

GLR Learning Tuesdays | Learning Loss Recovery Challenge Series

Early Grade Retention: A Conversation About Benefits and Risks

November 7, 2023 | 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm ET

PRESENTER and MODERATOR BIOS

Presenter

Adrienne Fischer MPA

Senior Policy Analyst

Education Commission of the States



As a senior policy analyst, Adrienne focuses on issues related to early learning. Prior to joining Education Commission of the States, Adrienne covered education policy issues with the National Conference of State Legislatures and earned a master's degree in public administration. When Adrienne is not hard at work, she can be found enjoying the outdoors or immersed in a good book.

Presenter

David Griffith

Associate Director

Thomas B. Fordham Institute



David Griffith is Associate Director of Research at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, where he manages or authors reports on various subjects including charter schools, accountability, and civic education. His research has been published or cited in numerous outlets including the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, the Atlantic, the New York Post, USA Today, National Affairs, and Education Week. A native of Portland, Oregon, David holds a bachelor's degree in politics and philosophy from Pomona College, a master's degree in public policy from Georgetown University, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Public Policy at George Washington University. Prior to joining Fordham, he worked as a staffer for Congressman Earl Blumenauer, a research assistant at Data Quality Campaign and Education Sector, and a high school social studies teacher in Washington, DC. Public Service Award in 2022, the Secretary's Golden Apple Award for exceptional service in 2016, and the Presidential Meritorious Executive Rank Award in 2008.

Presenter

Kristin Hengtgen, Ph.D.

Senior Analyst
Education Trust



Kristin Hengtgen is a senior policy analyst at The Education Trust. She focuses on policies and practices that advocate for educational equity and increased access to and success in rigorous, culturally sustaining coursework that prepares students of color and students from low-income backgrounds for college, career, and beyond. Kristen Hengtgen is a senior analyst on the P-12 policy team.

Prior to joining Ed Trust, Kristen worked as senior researcher at the Florida College Access Network, where she collaborated with state partners to promote college access and attainment for all Floridians, and especially first-generation college students, adult learners, and students from low-income backgrounds. She has also worked as an academic advisor at Indiana University.

A native of Detroit, Kristen holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Indiana University-Bloomington, a master's of Education in History and Philosophy of Education from Indiana University-Bloomington, and bachelor's degrees in History and Secondary Education from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor.

Presenter

Casey Sullivan Taylor Ed.S

Policy Director, Early Literacy
ExcelinEd



Casey Sullivan Taylor is the Policy Director of Early Literacy for ExcelinEd. A former reading teacher, interventionist, and literacy coach, Casey most recently served as an Early Literacy Consultant at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction where she worked to implement the Excellent Public Schools Act, North Carolina's comprehensive early literacy policy. Prior to this, she supported implementation of Mississippi's Literacy-Based Promotion Act as an Assistant State Literacy Coordinator at the Mississippi Department of Education.

Casey earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from William Carey University, a Master of Arts in Intercultural Communication/Missiology from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Specialist in Education degree from William Carey University.

Moderator

Nyshawana Francis-Thompson Ed.D.

Chief of Curriculum and Instruction

The School District of Philadelphia



Dr. Nyshawana Francis-Thompson also known as “Dr. Ny” is the Chief of Curriculum and Instruction in the School District of Philadelphia. She is an accomplished educational leader with an extensive background in evidence based reading instruction, curriculum design, special education, and culturally responsive and sustaining instruction. Her early years included work as an emotional support teacher, lead *teacher*, *special education liaison*, *Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) champion*, *special education director*, *executive director of special education and curriculum and instruction*, and *deputy chief of curriculum and instruction* in the School District of Philadelphia. Dr. Ny was awarded the overall excellence award in the *Interdisciplinary Doctorate of Educational Leadership program* at SJU. Her research covered the intersection of change theory and social capital theory in an international school system’s implementation of a large-scale educational reform effort. She was also awarded Teacher of the Year and Social Justice Activist through her community service work. As an award-winning educator and a dedicated social justice and community activist, she has demonstrated a remarkable ability to transform educational spaces through focusing on equity and inclusion. As part of Dr. Ny’s goal of developing future educators and educational leaders she serves as an adjunct professor in Saint Joseph’s University doctoral program where she co-developed and teaches a course on “Critical Conversations in Social Justice”. She is a member and held leadership positions in prominent organizations such as the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, PA Chapter. Dr. Ny’s record of achievements underscores her unwavering commitment to shaping the future of public education.