

# **GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinar**

## **250,000 Caring Adults: Rolling Out A New National Effort**

September 6, 2022

Moderator, Presenter and Commentator Bios

### **MODERATOR**

#### **John Gomperts**

##### **Executive Fellow, Campaign for Grade-Level Reading**



John Gomperts is a long-time leader in non-profits and government organizations devoted to civic engagement and to creating greater opportunity for children and youth. From 2012 - 2020, John served as President & CEO of America's Promise Alliance. Prior to that, John served as the Director of AmeriCorps in the Obama Administration. Earlier in his career, John worked in the US Senate (Sens. Wofford, Kerry, Daschle), practiced law and served as a judicial clerk. John earned his JD from Georgetown University Law Center and his AB in History from University of California,

Berkeley. John has served on a wide range of boards including FoodCorps (Chair), Points of Light, Presidio Institute, News Literacy Project, and others.

### **PRESENTERS**

#### **Shital Shah**

##### **Director of Strategic Partnerships, Office of the Secretary**

##### **U.S. Department of Education**



Prior to joining the Department, Shital was the Director of Philanthropic Engagement at the American Federation of Teachers and also served on the 2020 Biden-Harris Transition Team for the US Department of Education. While at the AFT, she cultivated and strengthened relationships with philanthropic and education industry partners to garner support for improving children's well-being, creating powerful learning, building teacher capacity, and fostering school and community collaboration. In this role she also oversaw AFT's inter-departmental community school strategy, as well

as the Center for School Improvement Institute. She has spent over a decade working in the field of community schools policy and practice, providing strategic support and guidance to state and local affiliates related to policy, advocacy and school and district implementation of approaches to the community school strategy and extended learning time, including implications for collective bargaining. During her time with the national Coalition for Community Schools, as the Manager of Policy & Partnerships, she lead partnership development; federal and state policy coordination; and helping develop federal policy recommendations.

## PRESENTERS

### **Robert Balfanz, Ph.D.**

#### **Director, Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins University School of Education**



Robert Balfanz, PhD, is a research professor at the Center for the Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University School of Education, where he is the director of the Everyone Graduates Center. He has published widely on secondary school reform, high school dropouts, early warning systems, chronic absenteeism, school climate, and instructional interventions in high-poverty schools. He focuses on translating research findings into effective school interventions. His work was featured in PBS Frontline's *The Education of Omarina*. Dr. Balfanz is the first recipient of the Alliance For

Excellent Education's Everyone a Graduate Award and the National Forum's to Accelerate Middle Grade Reform Joan Lipsitz Lifetime Achievement award. In 2013 he was named a Champion for Change for African American Education by President Obama and he is also an education fellow for the Middle School Matters program at the George W. Bush Institute. He holds a B.A. in history from Johns Hopkins University and a PhD in education from the University of Chicago.

### **Kate Cochran**

#### **Managing Director, National Partnership for Student Success**



Kate Cochran is a managing director of the National Partnership for Student Success. Prior to this role, Kate served as Chief of Staff and a founding team member at InnovateEDU, an organization focused on closing opportunity gaps in education through the development of innovative models and tools to serve, inform, and enhance teaching and learning. In this role, Kate managed organization-wide business operations and provided strategic guidance and project management support to organizational leadership across InnovateEDU's major projects including efforts to bring together diverse, and often

disparate, stakeholder groups to address some of education's most pressing challenges collaboratively. She played an integral role in the design and launch of a school network and afterschool program in Brooklyn, NY, as well as InnovateEDU's work to develop and operate an urban education fellowship and launch a community of practice to address talent and human capital challenges in K-12 education. Kate was an Education Pioneers Fellow and has a B.A. from NYU and a Master's in Public Administration from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University.

## COMMENTATORS

### Denise Forte

#### Interim CEO, Education Trust



Denise Forte (pronounced “fort”) is the interim CEO at The Education Trust. With more than two decades of experience in the federal legislative and executive branches advancing progressive education and family policy, Denise brings strategic leadership to the organization’s efforts to engage policymakers and diverse coalitions of advocates in demanding and securing equity-advancing policy change at the national and state levels. She also will lead Ed Trust’s legislative efforts and, as a member of the Senior Leadership Team, coordinate an organization-wide advocacy agenda and strategy. Prior to Ed Trust, Denise was a senior fellow and director of public affairs for The Century Foundation, a progressive think tank. She also spent 20 years in progressively senior congressional staff roles, most recently as the staff director for the House Committee on Education and the Workforce (Minority), providing strategic advice and counsel to the Ranking Member, Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), managing and directing the legislative and policy agenda for Committee Democrats and as Education Policy Director for Chairman George Miller. Denise also served in the Obama administration at the U.S. Department of Education, where she held the positions of Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Acting Assistant Secretary in the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, providing direction and management of the office that oversees policy and budget development for the agency. Forte also has worked in the nonprofit leadership development space as the vice president for policy leadership at Leadership for Educational Equity (LEE), an organization supporting current and former teachers in public leadership. Denise has a B.S. in Computer Science from Duke University, and a M.A. in Women’s Studies from the George Washington University. She resides in Washington, D.C. with her family.

### David G. Handy, Ph.D.

#### Director, Program Implementation, AARP Foundation Experience Corps



Dave spearheads the team that leads strategic and operational management support for the Experience Corps nationwide network of 17 Program Partners. After graduating from Davidson College, Dave worked in a wilderness-based, therapeutic recreational facility for youth at risk for delinquency. With a deeper appreciation for prevention and the role of systems, Dave earned Master’s (East Carolina University) and Ph.D. (Florida State University) degrees in Marriage and Family Therapy, logging over 2,000 clinical hours with families. Prior to joining AARP, David worked with Communities In Schools for 14 years where he built expertise in organizational development, leadership, promoting quality, evidence-based decision making and strategic action. Dave is passionate about helping communities organize around effective solutions to poverty and social injustice.

**Munro Richardson, Ph.D.**  
**Executive Director, Read Charlotte**



Munro Richardson is Executive Director of Read Charlotte, a community initiative that unites families, educators and community partners with the goal of improving third-grade reading proficiency in Mecklenburg County to 80% by 2025. In this role, he is responsible for using research, data and strategic funding to coordinate, integrate and align the efforts of dozens of organizations across Charlotte-Mecklenburg to improve children’s language and literacy development from birth through third grade. Munro holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Kansas, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa with Honors, master’s degrees from both Harvard University (where he was a Mellon Fellow) and Oxford University (where he was a Rhodes Scholar), and a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. He is co-author with Samantha Cleaver of Read with Me: Engaging Your Young Child in Active Reading.

**Liz Ross**  
**Program Officer, New Jersey, Overdeck Family Foundation**



Liz serves as the New Jersey Program Officer at Overdeck Family Foundation, where she leads a portfolio of innovative projects with her passion for education in New Jersey and 20 plus years of experience in the nonprofit sector. Prior to joining OFF, she was Director of Outreach at Bedtime Math, an organization dedicated to helping young children learn to love math. Previously, she was Director of Development at Mass Mentoring Partnership in Boston and a Development Officer at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Born and raised in New Jersey, Liz graduated from Stanford University and she and her husband are now raising their two daughters in the Garden State.