



Catherine Atkin
President, Preschool California

Catherine Atkin is the President of Preschool California, a nonprofit organization working to increase access to high-quality preschool for California's children. Atkin is an attorney with expertise in the area of early education

and more than a decade of professional legislative and policy experience. Prior to joining Preschool California in 2004, she was the principal of a consulting firm specializing in early education research and analysis. From 1999-2002, she was a Directing Attorney at Public Counsel Law Center in Los Angeles, where she was engaged in local and statewide legislation and litigation.

Prior to her work in the early education field, she was a public interest attorney and served as Minority Subcommittee Counsel for the Banking and Financial Services Committee of the United States House of Representatives, where she focused on urban development and housing. She graduated from Stanford University and holds a law degree from Boalt Hall School of Law at UC Berkeley and master's degree in Urban Planning from UCLA.



Toby Boyd
Board Member, California Teachers Association

Toby Boyd, a teacher for 16 years in the Elk Grove Unified School District, is serving his first term full term on the CTA Board, which expires June 25, 2014.

Boyd represents most of the CTA members in the counties of Sacramento and San Joaquin. He was involved with an educational program in Elk Grove Unified that assists under-represented children in the fields of math, science, and engineering – a program called MESA (Mathematic, Engineering, Science Achievement). He held the positions of MESA advisor and elementary coordinator for Elk Grove, and served as the liaison between the school district and the universities involved with the program.

As a strong site representative for the Elk Grove Educators Association, he gained the respect of his peers and was appointed as a bargaining team member and several special sub-committees. He served as a delegate to the CTA State Council of Education, the union's top governing body. At State Council, Boyd served on the Early Child Education Committee, where he was appointed chair of the kindergarten subcommittee. He also held the position of member/minority at large on the CTA Association for a Better Citizenship Committee. Boyd is a five-time delegate to the National Education Association Representative Assembly.

He was also involved with Preschool California, an organization seeking the implementation of universal access to preschool for all California's children. Boyd served as a spokesperson for the group at several functions, and represented the organization's position on at least two state legislative panels. He was also appointed by former Assembly Speaker Karen Bass to the state's California Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee, where he was the vice-chair of the Data Systems for Program Improvement and Research/Evaluation subcommittee.

Boyd is a graduate of California State University, Sacramento, where he earned a bachelor's in liberal studies with an emphasis in bilingual/cross-cultural studies, and then earned his teaching credential from the Multi-Cultural/Multi-Lingual Center at the university.



Dennis Cima
Senior Vice President, Silicon Valley Leadership Group

Dennis Cima serves as Senior Vice President for the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, a public policy trade association made up of more than 340 leading Silicon Valley employers and

founded by David Packard in 1977.

Cima joined the Leadership Group in 2004 to direct the organization's educational policy objectives. In 2007, Cima was named Vice President of the organization's legislative agenda, in addition to his education and workforce policy portfolio. He was named Senior Vice President in December 2008.

Prior to joining the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Cima was the Assistant to the Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools where he assisted in managing the day-to-day operations of the Superintendent's office and provided policy support to the Superintendent and her cabinet, the County Board of Education, and local school districts. Dennis also served for five years as a legislative assistant to former Congressman Tom Campbell during Mr. Campbell's service in both the U.S. House of Representatives and California State Senate. In that capacity, Cima provided policy support and constituent service in the areas of national defense, veterans affairs, and transportation, among others.

Cima received a bachelor's degree from Santa Clara University in political science, with an emphasis on American public policy. He is the son of two public school educators and a proud Bay Area native.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Evelina Du **Senior Research Associate,** **WestEd**

Evelina (Evy) Du is a Senior Research Associate at the WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies. Du is responsible for project management, research design/implementation, and development of new resources to inform policy and practice in the early childhood field. She leads the Educare Development in California project, designed to establish Educare schools in California with the collaboration of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, First 5 California, and the Educare Learning Network. Du received a bachelor's degree in Economics with an emphasis on Education from UCLA and a master's degree in International Educational Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford University. She is pursuing a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership at Mills College.



Delaine Eastin **Former California State** **Superintendent of Public** **Instruction**

Delaine Eastin served as the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) for eight years from 1995 to 2003, the first and only woman in history elected to that position. As an elected constitutional officer, Delaine managed more than 40% of the California budget and oversaw the education of 6.1 million children. Superintendent Eastin championed state standards and assessments aligned to standards, reduced class size in kindergarten through third grade, and advocated for a strengthening of arts education and hands-on science, including gardens in school. As SPI she fought to rebuild California school libraries and to wire schools for technology. She was the architect of the innovative Net Days, copied nationally in more than 40 states and internationally in more than 40 countries. Eastin has been an advocate for substantial increases in school construction funding, improved school nutrition, universal preschool, full-day mandatory kindergarten, better career and technical education, and greater civic engagement of students. She advocated for a longer school year and for more safety nets for children who fall behind.

Prior to serving as SPI, Eastin served 8 years in the California State Assembly, where she chaired several committees including the Education Committee. After retiring as SPI, Eastin was the first Executive Director of the National Institute for School Leadership and then a Distinguished Visiting Professor of Educational Leadership at Mills College in Oakland. She now does speaking and consulting. She is an avid reader, gardener, cook, traveler, and advocate for

children. She serves on a number of boards that support the education, health and civic engagement of children from preschool to college. An elementary school in Union City is named after her, and it has a preschool on site. She has received numerous other awards and state and national recognition for her contributions to children.



Tim Fitzharris, Ph.D. **Legislative Advocate, Child** **Development Policy Institute**

Tim Fitzharris is the Legislative Advocate for the Child Development Policy Institute (CDPI), the Early Care and Education Consortium (ECEC), and the Professional Association for Childhood Education (PACE). He has lobbied for children's issues in Sacramento for 39 years and is responsible for over 100 successful bills and appropriations.

Fitzharris has been a full-time, legislative committee consultant for the California Assembly, and the executive director of two statewide organizations – the California Probation, Parole and Correctional Association and the California Association of Services for Children – for 11 and 14 years, respectively. For the past fifteen years, he has written the respected political reports, *The CDPI Bulletin* and *Capitol Plus*, which have a readership of over 8,000 professionals throughout California. He has served on the boards of directors of the Child Welfare League of America and the National Association of Homes and Services for Children. For six years, he was a commissioner on the Sacramento County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission.

His Sacramento-based firm, Fitzharris & Associates, specializes in management consulting and governmental affairs for associations and nonprofit organizations.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of California, Davis, a master's in Public Administration degree from the University of San Francisco, and a Ph.D. in Criminology from the University of California, Berkeley. He is a Certified Association Executive (CAE) and a Certified Management Consultant (CMC).



Yolanda Garcia **Director, E3 Institute for** **Excellence in Early Education,** **WestEd**

Yolanda Garcia serves as Director of the WestEd E3 Institute, Excellence in Early Education, which has become a model of increasing community access to high-quality early education.

A member of the WestEd Center for Child & Family Studies, Garcia directs the advocacy and communication function of the E3 Institute, which supports and strengthens early childhood educator professional development.

Serving California's Santa Clara County, the Institute reaches new recruits, family-based early educators, center-based programs, programs for children with special needs, employers, faith-based providers, and the corporate community.

Garcia and her E3 Institute colleagues leverage local resources for early educators, especially through the Institute's Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) program. CARES promotes, rewards, and encourages educational attainment among early educators in Santa Clara County through a system of financial incentives and rewards. Garcia coauthored the WestEd-published *5 Years of Learning: A Report on the First Five Years of Santa Clara CARES 2002–2006*.

As part of her E3 work, Garcia coauthored the WestEd-published *Great Expectations: The E3 Institute-San Jose State University Bachelor's Degree Cohort Program for CARES Participants in Santa Clara County*. The E3 Institute supports the research showing that children are better prepared for school when taught by educators who are equipped with the necessary theoretical knowledge and education to improve the quality of preschool services for the county's youngest children. Evidence of the bachelor's degree program's benefits is presented in this report, specifically in the voices of the bachelor's degree cohort members, whose lives have been irrevocably changed by their participation and successes.

Garcia is also responsible for the implementation of a state demonstration called the Power of Preschool that enhances the quality of services to children served by three school districts, the county office of education, and community-based programs. High-quality preschool services were provided to 2,733 children during 2006-10. Garcia coauthored the WestEd-published *Power of Preschool in Santa Clara County: Making the First Five Years Count*.

Garcia led development of the California Department of Education's Early Childhood Educator Competencies, July 2011, a statewide evidence-based set of competencies that addresses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that early childhood professionals need to support the development and learning of young children.



John Hein
Political Consultant to Our Children, Our Future Act Campaign

John Hein is chief consultant to the Our Children, Our Future school funding initiative campaign and brings to this position 40 years of executive management experience in politics and public policy at both the national and state levels. Hein is perhaps best known for the development and use of opinion research data to shape the strategic context of a public policy debate and for the soundness

of his analysis of public policy issues. Until he retired from the position in 2004, Hein served as the associate executive director of the California Teachers Association, where he oversaw the political and legislative activities of one of the state's most influential organizations. His tenure coincided with major CTA victories in the Legislature and at the ballot box, particularly with ballot initiatives.



Carlise King
Research Director, California Child Care Resource and Referral Network

Carlise King is the Research Director for the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network (Network). The Network is a statewide membership organization of child care resource and referral agencies, whose mission is to improve access to quality child care for all families. Since 2000, King has conducted research on, and examined the impacts of, state and federal policies on parents' access to child care services; licensed child care supply; child care costs; and the child care workforce. She oversees technical assistance and training related to the Network's statewide data collection projects and child care resource and referral databases. King also manages the Data Standardization Project which produces the California Child Care Portfolio, a biennial series of county-by-county statistical reports about child care costs, supply, and demand in California. She holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of California at Berkeley, and a master's degree in Psychology from San Francisco State University.



Carol Kocivar
President, California PTA

Carol Kocivar of San Francisco is president of the California State PTA. She has served as president-elect, vice president for communications, an education commission member, and on numerous committees with the California State PTA. A past president of the San Francisco Second District PTA, Kocivar has worked as a journalist and attorney and ombudsperson for special education. The California State PTA has nearly 1 million members throughout the state volunteering on behalf of public schools, children and families, with the motto, "Every child, one voice." The PTA also advocates at national, state, and local levels for education and family issues.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



J. Ron Lally Co-Director, Center for Child and Family Studies, WestEd

J. Ronald Lally, Ed.D., is the Co-director of the WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies located in Sausalito, California. An expert on early development, Lally has been a director of the work of

WestEd's Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) since 1985. Lally is one of the founders and a board member of Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families. For the last forty years, working with state and federal governments, he has charted the direction of quality infant and toddler childcare in the United States and abroad.



Ted Lempert President, Children Now

Ted Lempert is the President of Children Now, a national research and advocacy organization based in Oakland, California. He is also a Lecturer in the Political Science Department at UC Berkeley. Previously, Lempert was

the founding CEO and co-founder of EdVoice, a California grassroots organization advocating for education reform and support for public education.

Lempert was a California State Assemblymember representing San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties from 1996 to 2000 and 1988 to 1992. He served as chair of the Assembly Higher Education Committee and the Select Committees on Education Technology and Coastal Protection, and co-chair of the Joint Committee to Develop a Master Plan for Education. He had more than 75 bills signed by Governors Deukmejian, Wilson, and Davis, including major laws in the areas of education, health care, children and families, tax policy, and the environment.

Lempert also served on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, where he was President of the Board in 1995. He was the founder of the County's Youth Commission and chaired the Task Force on Violence Against Women. Prior to holding public office, Lempert was special counsel and an associate for the law firm of Sheppard, Mullin, Richter and Hampton in San Francisco.

Lempert received the "Al Rodda Lifetime Service Award" from the California School Boards Association; was named "Legislator of the Year" by numerous leading education groups, including the National Association of Educational Service Agencies, the California Association of School Administrators, California Community College Faculty and the UC and CSU Students Associations; was recognized five times with the "High-Tech Legislator of the Year" award from the American Electronics Association.

He graduated from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and earned his law degree from Stanford University. He, his wife Nicole, and their three daughters live in San Carlos.



Camille Maben Director, Child Development Division, California Department of Education

Camille Maben was appointed in March 2008 by the Superintendent of Public Instruction as Division Director of the Child Development Division at the

California Department of Education (CDE).

She was previously appointed by the Governor to serve as Chief of Staff for the Office of the Secretary of Education. She worked closely with the Secretary on the coordination and development of the Governor's education policy agenda.

Prior to this, Maben worked at the CDE, where she was the Division Director of the School and District Accountability Division. Her division included the No Child Left Behind Office, oversight of the Categorical Program Monitoring process, the Title I Policy and Partnerships Unit, and the English Learner Accountability Unit. She served as the Superintendent's representative to the California Interscholastic Federation. Maben also served as Senior Advisor to former State Superintendent Delaine Eastin and has worked as a consultant to the Assembly Education Committee.

Maben currently serves as a school board member for the Rocklin Unified School District. This is her 18th year on the Rocklin Board.



Meera Mani, Ed.D. Director, Children, Families, and Communities Program, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Meera Mani is director of the Children, Families, and Communities (CFC) Program at the David and Lucile Packard

Foundation. She joined the Foundation in February 2009 as program officer, and in 2010 assumed responsibility for leading the preschool, after-school, and summer enrichment subprogram in CFC. Prior to joining the Foundation, Mani served as research director for Preschool California, where she monitored and advised national and state research and evaluation efforts, provided expertise and strategic support to ensure effective policy development, field operations, communications and messaging.

Before working for Preschool California, Mani served as the president of The Clayton Foundation in Denver, Colorado.

Under her direction, the foundation focused on operating high-quality programs for children from birth to five-years-old and on providing education and professional development opportunities for the early childhood education workforce. Her leadership was also instrumental in developing initiatives, organizations and government programs focused on building a comprehensive system of high-quality early care and education in Colorado.

Between 1999-2001, Mani led and managed the day-to-day operations of Educare Colorado, now known as Qualistar Early Learning, a statewide initiative dedicated to improving children's early learning experiences through the implementation of a quality rating and improvement system. Additionally, Mani served on various task forces, committees and collaborative projects including the Mayor's Early Childhood Education Commission.

Mani has a master's degree in child development from M.S. University in India and a doctor of education in Educational Leadership and Administration from Boston University.



Diana Rauner President, Ounce of Prevention Fund

Diana Rauner is President of the Ounce of Prevention Fund. Prior to becoming President in January 2011, Ms. Rauner served for three years as Executive Director and for five years as a member

of the Board of Directors. Rauner oversaw the expansion of the Ounce's Early Head Start program and the advocacy work that preserved state funding for early childhood programs during the worst economic crisis in Illinois history. She has also launched several new training and research initiatives at the Ounce.

Prior to joining the Ounce of Prevention Fund, Rauner was a Senior Research Associate at Chapin Hall Center for Children (www.chapinhall.org) at the University of Chicago, where she worked with public agencies and private foundations to evaluate programs that support early childhood development. Rauner has a background in investment banking and private equity and previously worked for private equity investment firms in Chicago and San Francisco. She holds a Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the University of Chicago, a master's degree in Business Administration from Stanford University, and a bachelor's degree from Yale University.



Molly Munger Co-Director, Advancement Project

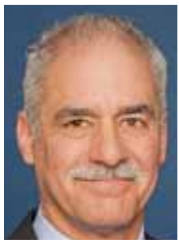
Molly Munger is a co-founder and director of Advancement Project. Munger brings an extensive background of legal expertise to the Advancement Project, including twenty years as a federal prosecutor and business litigator. Munger served with Advancement Project Co-Director Connie Rice as Western Regional Counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund from 1994 to 1998. Between 1974 and 1994, she served as an assistant United States Attorney, a partner in the all-women litigation firm Baird, Munger & Meyers, and a partner in the Los Angeles office of New York-based Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson. Together with Co-Directors Connie Rice and Steve English, Munger launched a coalition lawsuit, *Godinez v. Davis*, that won approximately \$1 billion for new school construction in Los Angeles and other urban areas - money previously slated for less crowded, more affluent suburban school districts. With these funds the Los Angeles Unified School District began its nationally recognized program to build over 66 new schools since 2001. After the court in *Godinez* required California to develop a new system for funding school construction, Advancement Project was instrumental in assessing the need for adequate schools to serve all children in California and in crafting and shepherding three school construction bond initiatives that raised \$25 billion for new and renovated facilities throughout the state, including \$5 billion earmarked to relieve overcrowding in urban schools. This funding enabled California to build or renovate over 1 million school spaces since 2000. Munger has been deeply involved in efforts to expand and improve early childhood education for several years; her work was critical to the development of thousands of preschool spaces that serve low income children in Los Angeles County, and California's Preschool Challenge, her report on statewide preschool space shortfalls spurred the creation of the Speaker's Task Force on School Facilities. Munger served as a Commissioner with First 5 California, and also serves on the boards of The James Irvine Foundation, Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools, and Westridge School for Girls. She received the Women Lawyers of Los Angeles Ernestine Stahlhut Award in 1996 and, with Co-Director Steve English, the ACLU of Southern California's Equal Justice Advocacy Award in 2002. She is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Kim Pattillo Brownson Director of Educational Equity, Advancement Project

Kim Pattillo Brownson is a civil rights lawyer with litigation and advocacy experience in education and constitutional law. She oversees the day-to-day management of Advancement Project's Education team, and focuses on early education, school facilities and overcrowding, and school finance. Prior to joining the Advancement Project, she was an education attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, and was a litigation associate at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom. She began her legal career as a law clerk to the Honorable Dolores Sloviter on the Third Circuit Court of Appeal, and the Honorable Louis H. Pollak in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. She holds a J.D. from Yale Law School and graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College. Prior to law school, She worked at the Boston Consulting Group, where she provided financial and strategic planning services to Fortune 500 companies.



Joshua Pechthalt President, California Federation of Teachers (CFT)

Joshua Pechthalt, a teacher in Los Angeles, was elected CFT President in March 2011 after serving as a CFT Vice President and president of the largest AFT local union in California, United Teachers Los Angeles, Local 1021. Pechthalt has worked to build alliances of education unions, social service and healthcare providers, and community-based organizations.



Kris Perry Executive Director, First 5 California

Kris Perry, Executive Director of First 5 California, understands that California's future lies in the health and well-being of the state's youngest children. She has dedicated her career to bringing resources and support to parents, caregivers, and early learning workforce professionals to ensure children grow up healthy and ready to succeed in school and in life. Since July 2005, she has fostered First 5 California's emergence as one of the most well-known and respected advocates for early childhood development on the state and national levels. Perry has been instrumental in developing and steering First 5 California's strategic planning process, and has streamlined funding priorities through program criteria that are evidence-based and results-driven. She utilizes social media and other online technology to expand First 5 California's outreach and

has taken to the next level highly successful First 5 California programs, such as Power of Preschool and the Kit for New Parents. The development of the Parent, Teacher, and Child Signature Programs, with an evaluation component to measure outcomes, is a key element of the strategic plan.

Such visionary leadership has garnered her past statewide appointments, including co-chair of the State Early Learning Advisory Council, which was established to position the state for millions of dollars in federal funding for early childhood education. In this and other state posts, her leadership resulted in recommendations for system changes for early learning to improve the quality of preschool and school readiness programs.

Perry has played a pivotal role in bringing the Educare model of early childhood centers to California and serves on the California Health Interview Survey Advisory Board. Kris is also a powerful voice for child advocacy, appearing as a commentator and child development expert on state and national media outlets.

Before joining First 5 California, she served as Executive Director of First 5 San Mateo County, where she implemented cutting-edge programs and led community design groups to develop countywide initiatives, including preschool for all and universal health care. Her dedication to children and their families began at the Alameda County Social Services Agency, where she worked for more than 12 years in various capacities, including child abuse investigator, family preservation case manager, and program manager.

Perry received her bachelor's degree from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a master's in Social Work from San Francisco State University. She also completed the Stanford Graduate School of Business Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders. She is a licensed clinical social worker and a board certified diplomat who holds a postgraduate certificate as a service integration specialist.



David Rattray Senior Vice President of Education and Workforce Development, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce; President, UNITE-LA

David Rattray serves as the Senior Vice President of Education & Workforce Development for the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and President of UNITE-LA—the School-to-Career Partnership of Los Angeles. After being a strategic partner, he joined the Chamber formally in 2003. Since 1998, he has lead UNITE-LA in building business and educational partnerships toward a goal of improving the academic achievement and enthusiasm for learning for all Los Angeles students.

Rattray serves on the L.A. City Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council, serves as the Vice Chair of the State Workforce Investment Board's Lifelong Learning

Committee, chaired a Working Group for the Legislative Joint Committee for the K-University Master Plan, co-chairs the Linked Learning Alliance Policy Development Working Group, serves as the co-chair of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction's Transition Team, is a member of the U.S. Chamber Education, Employment and Training Committee and serves on the board of Junior Achievement and more than 10 CBO's and organizations.

Prior to his roles with the Chamber and UNITE-LA, he spent more than 20 years in the food service distribution industry. Rattray held numerous executive positions with food service distribution giants CFS Continental and Sysco. In the six years before joining UNITE-LA, Rattray worked at US Foodservice (formerly Rykoff-Sexton) Corporation, one of the largest food service distribution companies in the nation. While western regional vice president, Rattray led a region of 10 divisions and 1,200 associates and sales of more than \$400 million for Rykoff.

He is married and a father of three grown children and has a master's in Business Administration from the University of Southern California.



Yvette Sanchez Fuentes
Director, Office of Head Start,
U.S. Department of Health and
Human Services, Administration
for Children and Families

Yvette Sanchez Fuentes brings extensive experience in providing services to young children from low income families at the local, regional, and national level to her appointment as the Director of the Office of Head Start. In her role as Director, Sanchez Fuentes will help lead ACF's critically important mission of enriching the quality of early childhood development for our nation's most vulnerable children.

Prior to her appointment, Sanchez Fuentes served as the Executive Director of the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association (NMSHSA). She worked with early education services, policies and resources for migrant and seasonal farm worker children and their families.

Before joining NMSHSA, she worked for the Education Development Center where she was the Early Childhood Specialist for the International Systems Division and provided technical assistance to projects in Honduras, El Salvador, and Egypt.

Sanchez Fuentes has served as a National Head Start Fellow where she provided consultation in literacy, parent education, child care collaborations, and program improvement to Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and other early childhood education programs nationwide.

Early in her career, she managed services for a large migrant and seasonal program for staff development and family child care initiatives. She received her bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts from California State Polytechnic University.



Jolene Smith
Chief Executive Officer, FIRST 5
Santa Clara County

Since the passage of Proposition 10 in 1998, Jolene Smith has been instrumental in establishing FIRST 5 as an organization that supports the healthy development of children prenatal

through age 5 and enriches the lives of their families and communities throughout Santa Clara County. As the leader of the Early Childhood Development Collaborative in 1999, she was responsible for developing the original county Strategic Plan that led to the creation of FIRST 5. In 2000, she served as the Director of Program Development, and worked her way up to Deputy Director, and eventually became the Executive Director in January 2005.

During her tenure as Chief Executive Officer, First 5 has been recognized for its leadership on ensuring that the healthy development of our youngest children is viewed as a high priority in the county. Through her efforts, Smith has worked to engage and unite the community through strategic partnerships and collaborations to tackle challenging issues such as children's health insurance, early literacy, high quality early education, screening and assessment for developmental delays, model court programs, and a cross-disciplinary, cross-sector community of learning. Under her leadership, FIRST 5 has worked closely with policymakers and elected officials at the federal, state, and local levels to create the necessary change in our laws and in our politics to improve the lives of the people in the community.

Smith's thirty years of public service are based around her strong commitment and dedication to help people in need. As a high school youth counselor, a national trainer, and a Program Manager with the Santa Clara County Health and Hospital System and the Social Services Agency, she has used her expertise in strategic planning, program development, and training and consultation, to ensure that children, youth, and their families receive vital social services.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Ralph Smith
Senior Vice President, The Annie E. Casey Foundation; Managing Director, The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Ralph Smith directs the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, a coalition of more than 70 foundations and donors from across the country, as well as sector leading nonprofit and corporate organizations. During the next decade, the campaign has committed to increase by 50 percent in at least a dozen states the number of low-income children reading at grade level in 3rd grade – a crucial indicator of whether children will complete high school on time. For the past 15 years, Smith has served as senior and then executive vice president of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private philanthropy dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States.



Buu Thai
Trustee, Franklin-McKinley School District

Buu Thai has served as a trustee with Franklin-McKinley School Board since 2005 and was re-elected for her second term in November 2010. Her past professional experience includes being the Public Affairs Director with Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, Division Director of Youth Services with Catholic Charities; and the senior field representative with State Assemblywoman Sally Lieber, focusing on a range of issues spanning from education to women's equality.

In addition to her professional accomplishments, Thai has served on many notable commissions and boards including: AIDS Coalition of Silicon Valley, Santa Clara County Commission on the Status of Women, Yu-Ai-Kai Japanese Senior Center, San Jose Mayor's Gang Task Force; Project Cornerstone Steering Committee; and Girls For a Change.

Thai received her bachelor's degree in Human Development with a minor in Education from University of California, Davis, and a master's degree in Social Work from San Jose State University.



Tom Torlakson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Tom Torlakson was elected to a four-year term as California's 27th State Superintendent of Public Instruction on November 2, 2010. As chief of California's public school system and leader of the California Department of Education, Superintendent Torlakson applies his experience as a science teacher, high school coach, and state policymaker to fight for our students and improve our state's public education system.

Torlakson's journey has led him from the classrooms of Contra Costa County's Mount Diablo Unified School District (where he remains a teacher-on-leave), to the Antioch City Council, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, and the California State Senate and State Assembly.

During his tenure in the California State Legislature, Torlakson acted to protect education funding, improve student nutrition and physical education, and ensure school safety. He also championed legislation to increase funding for textbooks, computers, and other instructional materials and efforts to close the digital divide, eliminate the achievement gap, and reduce the dropout rate.

In 1998, Torlakson authored legislation leading to the development of the largest system of after school programs in the nation. In 2006, he authored the bill that led to a 300 percent expansion in these programs—so they now reach 4,000 schools around the state. Torlakson authored the Quality Education Improvement Act (SB 1133) in 2006, which dedicates nearly \$3 billion to our lowest performing schools. He also played a key role negotiating and authoring the \$9 billion Proposition 1A bond measure in 1998—which has led to public votes supporting over \$36 billion to build new schools and improve existing school buildings.

As the chair and founder of the California Task Force on Youth and Workplace Wellness, Torlakson has been a leader on banning junk food from our schools, providing healthier school meals, promoting student health and fitness, and combating diabetes and obesity among our children.

Born in San Francisco, Torlakson served as a fireman in the United States Merchant Marine, earning the Vietnam Service Medal. He earned a bachelor's degree in History, a Life Secondary Teaching Credential, and a master's degree in Education from the University of California, Berkeley.



Jerry D. Weast, Ed.D.
Founder and CEO of the Partnership for Deliberate Excellence, LLC; former Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland

A 35-year veteran of education leadership, Jerry D. Weast has amassed a record of results. As leader of school districts in five states, Weast has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to ensuring all students graduate prepared and inspired for success in college and careers. Dr. Weast is widely respected for his expertise in crafting coherent strategies and leveraging his extensive management experience to successfully sequence change efforts. Weast led Montgomery County Public Schools—16th largest school district in the nation—to achieve both the highest graduation rate among the nation’s largest school districts for three consecutive years and the highest academic performance ever in MCPS at a time when the non-English-speaking student population more than doubled and enrollment tipped toward low socioeconomic demographics. With some of the highest participation and success rates in the country on college readiness measures such as the SAT and AP exams, students with a diploma from MCPS are among the best-prepared high school graduates in the nation.

Weast’s groundbreaking approaches to early childhood education, differentiation of resources, professional growth systems, predictive analytics, and relationship strategies for both unions and business involvement are the subjects of numerous Harvard Business School case studies, and of the book *Leading for Equity* (Harvard Education Press, 2009). MCPS is a 2010 winner of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award for management excellence and a 2010 finalist for the Broad Prize in Urban Education.



Charles Weis, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools, Santa Clara County Office of Education

Charles Weis, Ph.D. has served as Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools since July 2008. Previously, he held a similar position in Ventura County for 15 years.

A Santa Monica native, Weis holds several academic degrees from California’s state universities, including a doctorate in Educational Policy and Organizational Studies from UC Santa Barbara.

Throughout his career, Weis has served on countless boards and panels on the local, state and county levels. He is a past president of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), with which he’s been associated since 1980.

As a member of the state Academic Content Standards Commission, Weis helped develop new language arts and mathematics common core content standards that were approved by the State Board of Education in July 2010.

Weis also enjoys a long-running affiliation with the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, of which he was president from 2002 to 2003.

In 2002, the California State Board of Education appointed Weis as its representative on the No Child Left Behind Liaison Team. He also serves on ACSA’s No Child Left Behind Task Force.