

**Parents Eager to Address Learning Loss: Lessons From the Field**  
**GLR Learning Tuesdays | Learning Loss Recovery & Partner Series**

February 23, 2020 | 3 pm – 4:30 pm ET

**PRESENTER BIOS**

**INTRODUCTIONS**



**Ambika Kapur**  
**Program Officer**  
**Carnegie Corporation of New York**  
**@CarnegieCorp**

Ambika Kapur is a program officer within Carnegie Corporation’s Education program where she manages the Public Understanding portfolio. Kapur oversees grantmaking aimed at engaging parents, communities, teachers, and policymakers in understanding and demanding changes in education that ensure that all students develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need for future success. Previously, Kapur served as officer of Special Projects in the National Program, overseeing the budget, coordinating program strategies and grantmaking, and providing critical support to the vice president on strategic priorities. Kapur also managed grantmaking and communications activities for Next Generation Science Standards development and mobilization, leading the Corporation’s commitment to the Common Core Communications Collaborative. Kapur was born in Calcutta. She has a BA in international relations from Wellesley College and a MA in international education development from Columbia University.

**MODERATOR**



**Elisabeth O’Byron**  
**Co-Founder & Chief Impact Officer**  
**Family Engagement Lab**  
**@elisabeth\_cady | @FamilyELab**

Elisabeth O’Byron, Ph.D., is a co-founder and the Chief Impact Officer at Family Engagement Lab. Previously, she was the Director of Research and Evaluation at GreatSchools where she worked to design and implement evaluation projects, with a particular focus on rapid-cycle research approaches. Elisabeth was formerly a postdoctoral Research Associate at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence where she evaluated the effectiveness of school-based social emotional learning programming for children, teachers, and families. Elisabeth has a doctorate in psychology and experience providing school psychological services

to preschool through high school-age students in both English and Spanish. Her research has focused on how to promote the educational success of students identified as English learners, as well as ways to support home-school partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families. Elisabeth is also the mom of two young boys, who she learns from every day.

## PRESENTERS



**Elisabeth Chu**  
**Executive Director**  
**Columbia University Center for Public Research & Leadership (CPRL)**  
**@ColumbiaLaw**

Elisabeth Chu is the Executive Director of CPRL and a Lecturer in Law at Columbia Law School. She has held a series of distinguished roles in higher education, research, and leadership focused on P-12 education. Most recently, Liz was the Deputy Director at the [Columbia University Center for Public Research and Leadership \(CPRL\)](#), where she was responsible for overseeing CPRL's project portfolio, supporting staff members in directing project work, and teaching courses on the practice of organizational change. Prior to that, she was an Engagement Manager at CPRL and led projects focused on increasing the continuous improvement capacity of education and social sector organizations across the country. Before joining CPRL in 2014, Liz was an Assistant Professor of Practice at Relay Graduate School of Education. Liz began her career as a classroom teacher and earned her Ph.D. in Education Policy from Columbia University, her M.S. in Teaching from Pace University, and her B.A. in English Language and Literature from Yale University. Liz helped create CPRL as a member of its first student cohort.



**Claudia Medina**  
**Program Coordinator**  
**Alameda Unified School District**  
**@Pontelaspilas**

Claudia Medina serves as a Program Coordinator for the Alameda Unified School District. She supports Family Involvement and Community Engagement Programs as well as Title 1 After School Program grant management. Claudia's primary role is to orchestrate multiple partners to deliver high value, high impact programming to build community and leadership development for parents.

Prior to joining Alameda Unified, Medina served as the Public Information Officer for the Alameda County Office of Education where she provided project management, community outreach, communication strategy and event management. Claudia is a Master CA PTA School Smarts Trainer and a HeartSet SEL Education Trainer. She is a National Equity Fellow. Claudia serves as an active member of the Alameda Collaborative for Children, Youth and their Families, and the Alameda Parent Teacher Association Council. Claudia received a BS in Business Administration from San Francisco State University and is fluent in Spanish and French.



**Jessica Lawrence**  
**Staff Policy Specialist for Family & Community Engagement**  
**Baltimore City Public Schools**  
**@BaltCitySchools**

Jessica Lawrence has over 15 years of experience in organizing, policy, legislative affairs, and stakeholder engagement. She has worked with districts, schools, non-profit organizations, as well as state and local governments to address the issues and concerns of families and communities. In her current role as Staff Policy Specialist for Family and Community Engagement (FCE) with Baltimore City Public Schools, she is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the Board's policy and regulations for FCE at the district and school-level.

Her work in Baltimore City includes building partnerships with various community associations and constituent groups in Maryland's 45<sup>th</sup> Legislative District. Her passion for family engagement is rooted in her first experience working with school-aged children and families with the Department of Social Services' Family Support Center as a youth counselor in the Building Blocks Youth Program. Prior to joining City Schools, she was a Partnerships and Workforce Development Representative with Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake in Baltimore and served as Program Coordinator for the Parent Engagement and Community Ambassador Program with Anne Arundel County Public School's Office of Equity Assurance and Human Relations. She lives in Baltimore City and is a proud Baltimore City Public Schools' parent and wife of a Baltimore City School teacher



**Vidya Sundaram**  
**Co-Founder & CEO**  
**Family Engagement Lab**  
**@vidya\_sundaram**

Vidya Sundaram, Co-founder and CEO of [Family Engagement Lab](#), is a transformational education leader, having built diverse teams in nonprofit education and technology. Vidya has an extensive background in business leadership and program strategy, and most recently led GreatSchools' market research and social impact assessments. Prior to GreatSchools, she drove new investment opportunities in Internet media and also founded a teen media web site. Vidya has led software development at both consumer and enterprise Internet start-ups. She holds a degree in electrical engineering from Stanford University, a Masters in Public Policy from UCLA and her MBA from UCLA Anderson School of Management. Vidya is mom to two kids and proud to be part of a lively multigenerational household.



**Helen Westmoreland**  
**Director of Family Engagement**  
**National PTA**  
**@NationalPTA**

Helen Westmoreland is the Director of Family Engagement at the National PTA where she leads planning and management of the association's new Center for Family Engagement. From start-up to scale, she has spent her career supporting organizations and funders to more strategically and collaboratively enable families and communities to support every child's success.

Prior to joining National PTA, Helen was founding staff and Deputy Director at Flamboyant Foundation, where she developed their family engagement vision and strategy, resulting in an innovative approach to parent-teacher collaboration that reached 10,000+ students annually and became a national proof-point. During her six years at Flamboyant, Helen led a team that expanded the reach, sustainability, and impact of family engagement in D.C. and beyond.

Helen came to Flamboyant after providing research, evaluation, and technical assistance support in the areas of family engagement and out-of-school-time with the Harvard Family Research Project. During this time, she also participated in a study of education organizing that was captured in the book *A Match on Dry Grass*. Previously, Helen coordinated service learning and evaluation capacity-building for community-based afterschool programs in the Duke-Durham Neighborhood Partnership.

Helen is a proud graduate of South Carolina public schools and also received degrees from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Duke University. She is also the mom to a rambunctious toddler.