

Bridging the Early Years and Early Grades to Reduce Learning Loss

GLR Learnings Tuesdays Webinar Series

June 30, 2020 | 3:00 – 4:30pm ET

Moderator & Presenter Bios

MODERATOR



Marina Merrill, Ph.D.
Director of Research & Strategy
Children's Institute

Dr. Marina Merrill joined Children's Institute in 2013 to lead the organization's research on prenatal through third-grade issues, evaluation, data collection, and analysis. She also advises Children's Institute's advocacy and policy work. Dr. Merrill was instrumental in advocating for and winning a new, mixed-delivery preschool program in Oregon during the 2015 legislative session. She has extensive experience in program evaluation and technical assistance for early learning programs, prenatal to third-grade initiatives at the program and policy level, parenting education programs, home visiting, education reform, safe schools, community partnerships, and school/community health. Dr. Merrill partners with Portland State University on the evaluation of the Early Works and Early School Success initiatives. She is a member of the Partnership for Preschool Improvement state team, working to develop a comprehensive professional development system for state-funded preschool.

Prior to Children's Institute, Dr. Merrill was a Senior Research Associate at RMC Research and Early Childhood Education Specialist at the Oregon Department of Education, where she provided leadership for Oregon's Even Start Family Literacy and Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education programs. She also contributed to the development of the early childhood longitudinal data tracking system and provided statewide professional development on school readiness, including effective teaching strategies in early childhood.

CO-PRESENTERS



Mark Adler, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Ralston Public Schools

Dr. Mark Adler is currently in his eighth year leading Ralston Public Schools as Superintendent. Dr. Adler has devoted more than 25 years to the success of Nebraska's public schools, serving students and families in Petersburg, Elgin and Nebraska City before arriving in Ralston. Mark graduated from Hastings High School in 1987 and served six years in the United States Army.

Dr. Adler earned his Doctorate in Educational Administration from the University of Nebraska Omaha in 2008. Dr. Adler was a first-generation college student as he earned degrees from Kearney State College and the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Through the years, Dr. Adler has served many roles in education, including time as an industrial technology teacher, football coach, basketball coach, bus driver, high school principal, activities director, assistant superintendent for business and now superintendent of schools. Dr. Adler has, and will continue to be an advocate and voice for all students and staff under his care. In a very diverse urban school district with high needs, Dr. Adler and his team are focused on providing an environment dedicated to achieving excellence through purposeful instruction, while nurturing a climate of hope for students and families. Dr. Adler is committed to cultivating quality relationships and trust at all levels of Ralston Public Schools. That dedication supports and nurtures new leaders each year through the Ralston Leadership Academy for administrators and teachers.



Don Grotting
Superintendent
Beaverton School District

Don Grotting is superintendent of Beaverton School District. He joined the district 2016 and has served as a Superintendent in Oregon for over 22 years, during which time, he has established himself as a leader in the state and national education arena as well as the communities he serves. His dedication to students and their families is evident in his past work as a teacher and Superintendent in the Powers, Nyssa and David Douglas School Districts. He was selected as Oregon Superintendent of the Year in 2014.

Mr. Grotting began his education career in the Powers School District which achieved New Century School District status while he served as Superintendent. He then worked as Superintendent for the Nyssa School District in Eastern Oregon from 2000 to 2010 and was credited with transforming that District into a statewide model for student achievement and closing the achievement gap. In 2005, Nyssa became the first school district in Oregon presented with the Closing the Achievement Gap Award by the Oregon Department of Education.

He is a member of Governor Kate Brown's Educator Advancement Council, Oregon Association of Superintendents Education and Education Leadership Council, OASE Early Learning Workgroup, ESSA Advisory Committee and PSU's Graduate School of Education.

Supt. Grotting is a past President of the Oregon Schools Athletic Association and past advisor to the State Board of Education. Supt. Grotting is also known statewide and nationally for his work and leadership in early childhood education.

Superintendent Grotting grew up in Coquille, Oregon and served in the U.S. Army after high school. After the service, he returned to work at the local Georgia-Pacific sawmill. During the downturn in the timber industry, he went back to school and graduated magna cum laude from Linfield College in Elementary Education. He earned his Master's Degree in Educational Policy, Foundations and Administration from Portland State University in 1996, and an Administrative License from Portland State University two years later. Mr. Grotting attained his Superintendent's License in 2001 from Lewis and Clark College.



Anya Hurwitz, Ed.D.
Executive Director
Sobrato Early Academic Language

Dr. Anya Hurwitz currently serves as Executive Director of SEAL – Sobrato Early Academic Language – which began as a project of the Sobrato Family Foundation in 2008, and officially became an independent organization in July 2019. Dr. Hurwitz has a longstanding commitment to creating the conditions for public schools to meet the diverse needs of their students’ academic and socio-emotional development. She has worked as a teacher, school leader, district administrator, and within the educational nonprofit sector. The early part of Dr. Hurwitz’s career was in New York City where she helped start a small secondary school in the Bronx and then became a Network Leader within the NYC Department of Education to a diverse group of 24 schools, preschool through early college. In 2010, she moved to northern California and began working as an educational consultant supporting district and school leaders as they planned and implemented strategic reform efforts. Dr. Hurwitz joined the Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) team in 2014. She has a doctorate in educational leadership from UC Berkeley.



Linda Montes, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services
Redwood City School District, CA

Dr. Linda Montes is the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services for the Redwood City School District in the San Francisco Bay Area in California. She also oversees the Department for English Learner Services. Dr. Montes served as an Assistant Professor at CSU, Chico in the Center for Bilingual and Multicultural Studies, preparing pre-service candidates.

Dr. Montes received her B.A. in Elementary Education with an emphasis in Special Education from Bowling Green State University. Dr. Montes received her Masters in Education from Stanford University developing her expertise as a leader in Educational Policy Analysis. Dr. Montes earned her Doctorate in Education from the University of Southern California in Educational Leadership focusing on the role of teacher leaders in an immersion setting. Dr. Montes has presented at various Bilingual Education conferences sharing best practices for students who are language learners. Dr. Montes was principal at Adelante Spanish Immersion School receiving the 2010 California Distinguished School Award and the 2011 Spanish School of the Year Finalist recognition from the Spanish Embassy of California. The Redwood City School District received the 2016 Multiple Pathways to Biliteracy Award from Californians Together under her leadership.

Dr. Montes served as a member of the California State Board of Education policy committee for the development of the English Learner Roadmap. The policy seeks to provide guidance to Local Educational Agencies “to welcome, understand, and educate the diverse population of students who are English

learners attending California public schools. The *California English Learner Roadmap: Strengthening Comprehensive Educational Policies, Programs, and Practices for English Learners (CA EL Roadmap)* articulates a common vision and mission for educating English learners and supports LEAs as they implement the State Board policy.”

Dr. Montes has provided guidance in the development of Immersion and Bilingual programs in the San Francisco Bay area. Dr. Montes leads professional learning experiences for site leadership and classroom teachers that seek to close the opportunity gap for students with emphasis on the implementation of the Sobrato Early Academic Language Model (SEAL). Dr. Montes is committed to the belief that instruction begins with strengths and must provide enriching options and direction to promote high intellectual performance for all students.



Lisa R. Roy, Ed.D.
Director of Program Development
Buffett Early Childhood Institute
University of Nebraska

Lisa Roy joined the Buffett Institute in 2019. She comes to the Institute from Denver Public Schools, where she served as executive director of the Early Childhood Department, managing a \$57 million budget that supported more than 5,000 3- and 4-year-olds within the District, and 2,500 half-day slots with community providers. Dr. Roy was responsible for managing more than 40 staff members in support of licensing, coaching, and operations. One of her roles was to partner with the City of Denver (Children’s Affairs, Human Services, Denver Public Library), Mile High United Way, and the Children’s Museum to increase language and literacy skills for children from birth to Grade 3.

Previously, Roy has done consultant work for Grantmakers for Education as the Organization’s equity impact group lead and served as the executive director of the Timothy and Bernadette Marquez Foundation, focusing on improving educational opportunities and increasing access and options in health care and human services for underserved or under-represented populations. Roy worked in Washington, D.C., for the Center for the Study of Social Policy as a senior associate, supporting the Child Healthy and Prepared to Succeed in School agenda for the Annie E. Casey Foundation. She also served as a grant officer for the Piton Foundation and Daniels Fund, as a Head Start administrator for the City and County of Denver, and as a director of early childhood programs for the Clayton Foundation and Catholic Charities.

She holds a doctorate in executive leadership for educational equity from the University of Colorado at Denver and a master’s degree in counseling psychology and counselor education, also from the University of Colorado at Denver, and a bachelor’s degree in psychology and speech community from the Metropolitan State College of Denver (now Metropolitan State University of Denver).



Karen Twain
Director of Programs
Children's Institute

Karen Twain joined Children's Institute in 2019 as Director of Programs to lead the Early School Success initiative. Karen has worked in the Tigard-Tualatin School District for 33 years in a variety of roles. She has been a classroom teacher, special educator, counselor, Director of Options Programs, and most recently, Assistant Superintendent. Karen has been active in equity and early learning efforts in Tigard-Tualatin and across the state and was chair of the committee that got full day kindergarten passed in Oregon. Karen also worked at the Oregon Department of Education for over a year where she led the Early Literacy Initiative.

Karen has been called on to present and speak on such topics as inclusion, Response to Intervention, literacy, early learning, equity, leadership, and culturally specific partnerships. When she was Principal at Metzger Elementary, the school was presented with the "Closing the Achievement Gap award" for five straight years. She has received accolades that include Distinguished Alumnus from University of Oregon, Ford/Trailblazer Coach of the year, Teacher of the year at Tigard High School, and the Bev Gladder mentor award from the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators.