

Strengthening Kindergarten to Improve Children's PreK-3rd Grade Experiences
GLR Learning Tuesdays | Learning Loss Recovery Challenge Series

June 20, 2023 | 3 pm – 4:30 pm ET

PRESENTER BIOS

MODERATOR



Laura Bornfreund
Senior Fellow and Advisor on Early & Elementary Education
New America

@lbornfreund | @newamericaed | [LinkedIn](#)

Laura Bornfreund is a senior fellow and advisor on early and elementary education with the Education Policy program at New America. Laura focuses on transforming kindergarten and promoting policy and practice that will strengthen the transition into kindergarten and the early grades of elementary school. Laura was director of Early & Elementary Education Policy at New America for nearly seven years. Before joining New America, Laura worked with several policy organizations in Washington, DC, including the Institute for Educational Leadership, The Forum for Education and Democracy, and Common Core (now Great Minds). Previously, Laura worked for the City of Orlando, FL, helping to implement its Parramore Kidz Zone, an initiative modeled on the Harlem Children's Zone. She began her career as a fourth-grade teacher in Orlando. Laura lives with her husband and two daughters in Florida.

PRESENTERS



Gloria Corral
President & CEO
Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)

@PIQEUSA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Gloria Corral is the President and CEO of the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE). Her passion for K-12 and higher education spans more than 25 years and includes work at the U.S. Department of Education, the House of Representatives and the Senate. Her expertise in education policy focused on Dual Language Learners, along with her extensive knowledge of system integration is both from developing policy and implementing programs that have been informed by years of working with state departments of education, local and state non-profits, advocacy organizations and large school districts. Corral previously served as the Assistant Executive Director at First 5 San Diego where she led San Diego County's Quality Early Learning efforts along with other key initiatives for children 0-5 and their families. She worked in early learning for 15 years in policy, program and advocacy and continues her work in the educational equity journey through family engagement and empowerment.

Corral holds an undergraduate degree from the University of California San Diego and a master's degree in Public Policy from the University of California Berkeley. She is the parent of two vivacious boys, Diego Emilio and Gael Antonio, who maintain her passion for improving access to high quality educational opportunities for all children.



Anya Hurwitz, Ed.D.

Executive Director

Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL)

@SEALedEquity | [LinkedIn](#) | [YouTube](#) | [seal.org](#)

Dr. Anya Hurwitz is the Executive Director of SEAL (Sobrato Early Academic Language), an educational nonprofit working to ensure all English Learners/Dual Language Learners in California learn, thrive, and lead. She has worked for over 25 years in education as a teacher, school leader, district administrator, and within the educational nonprofit sector. The early part of her career was in New York City, and in 2010 she moved to northern California. Dr. Hurwitz joined the SEAL team as Deputy Director in 2014 and became Executive Director in 2017. She has a doctorate in educational leadership from UC Berkeley.



Shantel Meek, Ph.D.

Professor of Practice, Founding Director

Children's Equity Project, Arizona State University

[@ChildrensEquity](#) | [@childrens-equity-project](#) | [@ChildrensEquityProject](#)

Shantel E. Meek is a professor of practice and the founding director of the Children's Equity Project (CEP) at Arizona State University. She manages strategic partnerships with CEP partners at 16 universities and non-profit organizations, policymakers, and national organizations, and sets the strategic direction of the CEP. Dr. Meek previously served as a consultant in early childhood policy and strategy at the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington D.C. where she advised senior staff on a range of federal and state equity and early childhood policy issues. Prior to founding the CEP, Dr. Meek served in the Obama Administration as a Senior Policy Advisor for Early Childhood Development at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and as a Senior Policy Advisor for Education in the Domestic Policy Council at the White House. During her time in the Obama Administration, Dr. Meek advised senior officials at HHS and The White House on a wide array of policy issues including Head Start, child care, public Pre-K expansion, and promoting equity and reducing disparities across the early care and education system. She also worked on drafting official guidance related to Head Start and the Child Care and Development Block Grant and worked closely with states, communities, and stakeholders on implementation. Dr. Meek also played a key role in President Obama's My Brother's Keeper Initiative, leading the early childhood policy component of the initiative. She has published pieces in the New York Times and the Washington Post. Dr. Meek serves on the boards of Child Trends and the Pyramid Model Consortium and is a member of the Ideal Learning Roundtable. Dr. Meek holds a B.A. in Psychology and an M.S. and Ph.D. in Family and Human Development from Arizona State University. She is the granddaughter of Mexican immigrants and her

personal experiences as a Latina and first-generation college graduate from a small border town inform her work and contribute to her drive to improve the learning conditions of children from historically marginalized communities. Today, she lives in Phoenix with her husband and two babies, both of whom are growing up bilingual.

COMMENTATORS



Connie Hall, M.Ed.

2023 Nevada State Teacher of the Year

Diedrichsen Elementary School, Washoe County School District

[@LaNisa70](#) | [@JustConnie23](#) | [@connie.l.hall.1](#)

[@NVSupt](#) | [@NevadaReady](#)

[#washoecountyschooldistrict](#) | [#WCSDProud](#) | [#WeAreWCSD](#) | [#23NVSTOY](#)

Connie Hall is a Kindergarten teacher at Lloyd Diedrichsen Elementary School in Sparks, Nevada. She is enthusiastic about teaching, helping other teachers and families, and supporting her community. Hall's primary goal is to build meaningful relationships with all in her sphere of influence. This helps her teach students, fellow teachers, and parents and includes the community in supporting education.

Hall began her teaching career in 1994 and has taught children from Nursery to third grade. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education and a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama, as well as a Master of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a Minor in Common Core State Standards from Concordia University-Portland in Portland, Oregon. In addition to teaching, Hall serves on the school Leadership Team. She is the Director of Comprehensive Children's Activities: Global Coordination & Early Childhood Interest for Messages of Hope International Ministries, serves on the Nevada State Superintendent's Teacher Advisor Cabinet, Nevada Kindergarten Think Tank member, and Washoe County Early Childhood Advisory Council member. Hall has done presentations throughout the continental United States, Hawaii, and internationally on varied topics both in the educational realm and for children's, youth, women's, and family ministry programs.

Hall was named the 2023 Nevada State Teacher of the Year and the 2019 Certified Employee of the Year for Washoe County School District. She has received two Certificates of Commendation from United States (Nevada) Senator Catherine Cortez Masto. Her classroom was filmed and featured in articles for several district and national projects. One project demonstrated her culturally responsive classroom for teacher training in her district. She and her students were one of five classrooms chosen nationally to be featured in The New Teacher Project Room to Run project, "showing what kids can do with challenging, inspiring schoolwork."