



# LITERACY SUMMIT

REACHING EVERY READER: THE NEXT CHAPTER

DECEMBER 9, 2021



**Department of  
Education**

Advocates for Children  
of New York



Protecting every child's right to learn

**ARISE**  
coalition

# CALL TO ACTION

Teaching children how to read is one of the most fundamental responsibilities of our public schools. Reading—the ability to gain meaning from print—is the gateway to future learning, both in and out of the classroom; it is essential for full participation in civic life, democratic society, and the 21st century economy.

Every student in New York City deserves the chance to learn to read, no matter the school they attend or the neighborhood they call home. And science tells us that nearly all children can become skilled readers when they receive high-quality, evidence-based instruction. We know that children learn literacy skills best when they are explicitly and systematically taught how to break the code that connects sounds and letters; when the curriculum reflects their lived experiences and affirms their cultural and linguistic identities; when language and literacy development are both understood as dynamic processes; and when their teachers have the training and support they need to be effective. Research lights the path forward, and success requires a long-term, citywide commitment to making evidence-based and culturally and linguistically relevant reading instruction a top priority.

How reading is currently taught around the city differs, to some degree, by school, neighborhood, and district. The goal is for there to be a consistent use of scientifically based and culturally and linguistically relevant curricula. If we are committed to supporting all students, including our marginalized students, then students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities will be ensured proper instruction and intervention, and students who learn in two languages will benefit from literacy instruction that uses and values their home language.

Now is the time for all New Yorkers—educators and school staff; parents and students; policymakers and philanthropists; community-based organizations, advocates, and faith leaders—to come together around a shared vision for universal literacy. Together, we will fight to ensure that every child, in every classroom, in every language, has the support they need to become a successful and lifelong reader.

## AGENDA

- 10:00 – 10:15 Welcome
- 10:15 – 10:45 Keynote Speaker
- 11:00 – 12:00 Evidence-Based & Culturally Relevant Practices:  
Working at the Intersection for Equity
- 12:45 – 1:45 All Means ALL:  
Diversifying Literacy to Meet the Needs of Every Student
- 2:00 – 3:00 How do We Move Forward?  
Understanding the Shared Responsibility Around Literacy
- 3:15 – 3:30 Closing Remarks

# KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Lacey Robinson  
Chief Executive Officer  
UnboundED

As Chief Executive Officer of UnboundEd, Lacey Robinson sets the vision for equity-driven national change as she carries generations of pride and tears of her enslaved ancestors along with the native sons and daughters of this sacred land. While keeping an eye on the design, delivery, and quality of all the organization's antiracist work, she ensures UnboundEd's health, sustainability and future-driven vision for what teaching and learning can be in the 21st century.

From the organization's infancy, in the role of Chief of Program and Engagement, Robinson engaged with industry partners to support standards-aligned, content-focused, equity-driven adult professional learning and development. While supporting vital design and execution elements for UnboundEd's signature professional learning opportunity, the industry-leading Standards Institute, Robinson contributed to the rapid growth of an organization respected for its national programs and customized professional learning for K-12 educators, work that pivoted online during the pandemic to meet the specific needs of educators.

As a teacher, principal, and staff development specialist, Robinson maintained a focus on literacy, equity, and school leadership for more than two decades. Her life's work aims to help educators in school systems disrupt systemic racism and all of its legacies in classrooms. Inspired by Langston Hughes, her path is to build temples for tomorrow, strong and brave as she knows how, and to ensure that future generations can stand free within themselves to be whomever they choose to be. As CEO, she pursues this passion by leading an organization known for the highest integrity in professional development experiences; experiences which honor us all as professionals in educating our nation's children, and in leading the schools that serve them.

# EVIDENCE-BASED & CULTURALLY RELEVANT PRACTICES

## Working at the Intersection for Equity

Learning to read and reading to learn are among some of the most complex tasks students must perform as they progress through the grades. This activity isn't only complex for students though. Teachers must have both the requisite knowledge and skills to adeptly instruct students to become masterful readers and writers. Social justice and equity demand that this happens for every child. Now, seminal and current research tells us that this is best done through the application of evidence-based practices delivered through pedagogy that is culturally responsive. This panel will delve into what these practices are and how we can ensure that they are taught with the cultural and linguistic diversity of our city's students in mind.

### Moderators



**Dr. Linda Chen**  
Chief Academic Officer  
NYC Department of Education



**Andrew Fletcher**  
Senior Executive Director, Early Literacy  
NYC Department of Education

### Panelists



**Linnea Ehri**  
Distinguished Professor  
CUNY Graduate Center



**Katie Pace Miles**  
Assistant Professor  
Brooklyn College



**Susan Neuman**  
Professor  
New York University



**Dr. Julie Washington**  
Professor  
University of California

# ALL MEANS ALL

## Diversifying Literacy to Meet the Needs of Every Student

We know there will be students who receive generally effective literacy instruction that will need strategic support to meet reading proficiency and develop more advanced literacy skills. Whether a student has a disability, is acquiring English as a new language, has language differences, or has been historically underserved, we need to ensure students receive intervention and access to grade level literacy instruction across all grades. This panel will delve into what evidence based interventions will best support students with both word reading and language comprehension.

### Moderators



**Dr. Esther Friedman**  
Literacy Learning Specialist  
and Consultant



**Jenna Shumsky**  
Executive Director, Middle School Quality Initiatives  
NYC Department of Education

### Panelists



**Nadine Gabb**  
Associate Professor  
Harvard Graduate School of  
Education



**Devin Kearns**  
Associate Professor  
University of Connecticut



**Jan Hasbrouck**  
Researcher, Educational  
Consultant, and Author



**Claudia Rinaldi**  
Professor of Education  
Lasell University

# HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD?

## Understanding the Shared Responsibility Around Literacy

As we look ahead to the future of literacy instruction in NYC schools, all stakeholders will need to work collectively to develop shared goals to ensure we support all students achieving beyond proficiency in their literacy development. In order to do so, how do we move forward and develop a shared responsibility to increase literacy achievement for all students? During our last panel, we will learn from a variety of experts and leaders about their successes and challenges in improving literacy outcomes. We will begin to leverage this discussion to articulate a path forward for literacy across all grades in NYC schools.

### Moderators



**Jason Borges**  
Executive Director of Literacy and Academic  
Intervention Services  
NYC Department of Education



**Kim Sweet**  
Executive Director  
Advocates for Children of New York

### Panelists



**Jenny Bogoni**  
Executive Director  
Read by 4th Campaign



**Katherine Kurjakovic**  
English Language Learner Specialist  
United Federation of Teachers



**Kymyona Burk**  
Senior Policy Fellow  
ExcelinEd



**Maggie Siena**  
Principal  
Peck Slip School



**Margaret Goldberg**  
Literacy Coach /Co-Founder  
The Right to Read Project



**Dr. Tracy Weeden**  
President and CEO  
Neuhaus Education Center



# CLOSING REMARKS



**Meisha Porter**  
Chancellor  
NYC Department of Education

Meisha Porter is Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, the largest school system in the nation. Appointed on March 15, 2021, she is the first Black woman to lead the education of the system's 1 million students in over 1,800 schools. A lifelong New Yorker and product of the City's public schools, Chancellor Porter has climbed every rung of the DOE's professional ladder over nearly 25 years: community coordinator, English teacher, assistant principal, principal, district superintendent, and Bronx executive superintendent before ascending to Chancellor.

Under her leadership in her most recent position, graduation rate increases in the Bronx outpaced the gains of other boroughs. Her vast experience in the system makes her the ideal leader to advance us toward fully reopening our buildings to all students while accelerating progress toward equity and excellence for all.

Chancellor Porter's lifelong journey through the New York City public school system has steeped her in the myriad complexities, challenges, and opportunities across the City's vast educational landscape. Just as her own local public education enabled her to achieve success, she is driven by the mission of enabling all students to realize their dreams.

Born in Far Rockaway and raised in Jamaica, Queens, Porter graduated from Queens Vocational and Technical High School before enrolling in Hunter College. She started her career as a youth organizer in Highbridge, then helped to conceptualize and launch the creation of the Bronx School for Law, Government, and Justice, the first Urban Assembly school. That was where she served 18 years as community coordinator, English teacher, assistant principal, and ultimately principal. Porter then spent three years as Superintendent of Bronx District 11, which includes neighborhoods that span the North Bronx. In 2018, she was promoted to Bronx Executive Superintendent, leading the entire borough's 361 schools, the New Visions Affinity schools, and 235,000 students across community school districts 7 through 12.

A recipient of the National Association of Negro Women's Sojourner Truth Award, Porter has been a Columbia University Cahn fellow and an Aspen Institute fellow. She has taught at CUNY as an adjunct professor and participated in the Harvard University National Institute for Urban School Leaders and is a member of the Fordham University – Carnegie Foundation iLead team.

Porter received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Hunter College, concentrating in Cross Cultural Literature and Black and Puerto Rican Studies. She later received her Master's Degree in Administration and Supervision from Mercy College and completed her School District Leader certification through the NYC Advanced Leadership Institute. She is currently pursuing a doctorate in education at Fordham University.

# SPEAKER BIOS



Jenny Bogoni  
Executive Director  
Read by 4th Campaign

Jenny is a pragmatic idealist, builder and convenor. She is a strategic leader whose work is grounded in the belief that society's most complex challenges can best be addressed through collective efforts informed and driven by those most affected by the issues at hand. Jenny has experience growing and scaling small enterprises as well as envisioning, creating and facilitating large-scale initiatives. She has honed her leadership skills shaping and driving citywide collective efforts that bring together hundreds of partners representing diverse stakeholders. These collective efforts – such as Read by 4th– are positively impacting the Philadelphia community and are recognized as national models for galvanizing change.



Jason Borges  
Executive Director of Literacy and Academic Intervention Services  
NYC Department of Education

Jason Borges is a literacy leader and specialist. His journey began in teaching over twenty years ago in alternative schools in Massachusetts for students with disabilities. He has served in the Special Education Office in the NYC DOE as Senior Director of Intensive Interventions and Director of Academic Intervention Services in the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Learning. Jason sees literacy as a foundation for educational justice. He is committed to continue serving NYC DOE schools as Executive Director of Literacy and AIS in developing literacy environments where all students learn skills that will help them engage with and adapt to changing media, contexts, and to use knowledge towards a more just world.





Kymyona Burk  
Senior Policy Fellow  
ExcelinEd

Kymyona Burk is a Senior Policy Fellow at ExcelinEd. In this role, she supports states pursuing a comprehensive approach to K-3 reading policy by assisting state leaders in building new or improving existing K-3 reading policies, with a heavy focus on supporting successful policy implementation.

Kymyona most recently served in Mississippi as the Executive Director for the Jackson Public School District's Office of Teaching and Learning and led all aspects of the district's instructional programming. Prior to this, she was the State Literacy Director at the Mississippi Department of Education where she led the implementation of Mississippi's Literacy-Based Promotion Act. Kymyona began her career as an elementary reading teacher and has also taught middle and high school English. At Jackson State University, she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Master of Arts in Teaching English, Master of Science in Education Administration and Supervision and a Doctor of Education in Early Child Education.



Dr. Linda Chen  
Chief Academic Officer  
NYC Department of Education

**Dr. Linda P. Chen** is Chief Academic Officer, overseeing instructional supports for all learners and managing the Divisions of Teaching and Learning, Special Education, and English Language Learners. Before returning to the NYC Department of Education, Linda served as Vice President for Engagement and Implementation at the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship. Before that, Linda served as Chief Academic Officer of Baltimore City Public Schools, Deputy Chief Academic Officer of Boston Public Schools, and Assistant Superintendent and Deputy Chief of Teaching and Learning in the School District of Philadelphia. Prior to her leadership roles in Philadelphia, Linda served as principal of PS 165 in Manhattan, literacy supervisor in Queens, and an elementary school teacher at PS 163 in Manhattan. She began her career teaching elementary school in Seattle.



Linnea Ehri  
Distinguished Professor  
CUNY Graduate Center

Linnea Ehri received her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of California, Berkeley. She was a professor at the University of California, Davis, for several years before joining the Ph.D. Program in Educational Psychology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York as a Distinguished Professor. She has received research awards from the American Educational Research Association, the National Reading Conference, the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading, and the International Reading Association, and has held elective offices in the first three organizations listed. She is a member of the Reading Hall of Fame. She served on the National Reading Panel which was commissioned by the U.S. Congress to report on research-based methods of teaching reading effectively to elementary students. She has received federal research grants from NICHD and the Office of Education. She has published over 150 papers in professional journals and books.

Her research has provided scientific evidence clarifying how words are read automatically by sight, how children develop word reading and spelling skill, and how instruction can facilitate acquisition of these processes. She has conducted studies showing that spellings of words are bonded to pronunciations and retained in memory when their graphemes (letters) are connected to phonemes (smallest sounds) within pronunciations, called orthographic mapping. Storing words in memory in this way enables readers to recognize words automatically as they read text. Her studies support phase theory clarifying how word decoding, sight word reading and spelling develop in beginning readers, from pre-alphabetic, to partial alphabetic, to full alphabetic, to consolidated alphabetic phases. Her studies reveal how to strengthen letter-sound learning through letter shape-sound mnemonics (e.g., shape of S drawn as snake to learn S-“s” association), and how to strengthen phonemic segmentation instruction through training in mouth positions and movements to articulate the sequence of phonemes in words (e.g., lips closed, then open, then closed to detect /m/-/a/-/p/). Her research shows how to strengthen vocabulary learning by exposing students to spellings of words. Exposure activates mappings between graphemes and phonemes to enhance memory for their pronunciations. Her research shows how to strengthen decoding instruction by teaching students to hold rather than break letter-sounds as they sound out and blend them to pronounce words (e.g., sssssaaaammmm, not sssss-aaaa-mmmm). Her research supports teaching beginners to read words by breaking them into grapheme-phoneme units rather than larger syllabic units. Her research suggests the importance of teaching students the major letter-sound relations, phonemic segmentation, decoding, and spelling as part of systematic phonics instruction.



**Andrew Fletcher**  
Senior Executive Director, Early Literacy  
NYC Department of Education

As a teacher, literacy coach, and educator for the past 20 years, it has been Andrew's life mission to ensure literacy for all. Andrew began his teaching career in San Francisco and later taught in Los Angeles and New York. He is currently Senior Executive Director of Early Literacy within the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) at the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE). The Early Literacy Team works to ensure equity and excellence for all through its implementation of the Mayor's and Chancellor's Universal Literacy Initiative (ULit), which has the goal of every student being able to read on grade-level by the conclusion of the second-grade year. The key driver of the Initiative is the school-based Reading Coach. There are currently over 400 reading coaches supporting kindergarten to second grade teachers throughout New York City's elementary schools. Coaches provide support to teachers and leaders through the use of cycles and the provision of professional learning. ULit also supports the work of the larger department (NYC DOE) in collaboration with other divisions, most notably the Chief Academic Office (CAO) as well as engages in non-coaching specific projects.



**Dr. Esther Friedman**  
Literacy Learning Specialist  
and Consultant

Dr. Esther Klein Friedman has served New York City students since the mid-1970s as a teacher of special education and reading in elementary, middle, and high school; staff development trainer for Manhattan Region; principal in District Two; director of literacy and social studies in District Six; regional director of academic intervention services and local instructional superintendent in Region Ten; director of secondary school reform, director of academic intervention services K-12, director of NYCLA, an NCLB Supplemental Educational Services program internal to the New York City Department of Education at NYCDOE central office; interim superintendent in District 3; and most recently as executive director of literacy and academic intervention services at NYCDOE central office. Having retired a year ago from the Department, Esther continues to work on several advisory and advocacy boards and has engaged as a consultant for projects in school districts, schools, and professional development organizations – all related to core literacy improvement and development and support of academic interventions in literacy. To put all of that experience to work where it counts, Dr. Friedman has tutored children and adults with reading disabilities and challenges for over thirty-five years.

Esther was born in Romania and lived in two other countries before arriving here in the middle of first grade. She learned enough English to get in trouble for talking too much in class within a few months of her arrival here. She is a product of the New York City public schools, completed her undergraduate degree at Queens College, and received Masters and Ph.D. degrees from New York University. Her doctoral work focused on reading acquisition in typically developing and struggling students. Esther's professional interests include exploration into the challenges of and solutions for supporting the achievement of students in urban schools, particularly in the area of literacy. Esther believes deeply in the transformative power of pedagogy and hopes to convince you of it as well.



**Nadine Gabb**  
Associate Professor  
Harvard Graduate School of Education

Dr. Nadine Gaab received her PhD from the University of Zurich, Switzerland and received postdoctoral training at Stanford University and MIT. She started her first faculty position at Boston Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School in 2007 and switched to her current position in January 2021. Currently, she is an Associate Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her work focuses on typical/atypical learning trajectories from infancy to adulthood with a special emphasis on language and reading development and the role of the environment in shaping these trajectories. Her work is at the intersection of neuroscience, education, EdTech, and policy within a learning disability framework. Her laboratory employs longitudinal behavioral and neuroimaging studies to characterize differences in learning as a complex outcome of cumulative risk and protective factors interacting within and across genetic, neurobiological, cognitive, and environmental levels from infancy to adulthood. Her theoretical work focuses on early multifactorial frameworks of learning differences with an emphasis on screening, early identification, and 'preventive education'. Additionally, one important key aspect of her work is the translation of our research findings to address contemporary challenges in educational and clinical practice and policy.

She is the 2019 recipient of the LDA Award (Learning Disabilities Association America) for her work on learning disabilities. In 2018, Nadine was presented with the Allan C. Crocker Award for her advocacy on behalf of children with dyslexia and reading disabilities and efforts around the recent passage of the Massachusetts screening legislation (under the guidance of Decoding Dyslexia MA). She has also been recognized by the International Dyslexia Association in her receipt of the Norman Geschwind Memorial lecture 2020 and the Alice H. Garside Award for outstanding leadership in advancing the science and advocacy of dyslexia. She is currently an Associate Editor at the journals Scientific Studies of Reading, Developmental Science, and the Journal of Learning Disabilities. She is an international speaker, frequently presenting to teachers on the brain science of typical and atypical literacy development as well as best screening practices for early literacy milestones, dyslexia and reading impairments. Her website with her publications can be found at [www.gaablab.com](http://www.gaablab.com) and her twitter handle is @GaabLab.



**Margaret Goldberg**  
Literacy Coach /Co-Founder  
The Right to Read Project

**Margaret Goldberg** is a literacy coach in a large urban district in California. She's held a variety of roles including district Early Literacy Lead, site-based literacy coach, and reading interventionist. In every role, she's worked to help schools and districts align instruction with reading research. She is the co-founder of The Right to Read Project, a group of teachers, researchers, and activists committed to the pursuit of equity through literacy. Her writing is published on The Right to Read Project blog (<https://righttoreadproject.com/>) and on Reading Rockets (<https://www.readingrockets.org/blogs/right-to-read>).



**Jan Hasbrouck**  
Researcher, Educational Consultant, and Author

Dr. Jan Hasbrouck is a researcher, educational consultant, and author. She was a reading specialist and literacy coach for 15 years before teaching at the University of Oregon and later becoming a professor at Texas A&M University. She served as Executive Consultant to the Washington State Reading Initiative and as an advisor to the Texas Reading Initiative. Dr. Hasbrouck has provided educational consulting to individual schools across the United States as well as in Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, and Germany, helping teachers, specialists, and administrators design and implement effective assessment and instructional programs targeted to help low-performing readers.

Dr. Hasbrouck earned her B.A. and M.A. from the University of Oregon, and completed her Ph.D. at Texas A&M. Her research in areas of reading fluency, reading assessment, instructional coaching, and English Learners has been published in numerous professional books and journals. She is the author and coauthor of several books including "Conquering Dyslexia", "Reading Fluency", "Student-Focused Coaching" and "Educators as Physicians", along with several assessment tools. Dr. Hasbrouck works with the McGraw Hill publishers as an author of their "Wonders" and "Wonder Works" reading and intervention programs. In 2019 she helped found Read Washington, a 501(c3) nonprofit organization with the mission to "provide professional development opportunities, based on the science of reading, so every student becomes a skilled and confident reader." She also enjoys volunteering at her grandson's K-8 school in Seattle.





**Devin Kearns**  
Associate Professor  
University of Connecticut

Devin M. Kearns, Ph.D. is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut (UConn). He researches reading disabilities—including dyslexia—in school-age children. His research focuses on linking educational practice to cognitive science and neuroscience in collaboration with colleagues at Haskins Laboratories and the Brain Imaging Research Center at UConn. He and his colleagues examine the neurobiological change that occurs as students learn to read. They are also developing a new reading intervention designed to link word reading and meaning and examining how the intervention affects students' patterns of cognitive processing. He and his colleagues are also developing and testing a game-based dyslexia screening app. Devin has seven years of classroom experience as a teacher, literacy coach, and reading specialist. He continues to help schools and districts implement high-quality reading instruction—including demonstrating how to implement evidence-based reading instruction.



**Katherine Kurjakovic**  
English Language Learner Specialist  
United Federation of Teachers

**Katherine Kurjakovic** is the assistant to the vice president for education and English language learner specialist at the United Federation of Teachers in New York City. She provides support in the areas of multilingual learners, curriculum, and professional learning. Prior to her current position, Katie taught English as a new language for 25 years in a K-6 school in Queens, NY, and was a member of the NY State ELA Standards Review Committee for the Next Generation Learning Standards. She serves on the Professional Standards and Practices Board for the New York State Education Department, the board of the Association for Education Finance and Policy, and the ELL Cadre of the American Federation of Teachers. She received her B.A. in American Studies from Barnard College and her M.A. in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from Hunter College.





**Susan Neuman**  
Professor  
New York University

Susan B. Neuman is a Professor of Teaching and Learning at New York University specializing in childhood education and early literacy development. Previously, she has been a Professor at the University of Michigan and has served as the U.S. Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education. In her role as Assistant Secretary, she established the Early Reading First program, the Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program and was responsible for all activities in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act. She has served on the IRA Board of Directors (2001-2003), and other numerous boards of non-profit organizations, and served as Co-editor of Reading Research Quarterly (2011-2018), ILA flagship research journal. Her research and teaching interests include early childhood policy, curriculum, and early reading instruction, preK-grade 3 for children who live in poverty. Neuman has received two life-time achievement awards for research in literacy development, and is a member of the Reading Hall of Fame, and a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association. She has written over 100 articles, and authored and edited 11 books, including the Handbook of Early Literacy Research (Volumes I, II, III) with David Dickinson, "Changing the Odds for Children at Risk" (Teachers College Press, 2009) "Educating the Other America" (Brookes, 2008) and "Multimedia and Literacy Development (Taylor & Francis, 2008). Her most recent books are "Giving our children a fighting chance:Poverty literacy, and the development of information capital." (Teachers College Press, 2012); and "All about Words:Improving vocabulary in the age of Common Core Standards, preK-grade 2 (2014).



**Katie Pace Miles**  
Assistant Professor  
Brooklyn College

Katharine Pace Miles, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in Early Childhood Education at Brooklyn College, City University of New York. Dr. Miles's research interests include orthographic facilitation and mapping, high frequency word learning, literacy assessment of students with special needs, and literacy instruction for young children that is both developmentally appropriate and grounded in the science of reading. She works closely with New York City's Department of Education to support literacy initiatives that impact the city's most under-served students. Dr. Miles proudly serves as the Academic Advisor for Reading Rescue, a professional development program and an evidence-based literacy intervention provided to first grade students across New York City. She is also the creator of Reading Ready, an explicit and systematic word reading curriculum for Kindergarten and first grade students. In addition, Dr. Miles supports the alignment of other early literacy programs with the field of reading science in an effort to close the research to practice divide.



**Claudia Rinaldi**  
Professor of Education  
Lasell University

Claudia Rinaldi, Ph.D., is Chair of the Joan Weiler Arnow '49 Professor of Education, a three-year endowed position awarded for excellence in teaching and community impact. Her areas of research are the implementation of the Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) framework in urban settings with English learners, teacher education in bilingual special education, and diversifying the teacher pipeline. Claudia has authored peer-reviewed publications and a book for educators called *Practical Ways to Engage All Struggling Readers*. She leads a graduate certificate program in Teaching Bilingual Students with Disabilities for general, ESL, and special education teachers geared towards applying research-informed practices to the questions and processes of identifying whether it is a language difference or a learning disability. Claudia also serves as an expert for Understood.org and the National Center for Intensive Interventions. Claudia believes that it is critical to prepare teacher leaders who may serve as advocates and allies for all students. She believes that teachers must respond to the belief that all students can learn and succeed beyond barriers like culture, language, disability, poverty, and marginalization in our country and globally.



**Maggie Siena**  
Principal  
Peck Slip School

Maggie Siena began her career in District 2 in 1992, teaching special education, early childhood and upper elementary classes. She has been a mathematics consultant for Marilyn Burns' Math Solutions and A.U.S.S.I.E. Maggie was the founding principal of City Hall Academy, a professional development lab school located on the ground floor of the Tweed Courthouse. After seven years as the principal of PS 150, a choice school in Lower Manhattan, she founded the Peck Slip School, a District 2 elementary school serving families in the Seaport and Financial Districts. Maggie was a 2013 Cahn Fellow and is the author of the professional book, *From Reading to Math: How Best Practices in Literacy Can Make You a Better Math Teacher*.



**Jenna Shumsky**

Executive Director, Middle School Quality Initiatives  
NYC Department of Education

Jenna Shumsky began her career as a middle school teacher and leader. She earned an MS in School Leadership, with a focus on literacy, from Bankstreet College of Education, and served as a district-level literacy coach and director professional development prior to holding her current position as the Executive Director of the Middle School Quality Initiative – a literacy support office in partnership with over 170 NYC middle grade schools.



**Kim Sweet**

Executive Director  
Advocates for Children of New York

**Kim Sweet** has been the Executive Director of Advocates for Children of New York (AFC), a not-for-profit organization that promotes access to quality education for low-income children in New York City's schools, since 2007. She leads a staff of more than 50 attorneys and education specialists and oversees a wide range of projects focused on the educational rights and needs of the children the school system often overlooks – children with disabilities, immigrants and Multi-Lingual Learners, children who are homeless, and children involved in the child welfare or justice systems. While at AFC, Ms. Sweet started the ARISE Coalition, which now includes more than 80 organizational and individual members working together to improve education for students with disabilities in the city's public schools, as well as the state-wide Coalition for Multiple Pathways to a Diploma.

At AFC, Ms. Sweet has served on numerous task forces, coalitions, and advisory boards, including the Mayor's Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline, the Young Men's Initiative Advisory Board, the Steering Committee of the Mayor's Community Schools Advisory Board, the School Diversity Advisory Group, and the NYS Education Department Family and Community Engagement Advisory Council.

Ms. Sweet previously worked as the Associate General Counsel at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, a litigation associate with Patterson, Belknap, Webb & Tyler LLP, and a law clerk to U.S. District Court Judge Robert P. Patterson, Jr. Ms. Sweet also taught as an adjunct professor in the Urban Law Clinic of New York Law School. She holds a B.A. from Brown University and a J.D. from Columbia Law School.



**Dr. Julie Washington**  
Professor  
University of California

Dr. Washington is a Professor in the School of Education at the University of California – Irvine (UCI). She is a Speech-Language Pathologist and is a Fellow of the American Speech Language Hearing Association. Dr. Washington directs the Learning Disabilities Research Innovation Hub funded by the National Institutes of Health, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute on Child Health and Human Development. She is also director of the Dialect, Poverty and Academic Success Lab at UCI. Currently, Dr. Washington's research is focused on the intersection of literacy, language variation, and poverty. In particular, her work focuses on understanding the role of cultural dialect in assessment, identification of reading disabilities in school-aged African American children and on disentangling the relationship between language production and comprehension on development of reading and early language skills for children growing up in poverty.



**Dr. Tracy Weeden**  
President and CEO  
Neuhaus Education Center

**Dr. Tracy Weeden** is a seasoned leader dedicated to advancing literacy success for all, and academic excellence for children regardless of zip code. Weeden has spent her career developing innovative academic programs while scaling transformational systems change.

While serving for the past 5 years as President and CEO of Neuhaus Education Center (NEC), Dr. Weeden has expanded the reach and impact of the Neuhaus Education Center from a local non-profit to a broader impact across the State of Texas, and on a national and international level. The NEC mission provides evidence-based professional learning to educators, information and resources to families, and adult literacy services.

Prior to serving at NEC, Dr. Weeden was the Executive Director of Academic Planning for Scholastic Achievement Partners. Dr. Weeden also spent 5 years as the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for the Houston ISD. In Katy ISD, Weeden served as a high school English teacher, a recruiter, and then as the Coordinator of Personnel Development in central office for Katy ISD. Dr. Weeden also served as a middle school Dean of Instruction in Katy ISD. Her roots are in her beloved City of Detroit, where and she served as a high school English and Theatre Arts Teacher. Weeden professes to always remaining a teacher at heart.

A graduate from the University of Detroit, with a B.A. in Speech Communications and English, Dr. Weeden also received her M.Ed. and Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Houston and is a loyal Cougar.

