



Education Summit:
Educational Pathways to Progress:
Celebrating Diversity, Promoting Access, and Empowering Leaders
September 21, 2023 | 11:00 AM ET | 10:00AM CT | 8:00AM PT

[Agenda](#)
[Register Here](#)



Dr. Bob Sanborn – President & CEO, CHILDREN AT RISK

Dr. Sanborn is a noted leader, advocate, and activist for education and children and the President and CEO of CHILDREN AT RISK. He earned his undergraduate degree at Florida State University and his doctorate at Columbia University in New York City. Before entering the non-profit sector, he had a distinguished career in higher education at institutions such as Rice University and Hampshire College. Under his leadership, CHILDREN AT RISK has expanded its influence considerably. Notable achievements include opening centers in Dallas and Fort Worth; launching the Public Policy & Law Center, the CHILDREN AT RISK Institute, the Center for Parenting and Family Well-Being and the Center to End Trafficking and Exploitation of Children. Sanborn is the Executive Editor of two peer reviewed, open-access academic journals, the Journal of Applied Research on Children and the Journal of Family Strengths. He is also the host of the popular radio program and podcast Growing Up in America on the Pacifica Radio Network.



Sharon Watkins Jones, Director of Texas Business Engagement at Public Private Strategies

SHARON WATKINS JONES attended The University of Texas at Austin and gained valuable experience working at the State Capitol as a legislative aide and legislative director during college and for several years after graduation.

She is a certified classroom teacher, dyslexia education specialist and taught in elementary, middle school and community college special education programs.

Sharon combined her commitment to education with her knack for advocacy and legislative impact when she returned to public affairs, directing public policy strategies for ACLU of Texas, managing issue campaigns, legislative priorities and training on matters of equity and inclusion. Sharon helped implement the Anthony Graves Smart Justice Speakers Bureau at Texas Southern University during her ACLU tenure.

Sharon Watkins Jones is owner and principal consultant of Watkins Jones LLC, a public affairs and campaign management practice and has served as a political consultant to municipal and state candidates for office in Texas.

Sharon served as the inaugural Director of the Texas Racial Equity Collaborative and Chief Equity Officer of Children at Risk, a research and advocacy group. She is an officer of the board of directors of the Peer Navigation Project, whose mission is to empower formerly incarcerated individuals by providing them with the necessary training and resources to become mentors and advocates within the criminal justice system.

She is Director of Texas Business Engagement at Public Private Strategies, bringing together diverse allies including foundations, associations, corporations, small businesses, and entrepreneurs to solve pressing societal challenges.

Her volunteer work includes advocacy for voter rights, women's and girls' empowerment through historical organizations such as The Links, Incorporated and Delta Sigma Theta, a Public Service Sorority.



Andrey Ward Sampy – School Psychologist/ District Level

Educational Leader

Andrey Ward Sampy's, School Psychologist, professional experience over the last 23 years reflects a passion and commitment to improving outcomes for at-risk children and students. She formerly worked as a Special Populations Director for KIPPTX Public Schools Houston and most recently BakerRipley Community Schools. In those roles she served as the regional lead for the Special Education, General Education Homebound, Dyslexia, and MTSS. At BakerRipley she also led the school-based counseling team, while supporting district leadership as a member of the Safety and Security Team for the BakerRipley agency. In recent years, she has consulted with new charter applicants in ensuring that their charter applications and staffing models

appropriately reflected best practice standards for students in special populations. She also frequently volunteers to support family, friends, and community members in not only understanding but advocating for their child's individual learning needs. Prior to entering the field of education she worked with organizations such as Child Advocates Inc., The Department of Family and Protective Services, and Waco Center for Youth.



Dr Natalie D Hudson – Executive Director of Special Services and Diverse Learners - The Varnett Public School

Dr. Natalie Hudson has served in special education for 18 years. After teaching in inclusion classes, Natalie studied Special Education at the University of Houston-Victoria, where she completed her Educational Diagnostician certification. She specialized in the art of coaching educators on inclusive practices and special education compliance. She later served in district-level administrative roles such as Inclusive Services Coordinator, Director and as a private special education consultant across the state of Texas. She completed her doctoral studies at Houston Christian University (formally Houston Baptist University) where she researched Universal Design for Learning to promote diversity and equity for exceptional students. Dr. Hudson currently serves as the Executive Director of Special and Diverse Learners at a charter school in Houston, Texas.



Anne Kelsey – Policy Analyst for Disability Rights at the Young Center for Immigrant Children's Right

Anne Kelsey (she/her) is a Policy Analyst for Disability Rights at the Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights, where she works on disability and health care issues affecting unaccompanied immigrant children. Anne has worked in the field of disability and health rights for over a decade. She has previously held positions at the Center for HIV Law and Policy; Disability Rights New York (New York's Protection and Advocacy organization); the Community Service Society of New York; and at Disability Rights Advocates. Anne received her J.D. from the Fordham University School of Law and her undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia.



Mike Miles – Superintendent, Houston Independent School

District

Miles is the state-appointed superintendent of Houston ISD. He is a leader in education reform and the former superintendent of Dallas ISD. Miles is also a former CEO of the charter network Third Future Schools. Prior to his education career, Miles served as an Army officer and later in the U.S. State Department as a diplomat to Poland and Russia.



Susannah Young – Academic Performance Coach, TEXAS A+

CHALLENGE

For over 10 years, Susannah has been refining her expertise in education in the Greater Houston Area. She has worked as an elementary school teacher, middle school teacher, and literacy coach at multiple schools. Her passion focuses around supporting program implementation for at-risk and ELL students, with a focus on literacy Pre-K through 8th grade. As a proud graduate of the University of Houston and Lamar University, she remains dedicated to improving education through her partnerships with districts and campuses across Houston.



Dr. Gregory S. Prince, Jr. Senior Consultant, Pathways to College
and Former President, Hampshire College

Dr. Gregory S. Prince, Jr. currently serves as Vice Chair of the Board of the Friendship Public Charter Schools in Washington, DC, an eight campus, fourteen school Prek-12 system and an advisory board member for the Friendship Education Foundation that manages schools outside of DC.

Dr. Prince is the former president of Hampshire College. During his sixteen-year tenure as president, he also held the position of professor in the School of Social Science and taught courses on conflict resolution and historical analysis. Prior to his time at Hampshire, Dr. Prince held various administrative positions at Dartmouth College. He began his academic career teaching abroad with the Yale-China Association at the Chinese University in Hong Kong and then in a US high school where he also served as Director of Guidance and College Placement before attending graduate school at Yale University where he earned his PhD in American Studies.

Between 2005, when he stepped down as president of Hampshire and 2021, he worked as an advisor to Pathways to College which worked with underserved urban high schools in preparing high school students for college. Pathways itself was an offshoot the A Better Chance Program that placed students of color from underserved communities primarily in private boarding schools and whose work benefitted many of the institutions represented at this conference.

Among his numerous leadership roles in civic and community organizations, Dr. Prince has served for various periods as president of Five Colleges, Inc.; chair of the boards of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts, the Yale China Association, the American Council on Education's Commission on Credentialing and Life Long Learning; as vice-chair of the Council on Racial and Ethnic Justice of the American Bar Association and of the board of Friendship Public Charter School, the largest charter school in the District of Columbia and one of the largest in the country; and on the boards of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the American University in Bulgaria, and the European Humanities University, a Belarus university in exile in Vilnius, Lithuania .

He is author of *Teach Them to Challenge Authority: Educating for Healthy Societies*, published in 2008 by Continuum Press International.



Hector Bojorquez, Director of Operations and Educational Practice, Intercultural Development Research Association

Hector Bojorquez is the Director of Operations and Educational Practice at IDRA (Intercultural Development Research Association). With 30 years of experience in education, he has held various roles, including education specialist, curriculum writer, trainer, and teacher in a bilingual elementary school classroom.

Throughout his career, Hector has been deeply involved in numerous projects at IDRA. He co-directed the IDRA EAC-South, a federally-funded center that provided technical assistance and training to promote equitable learning environments. He played a crucial role in IDRA's response

to the COVID-19 pandemic, leading the development of bilingual tools and resources to support educators and families during school closures.

Hector's commitment to educational equity is evident through his involvement in projects like Ready Texas, which studied the impact of curriculum changes on college and career readiness, and the Re-energizing Leadership to Achieve Greater Student Success project, aimed at transforming instruction and fostering collaboration within schools and communities.

He also contributed to the development of the IDRA OurSchool portal, an online platform that enables educators and community members to assess school data and plan collaborative actions to improve student outcomes. With a background in technology integration, Hector led initiatives like the FLAIR model, which harnessed technology to tailor reading programs for improved student achievement.

Hector's extensive contributions, leadership, and dedication to educational improvement have left a lasting impact on IDRA's mission and the educational landscape as a whole.



Jonathan Feinstein, State Director for Texas, Education Trust

Jonathan brings more than 15 years of experience in education as a teacher, organizer, and nonprofit leader. He serves as the State Director for Texas, where he works with and supports partners statewide to advance educational equity for students of color and from low-income backgrounds. Prior to joining The Education Trust, Jonathan worked at The Commit Partnership, where he led community engagement and local advocacy efforts to bring together a wide range of systems leaders and directly impacted stakeholders to improve cradle-to-career outcomes for students in Dallas County.

Before that, Jonathan worked as a middle school and special needs teacher, and continues to engage directly with educators, students, and other leaders to deepen his learning and commitment to racial equity. A native of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Jonathan credits his public schooling experience for instilling a deeply held appreciation for diverse educators and peers and for exposing him to the wide, persistent opportunity gaps affecting students of color and students from low-income families. He holds a bachelor's degree in American Studies from Wesleyan University with a concentration in Ethnic Studies.



Shirley Appleman, Senior Adviser, Bellwether

Shirley Appleman is a senior adviser on the Academic and Program Strategy team within Bellwether's Strategic Advising practice area. Shirley brings more than 17 years of experience helping individuals, teams, and organizations grow. Since 2018, Shirley has been an independent consultant with a focus on building the capacity of leaders through advising and coaching. Shirley started her career as a management consultant at Accenture, helping organizations transform through customized training and implementation of change management initiatives. In 2010, driven by a commitment to educational equity, Shirley joined Teach For America, where she taught kindergarten, first grade, and second grade at a founding school in Huntington Park, California, and later transitioned to a principal role. As principal, Shirley led the school's transition to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, and in the following year, her school was ranked No. 1 in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) serving a majority of low-income students, No. 2 in California serving a majority of low-income students, and third-highest performing school overall in LAUSD. Shirley's impact on the school was sustained during her tenure and eventually led to a National Blue Ribbon School recognition in 2017 from the U.S. Department of Education. Shirley also served as the director of schools for KIPP SoCal Public Schools, where she managed and developed multiple school leaders, created leadership development programming for the network, coached future leaders, and oversaw yearly school planning processes.



Byron Sanders – *President and CEO of Big Thought*

Byron Sanders is President and CEO of Big Thought, an impact, youth-aligned organization closing the opportunity gap by equipping youth with skills to create. His work across many sectors have all centered on the belief that people are born great – our responsibility is to create systems of opportunity for their greatness to shine. Byron and his team's work builds programs and learning systems empowering youth with the skills to thrive in their authentic voice and recognize their own power. By building 21st century skills, a youth becomes a creator and can forge their path ahead. He's recognized as 2022 Dallas Business Journal's Most Admired CEO, the CASEL O'Brien Award for Excellence in Expanding the Evidence-Based Practice of Social and Emotional Learning and to be named a 2017 Presidential Leadership Scholar. Byron believes with youth as co-designers of the world around us, we become the best version of us all.



Shubra Endley – Director of Mental Health and Wellness for Communities In Schools of Houston

Shubra Endley, Director of Mental Health and Wellness for Communities In Schools of Houston, has 25 years of experience in the provision of school-based mental health services to children and families across the greater Houston Area. Shubra attended the University of Texas at Austin obtaining her Bachelor's degree in Psychology and her Master's degree in Social Work. She is a Board Approved Clinical Supervisor and has provided supervision to emerging social workers for over 10 years. Shubra has served as adjunct faculty at the University of Houston's Graduate College of Social Work and as a Practicum Liaison.



Dr. Twyla Williams, Executive Director of Counseling Crisis & Mental Health, AISD

Dr. Twyla Williams is passionate about bringing healing to students and parents/caregivers dealing with trauma or stressful experiences and helping them navigate the social and emotional components of life. Her goal is to help students find healthy perceptions of their individuality and strengthen their relationships, so they can know themselves as peaceful, complete, whole, and safe.

Her pathway to accomplishing this feat has been through receiving a Bachelor of Arts from Sam Houston State University, a Master of Arts from Prairie View A & M University, and a Doctorate in Educational Administration from Texas A&M University, with superintendency.

Dr. Twyla Williams began her career as a middle and high school teacher. She continued as a counselor in elementary, middle, and high school, and then, as Secondary Counseling Coordinator for Austin ISD, before taking on the role of Director for the Office of Counseling Crisis & Mental Health. She also taught graduate level courses in counseling at Houston Baptist

University and the University of Phoenix.

As the author of *Save Our Children: The Struggle Between Black Parents and Schools*, she shares the message of hope and healing with local and national audiences through workshops, professional development and keynote presentations. Dr. Twyla Williams believes the greatest of her accomplishments is in being the mother of her daughter, who is a graduate of Hampton University and an educator, and her son, who is a Freshman at Wiley College.



Brianna Harris, Manager, Child Poverty Action Lab

Brianna Harris is a Manager at the Child Poverty Action Lab (CPAL), a nonprofit organization committed to cutting child poverty in Dallas in half within 20 years.

In her role, Brianna leads the implementation of a multifaceted data-driven housing strategy focused on housing stability to significantly reduce child poverty in Dallas.

Prior to CPAL, Brianna served as a policy and advocacy fellow for the Dallas Independent School District where she worked on gathering and analyzing data to track trends between healthcare options and equitable access for employees. She also served as an elementary school educator at Eugene Field Elementary School, where she taught first and second grade and also held teacher leadership positions where she constructed and facilitated professional development sessions focused on instruction and culturally responsive pedagogy. Brianna earned a degree in social work from Georgia State University.



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Gina Martinez– Regional Director El Paso/ Texas Border,

With a heart dedicated to making a positive impact, Gina's role as Regional Director for El Paso and the Texas Border at Children at Risk is just the tip of the iceberg.

Having made her mark as the former VP of Business Development at El Paso Inc. and the visionary founder behind the Neon Desert Music Festival, Gina brings a wealth of experience to every endeavor. Her impressive fourteen-year journey as an executive leader showcases her aptness in relationship cultivation, efficient execution, and a genuine passion for championing women's causes, particularly those of Latinas.

Gina's mission is clear within our organization. She tirelessly advocates for the well-being of children in our community, leading fundraising initiatives and forming invaluable partnerships with local entities.

Inspired daily by her family, Gina finds unwavering support in her husband Nick and their daughter Luna. Her commitment to local causes include sitting on the board of directors for Centro San Vicente, being the VP of Advocacy for Mesita Elementary PTA, and volunteering for Communities en Accion.



Dr Lupita Hinojosa – Spring ISD Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Lupita Hinojosa was named Superintendent of Schools in January 2022, becoming the first Hispanic woman to hold the top leadership position in Spring ISD, which serves more than 34,000 students in a diverse community approximately 20 miles north of downtown Houston.

An experienced educational leader with more than 30 years in public education, Dr. Hinojosa joined Spring ISD in 2014 as the Chief Schools Officer and later served as the district's Chief of Innovation and Equity.

As Chief Schools Officer, she helped oversee the implementation of the district's Five-Year Strategic Plan focused on student-centered transformation. As chief of Innovation and Equity, she worked to create opportunities for all students from various backgrounds to ensure excellent and equitable outcomes – securing more than \$40 million in grants for school and district transformation efforts.

Since becoming Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Hinojosa has launched a new Strategic Plan, *Every Student – Every Teacher – Every Day: A Blueprint for Excellent and Equitable Outcomes*, to build on the work in Spring ISD to continue to improve student achievement and ensure all paths are aligned to that purpose. The plan follows the Board of Trustees' commitment to six priorities: Student Outcomes, Opportunities, Leadership, Well-Being, Engagement, and Equity.

Most recently, Spring ISD improved to a “B”-rated school district under the state accountability system. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) also exited seven of the district's underperforming schools, and rated more than half of Spring ISD campuses as “A”- or “B” rated schools – a 133 percent increase from the schools that reached an “A” or “B” rating in 2019. No schools were rated as “F” campuses.

For the 2022-23 school year, Dr. Hinojosa has also spearheaded the launch of a new Momentum High School, which offers a path to graduation for students seeking an alternative to the traditional middle school or high school experience. One year in with its first graduating class, Momentum is providing students with smaller classes, personalized learning plans, accelerated credit recovery and career training opportunities -- providing paths to graduation for students who may have become disconnected or disengaged in their traditional high school environment.

Dr. Hinojosa began her career in 1988 as an elementary bilingual teacher with the Houston Independent School District, going on to serve as an elementary principal, middle school principal, executive principal, school services officer, and as an assistant superintendent – a role in which she oversaw 114 magnet programs serving approximately 45,000 students.

Hinojosa holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of Texas at Austin, an Elementary and Bilingual Education Certification from the University of Houston, a Master of Education in educational leadership and management from the University of Houston at Clear Lake and a Doctor of Education in educational leadership from the University of Houston.



Maria Silva, Director of Academic Language Services, Canutillo

ISD

Maria Elva Silva has professional experience in serving students learning a second language for over 30 years working on both sides of the border in Ciudad Juárez México and in El Paso, Texas as well as in Tarazona, Spain. She describes her professional career in 3 phases: 1. As a teacher and principal in the public and private sector, 2. As a Grant Coordinator, Assistant to the Dean, Lecturer, Director of Student Teaching and Director of Operations for the College of Education at the University of Texas at El Paso, and 3. As the Director of Academic Services and Migrant Program at Canutillo ISD. Being an emergent bilingual student herself, she developed a lifelong purpose of supporting and ensuring that students in her district are provided the services that they require and that are proven to be most effective when learning a second language. She obtained her bachelor's degree as a K-12 Bilingual/ESL teacher, a master's degree in Curriculum Development, and an ABD in Educational Leadership from the University of Texas in El Paso, an Administrative Degree from New Mexico State University in Las

Cruces and a Post Graduate Degree in Children's Literature from the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, Spain.

The beauty of living on the border, one becomes bilingual, biliterate and bicultural as speaking and reading in English and or Spanish is an everyday thing. Understanding the history and culture from both countries makes us unique because we do not have to choose as we become one.

Adrian Yam, Interim Sr. Early Head Start/Head Start Director, Baker Ripley

Adrian Yam, PhD, is the Interim Senior Director for Early Head Start/Head Start program at BakerRipley. In his tenure, he has held multiple roles at BakerRipley since 2009 with the most recent being Program Services Director which he began in 2018. He brings a passion for early childhood education, a commitment to shining a light on mental health issues, and a desire to address health disparities that affect our neighbors and communities. Dr. Yam holds a Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor license, a school counselor certification which he obtained in 2008 as well as a Doctorate in Community Health since 2017 from Texas Woman's University. He is also a certified Bilingual Teacher. He enjoys traveling, reading Latin American authors, and spending time with family and friends.

Thank you to our partners!

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SANTA MARIA



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