as part of her Teach for America commitment. She received her Masters degree in Urban Education with a focus on Policy and Administration from Loyola Marymount University this past spring and studied environmental science and Native American studies at Dartmouth College for her undergraduate degree. Having written her Master's thesis on the attrition of Teach For America Corps Members, Emily feels very strongly about teacher advocacy and helping to support teachers in their work for our students and our communities. ICEF View Park Prep has been co-located on the Crenshaw High School campus for one year.

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### **Shane P. Martin**

Shane P. Martin, an educational anthropologist by training and expert in the areas of intercultural education, cultural diversity, and the spectrum of public, charter and Catholic schools, was appointed dean of the LMU School of Education in 2005 and dean of Graduate Studies in 2012. Dean Martin serves as a state commissioner to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and is a member of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Board of Examiners and California Committee on Accreditation Board of Institutional Reviewers. He is visible in the education community as past chair of the Green Dot Public Schools Board of Directors, a member of the Teach For America Los Angeles Board and Loyola High School of Los Angeles Board of Regents, and serves as chair of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Special Interest Group on Catholic Education. He received the National Catholic Educational Association's (NCEA) Michael J. Guerra Leadership Award in 2005 and Catherine T. McNamee, CSJ, Award in 2009, and the Loyola High School Alumni Association's Cahalan Award in 2008.

### **Laura J. McGowan-Robinson**

Laura McGowan-Robinson has shaped her career around the goal of opening an outstanding urban school since the beginning of her career as a high school English teacher. Ms. McGowan-Robinson most recently served roles as Instructional Specialist and Literacy Coach at East Valley High School in Los Angeles. As Literacy Coach, Ms. McGowan supported the instructional practices of lead teachers, provided curricular training, coordinated assessments and helped to actuate data-driven instructional planning. Through the Johns Hopkins University Talent Development High Schools program, Ms. McGowan-Robinson studied a reform model focused on school-turnaround. This led her to develop intervention programs to combat truancy and tardiness, and facilitate the roll-out of four Small Learning Communities through her role as Instructional Specialist. Ms. McGowan-Robinson is an alum of Building Excellent Schools, and the Founder & Executive Director for Crown Preparatory Academy. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a Master of Arts degree in Instructional Leadership and English from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

### **Edward Morris**

Edward "Ted" Morris is the Co-Director of Endeavor College Preparatory Charter School, a high-performing, high-poverty, public charter school serving children on L.A.'s east side. In 2010, Mr. Morris founded Futuro Prep, a charter elementary school which officially merged with Endeavor in 2013 and became the elementary part of Endeavor's K-8 program. Mr. Morris was a Fellow with Building Excellent Schools, a national school leadership training program through which he visited and studied many of the highest performing urban charter schools in the country to inform the design of Futuro Prep. Before the Fellowship, Mr. Morris taught in urban public schools for 12 years, beginning as a bilingual kindergarten teacher for Teach For America and ultimately as a middle-school teacher for KIPP L.A. Prep during its founding years. As a school leader, Mr. Morris has worked in Prop 39 co-locations on different 4 campuses. Mr. Morris holds a dual degree in Economics and Japanese from Claremont McKenna College, a multi-subject teaching credential from California State University, Dominguez Hills, and a Masters in

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School Administration through the Principal Leadership Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles.

### **Jacqueline Olvera-Rojas**

Jacqueline Olvera-Rojas is the School Operations Manager at Robert F. Kennedy Community Schools, a co-location campus with 6 autonomous Pilot Schools that service 4000, TK – 12th grade students from the Pico Union/Koreatown area of Los Angeles. She is responsible for the day-to-day non-instructional functions of the school campus. Jackie has over 24 years working in public education with Los Angeles Unified School District. She worked as part of the implementation team with the Local District F Small Learning Communities Initiative grant and later with the Pilot School design team. Jackie designed and implemented the Zone of Choice Electronic Enrollment process that is now being used district wide. She has a B.A in Liberal Studies from California State University, Los Angeles. She is committed to providing students and safe and healthy learning environment where students will grow to be successful, civic-minded individuals that will return and contribute to their community.

### **Emilio Pack**

Emilio Pack the Founder and Executive Director of Math and Science College Preparatory Schools (MSCPS). MSCPS strives to operate high performing charter schools in Los Angeles that will prepare underserved students to excel professionally in the STEM fields.

Additionally, Emilio serves as the Director of Loyola Marymount University's (LMU) Institute of School Leadership and Administration (ISLA), and a Clinical Associate Professor of Educational Leadership for the LMU School of Education. Over the past 19 years Dr. Pack has worked on K-12 public school leadership and reform in numerous positions and roles. He has assisted in the opening of numerous charter schools in Los Angeles and was the Founding Principal of Alliance, Dr. Olga Mohan High School, the 2011 California Charter School of the Year.

### **Meg Palisoc**

Dr. Meg Palisoc is the Co-Founder and CEO of Synergy Academies, a non-profit organization that operates nationally recognized urban public charter schools in South Los Angeles. Over the past 10 years, Meg co-founded three schools, Synergy Charter Academy, Synergy Kinetic Academy, and Synergy Quantum Academy, which serve over 1300 students per year in grades K-12.

Meg holds three degrees from the University of Southern California, including a Doctor of Education. Prior to starting Synergy, Meg was a former Los Angeles Unified School District teacher, writing coach, and visual and performing arts coordinator. Teaching was a second career for Meg. She was formerly the Director of Engineering Career Services at USC, and she left her job to pursue teaching after she witnessed firsthand how there were not enough inner-city students persisting in college, let alone in the engineering fields. So, Meg became an inner-city teacher to help more kids get into colleges such as USC.

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Meg and her team are transforming the education landscape by sharing their best practices with other schools in order to eliminate the achievement gap nationwide. Under Meg's leadership, Synergy's schools are becoming model STEM schools that empower students to study Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. In 2013, Synergy's elementary school was named the Best Urban Elementary School in America and the #1 charter elementary school in California. The Walton Family Foundation recognized Meg as one of four Education Reformers to Watch in the nation and she is participating in the highly selective Pahara-Aspen Education Fellows Program.

### **Dayls Stewart**

An educator for 29 years, Dr. Stewart is currently the school administrator and leader of learning at Hamasaki Elementary in East Los Angeles, where she has served since 2011. Before becoming an administrator, Dr. Stewart taught at the elementary level, and subsequently held other positions including Literacy Expert and Literacy Coordinator. As a Coordinator she facilitated extensive professional development for teachers and administrators. Dr. Stewart is an advocate for the at-risk students in her school and district, and she stresses the importance of good first teaching as a way to address student needs.

### **Steve Venz**

As founding principal of Quincy Jones Elementary School (QJES) in the Los Angeles Unified School District, Steve Venz implemented an educational model using jazz music and the arts to strengthen critical thinking, foster creativity and nurture collaborative practices among students, teachers and families. Since opening in 2010, the school serves 365 neighborhood K-5<sup>th</sup> grade students: of these over 50% are designated as English Learners and 100% are designated as Title I in the highly impacted neighborhood known as the Historic Central Avenue Jazz Corridor in South Los Angeles. Within three years of being established, QJES has continually surpassed annual academic achievement goals as demonstrated by the following data: API growth of 96 points over two years (2011—685 Baseline API; 2012 – 730 API; 2013 – 781 API); 7<sup>th</sup> highest elementary school of 556 LAUSD elementary schools with API growth in 2013; one of the top forty schools out of all LAUSD schools with highest student attendance rate for two consecutive years; and 95% parent participation rate with Parent/Teacher Conferences for two consecutive years. A shared commitment to every student on campus with co-located charter school, Synergy Charter Academy (SCA), continues to strengthen the collective efficacy for both SCA and QJES.

Before becoming principal, Steve served as the LAUSD's music administrator, focusing on increasing the number of students receiving music education in Los Angeles. During the 2008 launch of Gustavo Dudamel's Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA), Steve served as the musical director for the Expo Center Youth Orchestra, the pilot orchestra for this El Sistema-inspired music program. Steve currently is a member of the US Department of Education's Professional Development for Arts Educators and Promise Neighborhood grant review teams, the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation national grant committee and the GRAMMY's Music Educator Award final evaluation panel.

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### **Jeen Yu**

As an advisor in the Charter Schools Division (CSD), Jeen believes strongly in high-quality petitions and in charter schools committed to providing equity and enrichment for all students. Prior to joining CSD, Jeen taught English literature and composition at the University of California, Santa Barbara—where she pursued doctoral studies in Renaissance literature—and at Los Angeles High School (LA High) and Venice High School. During her tenure at LA High, she served as English Department Chair, Master Teacher for UCLA’s Teacher Education Program, and founding member of a Media and Technology Small Learning Community. Her favorite part of teaching was helping students to understand and appreciate challenging texts and to develop their voices through in-depth literary study. Outside the field of education, Jeen has experience writing press releases and style guides and editing technical manuals for two Santa Barbara-based software companies.

### **Steve Zimmer**

Steve Zimmer is a 17-year veteran teacher and community activist. Steve joined Teach for America in 1992 working as an ESL teacher at Marshall High School in Silver Lake. At Marshall, he developed innovative programs such as the Comprehensive Student Support Center, which provides free medical services to students and their families. He also founded the Elysian Valley United Community Services Center (CSC) a community owned and operated agency that provides a continuation school program, an after school program, recreation and enrichment programs for the community. Steve continues his work in serving youth and their families as a School Board Member, elected first in 2009 and again in 2013. As part of Steve's passion to serve youth pushed out of the system, he launched Student Recovery Day in 2009—a District-wide event to encourage students with excessive absences to return to school by visiting these students at their homes and in their communities. He has authored numerous resolutions to support and affirm all students including: those who are undocumented, who are living in poverty or experience homelessness, LGBTQ students and those students learning English as a second language. Perhaps Steve’s greatest achievement is located in Hollywood at the FamilySource Center, a partnership site of LAUSD and the Youth Policy Institute. This site includes Pupil Services and Attendance counselors, Psychiatric Social Worker counselors, Adult ESL classes, and a Continuation High School for homeless youth and has become a model for the entire District.