

# GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinar

## Safety and Belonging First: Advancing Well-Being for Learning Recovery

November 15, 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

#### Maryam Abdullah, Ph.D.

##### Parenting Program Director, Greater Good Science Center, U.C. Berkeley



Maryam Abdullah, Ph.D., is the Parenting Program Director of the Greater Good Science Center. She is a developmental psychologist with expertise in parent-child relationships and children's development of prosocial behaviors. At GGSC, Maryam's role is to support organizations providing parenting education to raise caring children and to share the latest parenting science findings on *Greater Good*. Prior to joining GGSC, she was an Assistant Project Scientist at the University of

California, Irvine Child Development School in the Department of Pediatrics, a school-based behavioral health program where she provided parenting and child interventions, oversaw its clinical outcomes and program evaluation, and mentored undergraduate students with research projects. Her research experiences include exploration of parent-child relationships, early development of children with autism spectrum disorder, and traditional behavioral and canine-assisted interventions for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. She was the recipient of the University of California, Irvine Health System ARIISE Award for Respect. Maryam was born and raised in the Bay Area.

**Iheoma U. Iruka**

**Founding Director, Equity Research Action Coalition and Faculty Fellow  
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, UNC Chapel Hill**



Iheoma U. Iruka ((pronounced EE-OMAH EE-ROO-KAH), PhD, is a Research Professor in the Department of Public Policy, a Fellow at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG) and the Founding Director of the Equity Research Action Coalition at FPG (the Coalition). She is leading projects and initiatives focused on ensuring that minoritized children and children from low-income households, especially Black children, are thriving. Her work is focused on ensuring excellence for young diverse learners, especially Black children and their families, through the intersection of anti-bias, anti-racist, culturally grounded research, program, and policy. Some areas of focus include family engagement and support, quality rating and improvement systems, and early care and education system and programs. She serves and has served on numerous national and local boards and committees, including the National Advisory Committee for the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, the American Psychological Association’s Board of Educational Affairs, Brady Education Foundation, and Trust for Learning.

**Karen Pittman**

**Partner, Knowledge to Power Catalysts  
Co-Founder and Former CEO, Forum for Youth Investment**



Karen has made a career of starting organizations that promote youth development – including the Forum for Youth Investment, which she co-founded with Merita Irby in 1998. Karen stepped away from organizational management to dedicate her time to galvanizing the growing interest in using science informed strategies to truly change the odds that all children and youth can be successful. In 2021, Karen became a Partner in Knowledge to Power Catalysts, LLC; launched Changing the Odds Remix, a platform for sharpening ideas about how, where, when, why, with whom learning happens; and accepted senior advisory positions at several national organizations.

**COMMENTATORS**

**Kathleen “Kate” Knudsen**

**Facilitator, Metro-Omaha Raise Me to Read, Nebraska**



Kathleen Knudsen leads the Metro-Omaha branch of Raise Me to Read, a Campaign for Grade-Level Reading initiative, whose backbone organization is the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium. Her work includes collaboration with community entities and school districts regarding attendance, trauma informed mental health, and early literacy. Kathleen serves on a

team recently assembled to align early childhood goals and outcomes in Omaha with the support of the National League of Cities. Critical community engagement work has begun on the Omaha Urban Thinkscapes Project in partnership with University of Omaha (UNO) College of Education Health and Human Sciences, and the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce Connect GO. Creation of two Thinkscapes sites in underdeveloped neighborhoods and a Play Ecosystem Suite will support playful, equitable learning opportunities, and encourage adult-child engagement. A 6th generation Nebraskan, Kathleen has earned degrees from UNO and has worked as a teacher and school administrator. Her greatest achievements are her marriage to her husband and their two sons.

**Beth Tomlinson**

**Senior Director of Education and Co-Founder, Resilient Lehigh Valley  
United Way of Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania**



Beth Tomlinson is the Senior Director of Education with the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley and co-founder of Resilient Lehigh Valley. In her role as the Senior Director of Education, she oversees a 25member team leading work in school readiness, summer learning, school attendance, and trauma informed schools. In her role as the co-founder of Resilient Lehigh Valley, she serves as the backbone lead for a three county collective impact effort to promote hope and healing from trauma by advancing trauma informed and culturally responsive systems and practices. Beth has a dual Masters in Social Services and Law and Social Policy and over 25 years of experience as a child and family advocate. She lives in Coopersburg, Pennsylvania with her husband and three kids and loves spending time reading and playing with her dog Sadie.

**Elizabeth “Liz” Woody-Remington**

**Co-Founder and Director of Professional Development  
The Learning Alliance, Indian River County, Florida**



Elizabeth Woody-Remington is one of the three original founders of the Learning Alliance. She has a B.A. in English Literature from the University of Delaware and a Masters in Special Ed- Learning Disabilities from American University and is a former member of the Board of Directors for the International Dyslexia Association. She lives in Vero Beach, Florida, and is the mother of two boys who have struggled with LD issues.