

## **GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinar**

*Learning Pods: How We Responded, What We Are Learning and What's Next*

*A Follow-Up Conversation*

### **A Peer Exchange Learning Conversation**

April 27, 2021

Presenter Bios

#### **Sonja Nelson**

**Vice President, Resident Initiatives**

**Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA)**



Sonja Nelson is the Vice President of Resident Initiatives with Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) in Columbus, Ohio. As the management lead for the Resident Initiatives (RI) department, her team provides a connection to resources and supports that enable residents to be safe, stable, and economically mobile. The RI team manages various HUD grants and programs including the People focus of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative grant and RISE EnVision Center. Her department also oversees the case management and service coordination support provided by third party organizations that serve the residents at CMHA properties across Franklin County, which is comprised of approximately 14,000 households, 40,000 residents. Prior to joining CMHA, Ms. Nelson was the Founder and Chief

Executive Officer of the social enterprise, The Firm Development Group, LLC. She acquired corporate experience spanning over 15 years, including 10 years with Nationwide Insurance Company. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Accounting Information Systems from DeVry University and a Master's degree in Business Administration from Keller Graduate School of Management. She is a graduate of the United Way Project Diversity Leadership program and serves on many local committees.

#### **Dr. Maria Su**

**Executive Director**

**San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF)**



Dr. Maria Su is the Executive Director of the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF). DCYF is an innovative policy and grant making agency and a proud steward of the Children and Youth Fund, a landmark initiative that funds comprehensive services for children, youth and families in the City & County of San Francisco. DCYF is one of the few city departments in the country dedicated exclusively to the needs of young people from birth through 24 years of age. Dr. Su oversees and administers approximately \$100M annually, for children and family services ranging from early care and education, out-of-school time services, teens and youth workforce development, family support and violence prevention and intervention programs. Dr. Su started with DCYF as the Deputy Director in 2005 and was appointed by Mayor Gavin Newsom in 2009 to the Department Head position.

Dr. Su currently serves as a commissioner on the San Francisco First 5 Children and Families Commission and is Co-Chair of the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council. Dr. Su is an advocate for children services, and a leader in social justice and education reform. She has held senior management and executive positions at grassroots non-profit agencies and at large institutions throughout San Francisco. Dr. Su received her Bachelor Degree in Psychology from Boston University and Doctor of Psychology Degree from Alliant International University-CSPP.

**Lakisha Young**  
**Co-Founder & CEO**  
**The Oakland REACH**



Lakisha Young is Co-Founder & CEO of The Oakland REACH, a parent-run organization founded to “make the powerless parent powerful.” She has dedicated her career to promoting access to quality schools because she knows firsthand that changes lives.

When COVID19 threatened to exacerbate inequities facing REACH families, The Oakland REACH created the Citywide Virtual Hub to support families’ economic survival and their children’s educational success. The Hub launched in June 2020, serves over 350 families, and is delivering real academic gains. The Hub has been featured on CNN, KQED, BBC, Univision and more, and Lakisha regularly consults with cities about replicating this work.