

# GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinar

## Decoding NAEP: Attendance Matters

February 18, 2025

Moderator, Presenter and Discussant 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, Gomperts 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. Gomperts earned his JD from

Georgetown University Law Center and his AB in History from University of California, Berkeley. Gomperts has served on a wide range of boards including FoodCorps (Chair), Points of Light, Presidio Institute, News Literacy Project, and others.

### CO-PRESENTERS

#### Hedy Chang

##### Founder & Executive Director, Attendance Works



Hedy Nai-Lin Chang is the founder and Executive Director of Attendance Works, a national and state level initiative aimed at advancing student success by addressing chronic absence. A skilled presenter, facilitator, researcher and writer, she co-authored the seminal report, Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades, as well as numerous other articles about student attendance. Deeply committed to promoting two-generation solutions to achieving a more just and equitable society, Hedy has

spent more than three decades working in the fields of family support, family economic success, education and child development. She served as a senior program officer at the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund and as co-director of California Tomorrow, a nonprofit committed to drawing strength from cultural, linguistic and racial diversity. In February 2013, Hedy was named by the White House as a Champion of Change for her commitment to furthering African American Education.country

**Kari Sullivan Custer**

**Lead for Chronic Absenteesism, Connecticut State Department of Education**



Kari Sullivan currently serves as the Attendance Lead at the Connecticut State Department of Education. Her work involves coordination across agency divisions and with other state agencies and community providers to reduce non-academic barriers to student attendance, e.g., health, housing, juvenile justice. As part of this role, Kari provides leadership and guidance on improving student attendance to districts and schools within the state’s 10 Opportunity Districts. She is also the coordinator of the state Learner Engagement and Attendance Program, overseeing home visiting efforts in 15 districts with the highest levels of chronic absence. She also staffs the Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap. Prior to accepting this position, Kari served as the Communications Project Manager at Philadelphia Safe and Sound, a leading research and child advocacy organization whose services impacted more than 24,000 children in the City of Philadelphia.

**Lewis Ferebee, Ed.D.**

**Chancellor, District of Columbia Public Schools**



For six school years, Dr. Lewis D. Ferebee has been the Chancellor of DC Public Schools (DCPS). As a veteran education leader, he also has over two decades of experience as a teacher, principal, and district leader. Prior to joining DCPS, he served as Superintendent of Indianapolis Public Schools, where he successfully raised the district's graduation rate by 15%. Before his tenure in Indianapolis, Dr. Ferebee was the Chief of Staff for Durham Public Schools, where he reduced the number of low performing schools to zero. Chancellor Ferebee has received extensive recognition for his accomplishments in advancing student achievement. He was named Principal of the Year in North Carolina’s Guilford County Schools, recognized as one of Education Week’s 2016 Leaders to Learn From, and received the Marian University’s 2016 John A. Purdie Innovator and Mentor of the Year Award. Under Dr. Ferebee’s leadership, DCPS has surpassed enrollment of 50,000 students, improved graduation rates by 10 percent, and continues to be one of the fastest improving urban school districts in the nation. He is focused on ensuring there is a great school in every neighborhood in Washington DC and that every student feels loved, challenged, and prepared for post-secondary success.

**Thomas Kane, Ph.D.**

**Walter H. Gale Professor of Education and Economics**

**Harvard Graduate School of Education**



Thomas Kane is an economist and Walter H. Gale Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is faculty director of the Center for Education Policy Research, a university-wide research center that works with school districts and state agencies. Between 2009 and 2012, he directed the Measures of Effective Teaching project for the Bill & Melinda

Gates Foundation. His work has spanned both K-12 and higher education, covering topics such as the design of school accountability systems, teacher recruitment and retention, financial aid for college, race-conscious college admissions, the earnings impacts of community colleges and, more recently, pandemic impacts and recovery. From 1995 to 1996, Kane served as the senior economist for labor, education, and welfare policy issues within President Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers. Kane has also been a professor of public policy at UCLA and has held visiting fellowships at the Brookings Institution and the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

### **Lori Masseur**

#### **Early Learning Director, Read On Arizona**



As director of early learning, Lori Masseur guides Read On Arizona's collaborative work on several strategic priorities related to improving school readiness, early literacy, and systems-building efforts in our state, including: data integration, expanding effective literacy practices, and building educator capacity for early learning professionals. Lori has more than 20 years of experience in early childhood education, most recently as part of the Arizona Department of Education's early childhood education team, supporting the work of teachers and administrators in providing high-quality educational opportunities for children from birth to age 8. She served in various capacities over her eight years at ADE, including deputy associate superintendent of early childhood education and director of the Arizona Head Start State Collaboration Office. Lori also helped develop Arizona's successful Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant application and served on the advisory committee for [Child Care in 35 States: What We Know and Don't Know](#) from the Bipartisan Policy Center.

### **Ernise Singleton, Ph.D.**

#### **Assistant Superintendent, Office of Career & College Readiness Louisiana Department of Education**



Dr. Ernise S. Singleton serves the Louisiana Department of Education as Assistant Superintendent of Career and College Readiness. She is committed to ensuring students across Louisiana have multiple pathways to reach their goals upon exiting the K-12 educational system. Dr. Singleton has served as an educator in Louisiana, Texas, and Georgia. Dr. Singleton has provided oversight with several innovative programs including online professional development, school turnaround efforts, Course Choice, school safety, discipline and grants management. Presently, her office is focused on expanding opportunities for early college credit; preparing students for the workforce; and ensuring students are in school and ready to learn each day. Dr. Singleton earned a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from the University of Louisiana-Monroe, a Master of Science in Instructional Technology from the University of Houston-Clear Lake, and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Instructional Technology from the University of Georgia. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and The Links, Incorporated.