Potential IGNITE Speakers

Chernor Bah

Co-founder of A World at School

Chernor Bah’s childhood was interrupted by the chaos brought about by the civil war in Sierra Leone, which started when he was six years old. To escape the fighting, he and his family were displaced countless times between 1992 and 2001, fleeing to displaced camps in Sierra Leone and refugee camps in neighboring Guinea.

In response to the atrocities he witnessed, Chernor became a renowned peace activist at the age of 15. He mobilized his peers to set up the Children’s Forum Network, the first national children’s organization in Sierra Leone. Its aim was to advocate for children’s rights and participation in the peacemaking and peace-building efforts. In the capacity of founding national president, he traveled all over the country, soliciting the input of children in displaced camps, ex-child combatant interim care centers, schools and war-afflicted communities. At the age of 15, he was invited by the country’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, during its thematic hearings, to make a presentation on the impact of the war on children and to make recommendations for the future.

After obtaining his Bachelor’s degree at the University of Sierra Leone, Chernor was awarded the first-ever youth fellowship at the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) to work at UN headquarters in New York with the agency’s Humanitarian Response Unit. This assignment provided him the opportunity to travel to many war-affected spots in the world and consult with young people. His findings contributed to international policy discussions, including The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, commonly known as the Graça Machel report. He co-wrote the report Will you listen? Young Voices from Conflict Zones and participated in a multi-media documentary called “Youth Zones,” both of which were produced by UNFPA and the Women’s Refugee Commission. He subsequently served as a youth advisor for the UNFPA in post-conflict Liberia—developing and managing the first multi-stakeholder adolescent girls initiative in the country.

Chernor completed a Master’s Degree at the Kroc Institute at the University of Notre Dame on a full scholarship. Upon graduating, he worked with Nike Foundation, helping to create and manage an award-winning innovative adolescent girls program in Ethiopia. While there, he was invited to sit on the UN Secretary General’s high-level steering committee to lead a global campaign on education. He represented youth on the committee and worked alongside other members, including Ban Ki-Moon, Jim Kim and many other distinguished experts, to develop and launch the initiative. Chernor also serves as the Chair of the initiative’s Youth Advocacy Group—a network of 15 outstanding youth leaders from around the world who are mobilizing other young people and leading international advocacy on education. As a result of his work and the campaign, the UN
established the first Special Envoy office dedicated to global education. The Special Envoy, Gordon Brown, invited Chernor to join his staff and lead the office’s work with youth engagement.

Chernor travels around the world inspiring and mobilizing young people to stand up for their rights to education, speaking at many conferences and events on social justice and peace issues and particularly on the participation of young people in peace-building and the rights of young women and girls. He is a passionate, articulate and effective champion of young people’s rights in conflict-affected situations.

Veronica Boix-Mansilla
Principal Investigator, Project Zero at Harvard

Veronica Boix Mansilla is a Principal Investigator and Steering Committee member at Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education, where she leads the IdGlobal Project and chairs the Future of Learning Institute. With a background in cognitive science, human development and education, she examines how to prepare our youth for a world of increasing complexity and interdependence. Her research focuses on three main areas. She studies (a) global competence as it develops among learners and teachers in various world regions; (b) quality interdisciplinary research and education among experts, teachers and youth; and (c) quality teaching and learning in disciplines (history, biology, the arts) as lenses through which to understand the world.

Veronica’s work has produced frameworks and practical tools to support educators in interested in quality teaching, learning, curriculum, research, assessment, professional development, and program evaluation. Her writing on interdisciplinary work and evaluation—has informed National Academies of Science, National Science Foundation, International Baccalaureate’s interdisciplinary initiatives. Her work with the Asia Society on Global Competence education set the foundation for the US Department of Education’s International Education strategy.

Veronica serves as an advisor at a variety of institutions including the Asia Society, Association of American Colleges and Universities, Council of Chief State School Officers, the Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center, the International Baccalaureate, WorldSavvy and Global Kids, among others. She teaches at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and has taught the University of Buenos Aires. She is the author of multiple papers and books including “Educating for Global Competence: Preparing our youth to engage the world” (2011) with Tony Jackson.
Jenny Buccos
Creator, ProjectExplorer.org

Jenny M. Buccos is a multi-award winning director & producer. She is the creator of the ProjectExplorer.org educational series and an agent for global citizenship.

In 2003, before the existence of YouTube, she founded ProjectExplorer.org, a free multimedia website designed to educate primary and secondary school students about global cultures and histories. Over the last 10 years, she has directed/produced over 500 short films for ProjectExplorer.org working with leaders and visionaries including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Belize’s First Lady Kim Simplis Barrow, Ziggy Marley, and Andrew Zimmern to name but a few.

Awards & Recognition
Two-time recipient of a GOLD Parent’s Choice Award for Excellence in Educational Programming. Recipient of a 2010 National Award for Citizen Diplomacy; honored alongside Academy Award winner Robert Redford for her work as a citizen diplomat

A White House Champion of Change (July 2012)

Named one of the National School Board Association’s "20 to Watch" within the EDTech community (2013)

Selected by the Center for Digital Education as one of the "Top 40 Innovators" in Education (2013)

In addition to her work with ProjectExplorer.org, Jenny has produced multimedia content for the Four Seasons Hotel brand, the Happy Hearts Fund, Project Medishare (Haiti), and Bombardier, Inc. Jenny has travelled to over 60 countries and is considered a brand ambassador for several of the countries in which she has filmed.

Jamira Burley
Senior Campaigner for Amnesty International USA

Drive, perseverance, and passion, are just a few characteristics that this Philadelphia native is built with. Jamira Burley (26), is the first of sixteen children to graduate high school and college, graduate of Temple University, with dual degrees in International Business and Legal Studies. Currently, Jamira works as the Senior Campaigner for Amnesty International USA,
where she leads on issues of gun violence and criminal justice. Prior to joining Amnesty, Jamira served as Executive Director for the City of Philadelphia’s Youth Commission.

As an advocate for authentic youth engagement, global citizenship, comprehensive education reform, black male achievement and gun violence prevention. Jamira is the United States representative and co-chair to the United Nations Global Education First Initiative, Youth Advocacy Group. She is also the co-founder of GenYNot. GenYNot in partnership with the League of Young Voters, is an online platform that using the youth experience as a way to spark solution-driven dialogue. As an active and notable member of her community, she has made it her mission to employ her personal experiences as a driving force to improve the lives of others.

Jamira’s passion for challenging the status quo has led her to this journey of fighting for something bigger than herself. Her work has been featured in the Philadelphia Tribune, BET, Daily News, New York Times, ABC, Philadelphia Inquirer, USA Today, Settle Times and Huffington Post. Jamira has also had the opportunity to share the stage and speak alongside a number of world leaders, including Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Gordon Brown, President of the World Bank Jim Young Kim, United Nations Secretary General Ban Kim-moon, Attorney General of the United States Eric H. Holder, Jr. and Social Rights Leader Desmond Mpilo Tutu.

*Philadelphia Tribune, Most Influential African American* *White House Champion of Change Gun Violence Prevention* *People for the American Way Foundation (YP4), Iara D. Pend Award* *Philadelphia Daily News top-ten up and coming Philadelphians,* *Flying Kite Media 1/4 Next Generational Leaders,* *Philadelphia Tribune top 10 under 40* *Spark Action top 25 under 25* *BET 2013 millennial leader*

**Carol Carter**  
President, LifeBound

Carol Carter is a national and international student success author and speaker. At the college level, her KEYS TO SUCCESS series is used by more than 200,000 freshmen each year throughout the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and China. For the last ten years, Carol has also been president of LifeBound, a student success and transition company, which publishes books, conducts training in academic coaching skills and provides teacher training in K-12. LifeBound’s goal is to eradicate developmental education at the college level in the next decade by better preparing incoming freshmen with college level skills, especially in the areas of critical thinking, writing, math, and reasoning abilities.

Carol is featured as a national and international keynote speaker, as well as in the media, addressing issues on teen and young adult success. An innovator in student leadership and world-class skills, Carol has been a guest in over fifty countries, and she has worked with schools and associations as a keynote speaker around the world in many of these locations. In 2009, Carol gave the opening keynote address for the Tri-Association (Latin America and the Caribbean) in the Dominican Republic, and in January of 2010, she was the keynote speaker for Spectrum Education’s “Teachers Matter” annual conferences in Australia and New Zealand. This last year, Carol participated on the panel of the Grace Institute of Technology in Atlanta and the Innovation in Education Conference in New York. In 2011, she also spoke at the Southern Nevada Math and Science Conference in Las Vegas, the NADE conference in Washington D.C. on the topic of Successful Intelligence: Using Coaching to Promote Global Success, and AISA Educator’s Conference in Nairobi, Kenya.
Milton Chen,  
Senior Fellow, The George Lucas Educational Foundation

Dr. Milton Chen is senior fellow and executive director, emeritus at The George Lucas Educational Foundation (GLEF), a non-profit operating foundation in the San Francisco Bay Area that utilizes its multimedia website, Edutopia.org, and documentary films to communicate a new vision for 21st Century education. He served as executive director of GLEF for 12 years from 1998 to 2010. During his tenure, GLEF and its media brand, Edutopia, greatly expanded their editorial publishing efforts, including the award-winning Edutopia magazine. Edutopia.org is known as a destination Web site for educators and others interested in educational innovation and has won numerous honors, including the 2009 Webby People’s Voice Award for best education website.

Milton was featured in several videos produced by the Teaching Channel focusing on global competence - https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/benefits-global-perspective-asis

Ron Eglash
Professor of Science and Technology, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Ron Eglash (born December 25, 1958 in Chestertown, Maryland) is an American cyberneticist, professor of science and technology studies at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and author widely known for his work in the field of ethnomathematics, which aims to study the diverse relationships between mathematics and culture.

His research includes the use of fractal patterns in African architecture, art, and religion, and the relationships between indigenous cultures and modern technology, such as that between Native American cultural and spiritual practices and cybernetics. He holds a bachelor’s degree in cybernetics and a master’s in systems engineering both at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a Ph.D. in history of consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz. A Fulbright fellowship enabled his postdoctoral field research on African ethnomathematics, which was later published in the book African Fractals: Modern Computing and Indigenous Design.

Dr. Eglash has also conducted studies in teaching children math and computing through simulations of indigenous and vernacular cultural practices. He explains that the simulations do not impose math externally, but rather translate the mathematical ideas already present in the cultural practices to their equivalent form in school-taught math. Examples include transformational geometry in cornrow braiding, spiral arcs in graffiti, least common multiples in percussion rhythms, and analytic geometry in Native American beadwork. His approach is one of many attempts to draw the inspiration to learn out of students’ own cultural backgrounds.
He also studies social justice issues as they manifest in the practice of science and technology, ranging from the ethnic identity of “nerds” to the so-called appropriation of science and technology by groups disempowered on the bases of race, class, gender. Another branch of this research explores how the “bottom-up” egalitarian principles found in many indigenous cultures could be applied to modern society in fields from economics to political science.

He has served as a senior lecturer in comparative studies at Ohio State University, and is currently a professor at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he has taught courses on science and social theory, the history of information technology, and a design studio for the Product Design and Innovation program.

http://homepages.rpi.edu/~eglash/eglash.htm
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ron_Eglash

Michael Furdyk
Director of Technology, TakingITGlobal

Michael Furdyk is the Co-founder of TakingITGlobal (www.tigweb.org), which provides innovative global education programs that empower youth to understand and act on the world’s greatest challenges. TIG was awarded the 2013 Intercultural Innovation Award by BMW and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations.

In the past, he turned his interest in technology into several successful online companies, including MyDesktop.com, which sold to Internet.com in 1999. In 2008, he was named by Contribute Magazine as one of 10 Tech Revolutionaries Redefining the Power and Face of Philanthropy.

Michael has appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show, presented at TED, and was named one of Teen People's "Twenty Teens that will Change the World". Over the last decade, he has keynoted over 100 events across sectors, sharing his social media expertise and insights on youth engagement and educational reform to audiences in over 30 countries. He sits on several non-profit boards, and recently completed his Master of Design (MDes) in Inclusive Design at OCAD University.
Ambassador Patrick H. Gaspard (Potential Keynoter)

US Ambassador to South Africa

Prior to being appointed U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, Patrick Gaspard served as the Executive Director of the Democratic National Committee, a position he held since 2011. Previously, he served as an Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Political Affairs from 2009 to 2011. Prior to that, he was the National Political Director for Obama for America. He served as the Executive Vice President and Political Director for the Service Employees International Union. In 2004, he served as the National Field Director for America Coming Together, and from 2003 to 2004, he was the National Deputy Field Director for Dean for America. From 1998 to 1999, he was the Chief of Staff for the New York City Council.

Earlier in his career, Mr. Gaspard held a number of positions with the City of New York, including Special Assistant in the Office of the Manhattan Borough President and Special Assistant in the Office of Mayor Dinkins.

Ken Kay

CEO - EdLeader21 (Potential Keynoter)

Ken is the Chief Executive Officer of EdLeader21, a professional learning community for education leaders committed to 21st century education.

Ken co-founded the Partnership for 21st Century Skills in 2002 and served as its President for eight years. Prior to his work on 21st century education, Ken served as executive director of the CEO Forum on Education and Technology.
Ken spent 28 years in Washington, DC, where he gained a national reputation as a coalition builder on competitiveness. He founded a landmark coalition of US universities and high-tech companies focused on research and development issues, and was the founding Executive Director of the premier CEO advocacy group in the US computer industry.


Ken is a graduate of Oberlin College and the University of Denver College of Law. He and his wife, Karen, have three adult children, a daughter-in-law and a grandson, Ollie. They live in the desert outside Tucson, Arizona, with their golden retriever, Bisbee.

**Allyson Knox**

**Director, Education Policy & Programs, Microsoft**

Allyson Knox is Director of Education Policy and Programs in Microsoft’s Washington DC office. Since joining Microsoft in 2004 she launched several new national education programs including InterroBang, Problem Solving with Smithsonian Experts, Service Technology Academic Resource Teams program with the Corporation for National and Community Service, Scaling Education Success, C2i Gaming Challenge with the NEA Foundation and CareerForward. At the state-level, she helped deploy Microsoft’s IT Academy available for NC, VA, GA, LA, and WA high school students.

Prior to joining Microsoft, Allyson managed Workforce Innovation Networks as a senior program officer at the US Chamber of Commerce’s Center for Workforce. She directed Michigan State University’s Young Spartan Program – a university-urban elementary schools partnership, taught leadership and entrepreneurship courses to urban youth and community members as an economic development agent for Michigan State Extension, trained community leaders on building service coalitions at the Michigan Community Service Commission, secured federal grants and managed industry committees as Director of Workforce Development at the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, and directed a nationally recognized community outreach program at Michigan’s largest independent bookstore.

Allyson received her BA from University of Michigan, MA from Michigan State University, and Ed M from Harvard University.
Chris Lehmann is the founding principal of the Science Leadership Academy, a progressive science and technology high school in Philadelphia, PA. The Science Leadership Academy is an inquiry-driven, project-based, 1:1 laptop school that is considered to be one of the pioneers of the School 2.0 movement nationally and internationally. The school was recognized by Ladies Home Journal as one of the Ten Most Amazing Schools in the US, has been recognized as an Apple Distinguished School from 2009 through 2013 and has been written about in many publications including Edutopia Magazine, EdWeek and the Philadelphia Inquirer. In September 2013, Chris opened Science Leadership Academy @ Beeber campus, the second campus in the SLA model. Chris returned to his native Philadelphia after nine years as an English Teacher, Technology Coordinator, Girls Basketball Coach and Ultimate Frisbee coach at the Beacon School in New York City, one of the leading urban public schools for technology integration.

Chris is the 2014 winner of the McGraw Prize in Education. In June 2013, Chris was named Outstanding Leader of the Year by the International Society of Technology in Education. In November of 2012, Chris was named one of Dell’s #Inspire100 – one of the 100 people changing the world using Social Media. In April of 2012, Chris won the Lindback Award for Excellence in Principal Leadership in the School District of Philadelphia. In September of 2011, Chris was honored by the White House as a Champion of Change for his work in education reform. In June 2010, Chris was named as one of the “30 Most Influential People in EdTech” by Technology & Learning Magazine. In 2009, Chris was a honoree for the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development’s Outstanding Young Educator Award. Chris was named as one of “40 Under 40” by Philadelphia Business Journal in 2009. In 2006, the National School Board Association named Chris one of “20 to Watch” among American administrators. In 2001, Chris was honored by MOUSE as a Champion of Technology and Education for his work on building the portal at the Beacon School.

Chris has written for such education publications as Principal Leadership Magazine, Learning and Leading with Technology Magazine, and the School Library Journal. Chris has spoken at conferences all over the world, including TEDxPhilly, TEDxNYED, the National Association of Secondary Schools Conference, SXSW, SXSWedu, the Building Learning Communities conference, the International Society of Technology in Education, the Philadelphia Area Educational Technology Conference, The Florida Educational Technology Conference, the Innovative Learning Conference, The Council of Educational Facilities Planners Regional Conference, the K12-Online Conference, the International Conference on Technology and Education and at the Central and Eastern European Schools Association Conference, and he has worked with many schools and districts all over the world as a consultant. Chris received his B.A. in English Literature from the University of Pennsylvania and his M.A. in English Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. Chris is co-editor of What School Leaders Need to Know about Digital Technologies and Social Media, the author of the education blog this blog Practical Theory and is father to Jakob and Theo.
Zak Malamed

**Founder and Executive Director, Student Voice**

Zak is a junior at the University of Maryland, College Park where he created a major in Engagement and Media. He sees student voices as the common sense mechanism for addressing education equity and advancement. Beyond Student Voice, he lives his life to go to space, travel to all seven continents, enjoy great music, and share these experiences with family and friends. You can follow his live tweeting of pop culture events and engage with his perspective on the future of education via Twitter at @zakmal.

Joe Mazza, Ed.D.

**Leadership Innovation Manager, Penn GSE**

Joe serves as the Leadership Innovation Manager at the University of Pennsylvania’s Graduate School of Education working with Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership (MCDPEL) faculty, students and alumni as well as supporting the Penn Center for Educational Leadership (PCEL). Joe also serves as a national family-community engagement advisor to the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. Before moving to higher education, Joe served as K-12 Project Manager for Connected Teaching, Learning & Leadership in the North Penn School District in Lansdale PA. Joe served as lead learner at Knapp Elementary School since 2007 before taking on the district edtech role. He has spent his career working with students, teachers & families as a 3rd grade teacher, bilingual assistant principal, middle school vice-principal, an elementary principal, while serving as a TV studio producer, webmaster and technology integration coach in each setting. He is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania with a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. Dissertation topic: *Principals’ use of social media to strengthen home-school partnerships*.

Joe’s blog was originally created to share ways educators can use innovative tools to complement face to face communications between home and school, and do this in a transparent and collaborative way. Since completing his dissertation, the blog is aimed to serve all things teaching, learning & leadership. It’s the relationships that matter, and Joe’s work is aimed at meeting stakeholders “where they are” with a focus on technology and social media tools to complement face to face interactions.
Steve Mesler

*Olympic Gold Medalist & President & CEO of Classroom Champions*

Steve is the co-founder and President & CEO of Classroom Champions, an international award winning education organization. A 3-time American Olympian in 4-man bobsled, Steve and his team became the first Americans to win a World Championship title in 50 years in 2009. A year later, they won gold for the first time in 62 years for the U.S. at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games. Steve has been a finalist for the International Champion of Peace Award and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the United States Olympic Committee.

Having moved to Calgary, Alberta in 2003 to give himself the best chance to succeed - Steve was recognized as a leader that helped push his team to success. With that same push to succeed, Steve and his sister, Dr. Leigh Mesler Parise, founded Classroom Champions and have grown it into an international organization affecting change in classrooms and donating needed technology utilizing Olympians and Paralympians.

Steve’s teaching extends beyond the schools of the world and into corporate board rooms where he is a leadership development consultant. He works with multi-national corporations to increase employee development, leadership abilities, team performance and community involvement engagement. Steve has keynoted executive conferences and national conventions from Vancouver to Orlando. He has spoken on communicating the Olympic ideals in Olympia, Greece, and sat on a panel in Sochi, Russia to discuss the future of organizations in creating peace through sport.

Dana Mortenson

*Co-Founder and Executive Director, World Savvy*

Dana has dedicated her professional life to educating and engaging youth in community and world affairs, to close the global competence gap in American education. Her deep belief in the transformative power of global education to contribute to peace, justice and equity on a global scale led her to co-found World Savvy in 2002. She has since led the organization through extensive growth and expansion —reaching more than 375,000 students and 2,200 educators from three offices nationwide. Dana is a recognized expert in the field of global education, and serves as Advisor and Board member to a range of nonprofits focused on international education and youth development. She is a frequent speaker on the subject of global citizenship and
social entrepreneurship. She is a 2011 Ashoka Fellow and was named one of The New Leaders Council’s 40 Under 40 Progressive American Leaders in 2010. Dana holds a B.A. in International Relations from Connecticut College and a Masters in International Affairs from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University.

Alan November

Senior Partner & Founder, November Learning

Alan November is an international leader in education technology. He began his career as an oceanography teacher and dorm counselor at an island reform school for boys in Boston Harbor. While Alan was a computer science teacher in Lexington, MA, he was probably the first teacher in the world to have a student project online in 1984, a database for the handicapped. He has been director of an alternative high school, computer coordinator, technology consultant and university lecturer. He has helped schools, governments and industry leaders improve the quality of education through technology.

Audiences enjoy Alan’s humor and wit as he pushes the boundaries of how to improve teaching and learning. His areas of expertise include planning across curriculum, staff development, new school design, community building and leadership development. He has delivered keynotes and workshops in all fifty states, across Canada and throughout the UK, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Central America.

Alan was named one of the nation’s fifteen most influential thinkers of the decade by Technology and Learning Magazine. In 2001, he was listed as one of eight educators to provide leadership into the future by the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse. In 2007, he was selected to speak at the Cisco Public Services Summit during the Nobel Prize Festivities in Stockholm, Sweden. His writing includes numerous articles and two best-selling books, Empowering Students with Technology and Web Literacy for Educators. Alan was co-founder of the Stanford Institute for Educational Leadership Through Technology and is most proud of being selected as one of the original five national Christa McAuliffe Educators.

Each summer Alan leads the Building Learning Communities summer conference with world-class presenters and international participants. Visit http://novemberlearning.com/blc for more details.
Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach
Co-Founder & CEO, Powerful Learning Practice

Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach is the co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Powerful Learning Practice, where she works with schools and districts from across the US, Canada, Australia, Brazil, United Kingdom, Israel, Norway, and China to re-envision their learning cultures and communities through the Connected Learner Experience and other e-learning opportunities.

During a 25-year education career, Sheryl has been a classroom teacher, technology coach, charter school principal, district administrator, university instructor and digital learning consultant. She is the author (with Lani Ritter Hall) of The Connected Educator: Learning and Leading in a Digital Age (Solution Tree, 2012) and is in the dissertation phase of completing her doctorate in Educational Planning, Policy and Leadership at the College of William and Mary.

Sheryl is a sought-after presenter at national and international events, speaking on topics of 21st Century reform, teacher and educational leadership, community building, and educational issues impacting marginalized populations such as the homeless. She is an advisor to the U.S. Department of Education’s Connected Educators initiative and a leader in the development of USDOE’s first Connected Educators Month in August 2012. She currently serves on the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Board of Directors. She also served on the New Media Consortium’s 2012 Horizon.K12 Report Advisory Board and their 2013 Horizon Higher Education Report Advisory Board. Sheryl consults with governments and non-profits that are integrating online communities and networks into their professional learning initiatives, including the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI), Virtual Independent School Network (VISNET), and the Oberkotter Foundation.

Sheryl lives near the Virginia shore and spends her spare time playing on the water with her four children, her grandson Luke Skywalker Walblay, and a trio of longhaired dachshunds.

Chris Plutte
Co-Founder, Global Nomads Group

A proven entrepreneur and multi-faceted leader, Chris Plutte has more than 15 years of experience in NGO management and growth, education, media development, and conflict resolution. Chris co-founded the award-winning international NGO, Global Nomads Group (GNG) in 1998, and has led the organization for more than a decade. Prior to rejoining GNG in 2010, he opened and directed all of Search for Common Ground’s (SFCG) programs in Rwanda, and was SFCG’s Chief of Party on major initiatives for the Great Lakes region (DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda). In both roles at GNG and SFCG, Chris managed all aspects of project and program development. He is skilled and experienced in international development with a breadth and depth of experience in multi-cultural environments across Asia, the Americas, Africa, and Europe. Chris is currently an Aspen Institute Pahara Fellow.
Dr. Russell J. Quaglia  (Potential Keynoter)

President/Founder - Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations

quaglia@qisa.org

Dr. Russell J. Quaglia is a globally recognized pioneer in the field of education, known for his unwavering dedication to student voice and aspirations. Dr. Quaglia has been described by news media as America's foremost authority on the development and achievement of student voice and aspirations. His innovative work is evidenced by an extensive library of research-based publications, prominent international speaking appearances, and a successfully growing list of aspirations ventures.

Among these ventures, Dr. Quaglia authored the Student Voice and Teacher Voice suite of surveys, and the iKnow My Class course assessment tool. His recent book, Student Voice: The Instrument of Change published by Corwin is already receiving international acclaim.

In addition to founding and leading the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, Dr. Quaglia also founded and currently chairs the Aspirations Academies Trust, a sponsor of primary and secondary academies in England built upon his aspirations research. Most recently he has founded the Teacher Voice and Aspirations International Center, dedicated to amplifying the voice of teachers in order for them to realize their aspirations and reach their fullest potential.

Dr. Quaglia earned his bachelor's degree at Assumption College, a masters degree in economics from Boston College, and master of education and doctorate degrees from Columbia University, specializing in the area of organizational theory and behavior. He has been awarded numerous honorary doctorates in humanitarian services for his dedication to students. Dr. Quaglia’s work has also led him to serve on several national and international committees, reflecting his passion for ensuring that students' voices are always heard, honored, and acted upon.

Dr. Fernando Reimers

Ford Foundation Professor of Practice in International Education
Faculty Director, International Education Policy Program, Harvard University

Fernando M. Reimers focuses his research and teaching on innovative global education policies and programs that help students develop twenty first century skills. He is also interested in programs that support the development of global competency. He teaches a graduate course that examines the core global education challenges and the role of policy analysis in addressing them, and a course that studies innovative education programs and the role of social entrepreneurs in generating and scaling up
change. He also chairs an annual Think Tank that examines state of the art practices and programs to help students gain global competency.

He also teaches courses on education policy and educational innovation online through Harvard Extension School. He is a co-chair of Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative.

Current research includes a cross-national study of policies and innovative programs to develop twenty first century skills Global Education Innovation Initiative.

Publications and more information about his academic work is available on Fernando Reimers' website. Reimers is a member of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, the Council of Foreign Relations, a fellow of the International Academy of Education, as well as a member of the United States National Commission for UNESCO. He serves on the board of several educational organizations and foundations.

**Pasi Sahlberg**

*Professor & Author*

Pasi Sahlberg is a visiting Professor of Practice at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education in Cambridge, MA, USA. He is experienced in classroom teaching, training teachers and leaders, coaching schools and advising education policy-makers around the world. Pasi is an international speaker and author who has given more than 400 keynote speeches and published over 100 articles, chapters and books on education.

Pasi has lived and worked in England (King’s College), the United States (World Bank in Washington, DC) and Italy (European Training Foundation in Torino) and worked with 50 education systems around the world. He earned his PhD from the University of Jyväskylä (Finland) in 1996 and has been invited speaker in world’s best universities, including Stanford University, Columbia University, George Washington University, University of Chicago and Vanderbilt University in the U.S. and Parliament Houses in England, Scotland, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand and the European Union.

Pasi is a member of the Advisory Board of the Open Society Foundations (Education Support Program), the Center on International Education Benchmarking and Laureate of Kappa Delta Pi. He is Adjunct Professor at the Universities of Helsinki and Oulu, and former Director General of CIMO (Centre for International Mobility and Cooperation) at the Finland’s Ministry of Education and Culture in Helsinki.

His book “Finnish Lessons 2.0: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?” won the 2013 Grawemeyer Award and he received the 2012 Education Award in Finland and 2014 Robert Owen Award in Scotland. He is also known as international “school improvement activist” because his direct links to practitioners and their communities. Follow Pasi in Twitter @pasi_sahlberg.
Homa Sabet Tavangar

Author


Homa is the lead author of *The Global Education Toolkit for Elementary Learners* (Sage/Corwin, 2014), contributor to *Mastering Global Literacy*, Heidi Hayes-Jacobs, ed. (Solution Tree, Nov. 2013) and is currently working on a 3-book series with Professor Yong Zhao on educating creative, entrepreneurial “World Class Learners.”

She serves as Consultant to NBC Sprout TV on original programming, has been Education Adviser to the *Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting*, and has worked with organizations ranging from the World Bank and USAID to Education First (EF), PBS Parents, Sprout TV, Kidshealth.org, and was a Visiting Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania. Her writing appears on National Geographic Education, Edutopia, the Huffington Post, PBS, Momsrising, GOOD, and EducationWeek, among other media, and she is a sought-after speaker around global citizenship, globalizing curriculum, parenting, diversity, and creating inclusive, empathetic working and learning environments.

Prior to turning her sights to global education and parenting, Homa spent 20 years working in global competitiveness, organizational, business and international development with hundreds of businesses, non-profit agencies, governments and international organizations. Born in Iran, she also has lived in East and West Africa, South America and throughout the U.S. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from UCLA and holds a Master’s in Public Affairs from Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. She speaks three-and-a-half languages and her religious heritage includes four of the world’s major faiths. An active volunteer in her local community near Philadelphia, she also serves on the board of the *Tahirih Justice Center*, a national organization protecting immigrant women and girls fleeing violence. She is married and the mother of three girls ages 11, 19 and 21.

Michele Weslander-Quaid

Chief Innovation Evangelist, Google

Michele is Google’s Chief Innovation Evangelist supporting the global user base, and has served as Chief
Technology Officer for the Public Sector since joining Google in April 2011. Throughout her career, she has taken on the challenge of creating start-ups and transforming existing businesses in both industry and government. Through consistent success, Michele is recognized and sought after as a leader of change, innovation, and organizational transformation.

Michele’s career has been at the nexus of National Security, Domestic and Foreign Policy, and Technology. Prior to joining Google, Michele's work experience spanned both industry and government. She started her career as an image scientist and systems engineer, where her innovative technology applications proved to be prescient solutions for operational needs, and she soon became the youngest chief engineer in the history of her company. Post-9/11/2001, Michele was recruited into public service to lead change, innovation, and organizational transformation, and became one of the youngest people ever sworn in as a senior executive in the US Government. Michele’s perspicacious leadership -- both in industry and government -- has had a lasting positive impact on the US and it’s Allies, and her support of the troops both at home and abroad earned her the call sign “Warrior Goddess.”

Michele earned a B.S. in Physics and Engineering Science with honors from Seattle Pacific University, and a M.S. in Optics from the University of Rochester. She is a graduate of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government program for Senior Managers in Government, and a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff CAPSTONE Fellow.