



The Condition of Education in Western Massachusetts

June 9, 2022 – Delaney House – Holyoke, MA

Agenda

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REGISTRATION AND LUNCH

WELCOME

Paul Belsito | Executive Director, The Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation

RESEARCH PRESENTATION

Chad d'Entremont | Executive Director, Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy

Sophie Zamarripa | Senior Associate, Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy

REMARKS

Edward Lambert | Executive Director, Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderated by:

Michael Wotorson | Director, National Opportunity to Learn Network, Schott Foundation

Featured Panelists

William Cameron | Chair, Pittsfield School Committee

Matthew Deninger | Chief Strategy and Research Officer, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Graeham Dodd | Director, Education Initiative at Smith College

Pema Latshang | Founding Executive Director, Teach Western Mass

BUSINESS RESPONSE

Tricia Canavan | Chief Executive Officer, Tech Foundry

CLOSING OUT

Chad d'Entremont | Executive Director, Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy

Speaker Biographies

PAUL BELSITO



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE IRENE E. AND
GEORGE A. DAVIS FOUNDATION

Paul Belsito has been the Executive Director of the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation since June 2020. He previously served as President of The Hanover Insurance Group Foundation and Assistant Vice President for Community Relations in Worcester. One of Belsito's signature initiatives included supporting the Advancement Via Individualized Determination (AVID) college readiness program in the Worcester Public Schools.

A native of Worcester, Belsito has long been deeply involved in his community, serving on numerous nonprofit boards, including corporator of the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, associate trustee of the Nativity School of Worcester, and presently as chair of the board of the EcoTarium. Paul co-led the City of Worcester's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in support of the COVID-19 pandemic response. In this capacity, Paul helped to create a strategic plan for the City's EOC response to COVID-19 that provided a road map for success. Prior to joining Hanover, he served in the Office of the President at Assumption College as Executive Assistant for Government and Community Relations and as a District Director in the Massachusetts State Senate. He holds a BA in management and an MBA, both from Assumption College.

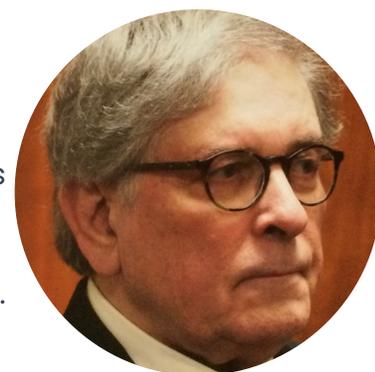
WILLIAM CAMERON, PH.D., J.D.

CHAIR, PITTSFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

William Cameron currently chairs the Pittsfield School Committee. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy from the Univ. of Toronto and, while working as Title I administrator in Pittsfield, a J.D. from Western New England College School of Law. He is admitted to the bar in the State of New York and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Bill served for 10 years as Assistant Supt. for Personnel & Negotiations in Pittsfield, and subsequently as Supt. of Schools in Salem, Mass., and Central Berkshire Regional School District.

Since retiring in 2014, Bill has served as interim supt. of schools in School Supervisory Union No. 70 in Berkshire County, and most recently in Lenox.

In addition to being a member of the Pittsfield School Committee, Bill has served since 2018 as chairperson of Berkshire Educational Resources K-12, an organization that seeks to work with Berkshire County school districts in overcoming the deleterious educational effects of declining enrollments and fiscal stress in communities throughout the County.





TRICIA CANAVAN

CEO, TECH FOUNDRY

Tricia Canavan brings a background in management, recruiting, education, and workforce development to her role at Tech Foundry, including experience as a business owner, nonprofit executive director, as a high school and community college instructor, focusing on English as a Second Language, history and career skills at schools in Massachusetts and Mexico.

She is passionate about innovative and collaborative approaches to learning, training, economic and community development, and is excited about using her varied experience to help Tech Foundry expand its positive impact. Tricia believes in the power of collaboration to create new ideas, strategies, and progress on important initiatives, and sees tremendous opportunities in working together with Tech Foundry's team, members, and partners around the region.

MATTHEW DENINGER

**CHIEF STRATEGY AND RESEARCH OFFICER, MA
DEPT ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Matthew Deninger, Ed.M., is the Chief Strategy and Research Officer at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. In this role, Matt works to support school districts in their efforts to enhance equity, use research to inform decision-making, and use resources to improve academic achievement across the board, especially in areas that serve historically underserved students. He oversees the administration and implementation of a wide range of funding mechanisms, including several major federal grant programs (ESSER, ESSA, IDEA, and Perkins).



Mr. Deninger has experience as a high school English teacher, athletics coach, researcher, and has spent the better part of two decades at the Department as a district liaison, policy analyst, project manager, performance management expert, and director. He holds a Bachelor's degree in English from Dartmouth College and a Master's degree in Educational Policy and Management from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

CHAD D'ENTREMONT, PH.D.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RENNIE CENTER
FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH & POLICY**

As Executive Director, Dr. Chad d'Entremont is responsible for shepherding the Rennie Center's mission to improve public education through deep knowledge and evidence of effective policymaking and practice. In this capacity, he has co-authored numerous articles, book chapters, and reports on reform strategies ranging from early childhood education to early college designs, as well as launched multiple initiatives to support local communities in the implementation and evaluation of evidence-based practice.



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

In 2012, he helped found the Massachusetts Education Partnership, a unique coalition of labor and management leaders committed to working collaboratively to advance sustainable school improvements. In 2014, he helped found the Massachusetts Institute for College and Career Readiness in partnership with Boston University, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and MassINC and supported by a \$1 million cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences. d'Entremont began his career as a teacher, serving high-needs students in both urban and rural settings. He is the former Assistant Director of a nationally renowned research center at Teachers College, Columbia University and, from 2007–2011, was the Research & Policy Director at Strategies for Children, as well as project manager for Massachusetts' successful application for a \$50 million Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge award. He has a Ph.D. in Education Policy and Social Analysis and an MA in the Sociology of Education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

GRAEHAM DODD

DIRECTOR, EDUCATION INITIATIVE AT SMITH COLLEGE

Graeham Dodd is the Director of the Education Initiative at Smith College. Previously, Graeham taught and served as an elementary school teacher and administrator in a range of school settings for over a decade. Graeham has mentored preservice and first-year teachers throughout her career and has extensive experience designing and leading professional learning for both new and experienced educators.



In addition, she has taught courses on curriculum design and methods of instruction at Smith and developed and taught the curriculum for the Project Coach–Jandon Fellowship, which offers an opportunity for Smith College students to explore the education field in out-of-school time and community-based settings. Graeham holds a bachelors and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Smith College and an Education Specialist degree in Administration and Supervision from the University of Virginia. She is currently a doctoral student in the Teacher Education & School Improvement (TESI) program at the University of Massachusetts – Amherst.

EDWARD LAMBERT

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MASSACHUSETTS BUSINESS ALLIANCE FOR EDUCATION

Ed Lambert is the Executive Director of MBAE. Previously he was vice chancellor for government relations and public affairs at UMass, Boston. Ed was Commissioner of the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation where he managed 2,700-employees responsible for the stewardship of over 450,000 acres of forests, sites, and recreational programs.

Ed was founding director of the Urban Initiative of UMass Dartmouth, a research center focused on urban policy issues and providing technical assistance to communities and organizations throughout MA.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

He helped to form the Gateway Cities Coalition, which includes a number of cities whose mayors are working to revitalize their communities with the support of the state legislature.

Ed's public service includes twelve years as the mayor of Fall River, MA, seven years as a state representative, and twenty years on the Fall River School Committee. As mayor, he worked on numerous initiatives including improving and building numerous schools, and the state's first bioserve, which has protected 14,000 acres of forests and wetlands.

Ed was the director of social services at Saint Vincent's Home in Fall River. He earned his BA in psychology at Southeastern Massachusetts University (now UMass Dartmouth) and his MEd in counseling at Bridgewater State College.

PEMA LATSHANG

FOUNDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TEACH WESTERN MASS

Pema brings deep knowledge and experience to her role as the founding Executive Director of TWM. She has worked in urban public education since 2003, as a teacher, school, and district leader, first in New York City and most recently in Holyoke. Pema focuses on creating innovative systems that produce quality education for all students and give educators what they need to be effective.



Pema grew up in Western Mass and is excited to be back in the area. She also serves on the board of Thonmi, a small Buddhist translation non-profit organization, and the Tashi Nyima Foundation, a small foundation supporting education in Eastern Tibet. Ms. Latshang received a B.A. in Public Policy with Honors from the University of Chicago, and also holds an M.S. in Educational Leadership from Baruch College-CUNY and an M.S. in Elementary Education from Pace University. Pema is the mother of two amazing girls.

MICHAEL S. WOTORSON

DIRECTOR, NATIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN NETWORK, SCHOTT FOUNDATION

Michael S. Wotorson joined the Schott Foundation in October 2021 as the Director of the National Opportunity to Learn Network. In this role he works closely with grantees and allies to cultivate and support effective grassroots organizing and campaigns that build a more racially just and equitable public education system for all children.

Michael brings a wealth of philanthropic expertise from his time as a Senior Community Impact Officer with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. There he managed grant making and outreach activities in key areas including student educational progress, gun violence reduction and community safety.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Michael has centered his commitments to racial justice and civil rights throughout his professional life. In addition to providing grant-making support to the Hartford Foundation's Black Giving Circle, Latino Endowment Fund, and Catalyst Endowment Fund, he has worked for national and regional organizations including the NAACP, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium.

Public education has been a touchstone of Michael's career. In addition to a brief stint teaching in Columbia, Missouri public schools, he was a higher education professional at the Central Missouri State University, later working at the American Association of State Colleges & Universities, the National Association of State Universities & Land-Grant Colleges, and the Campaign for High School Equity, a special project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

Michael earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in comparative political systems from the University of Missouri-Columbia and he completed doctoral coursework in Education Administration at American University in Washington, DC.

SOPHIE ZAMARRIPA

SENIOR ASSOCIATE, RENNIE CENTER FOR
EDUCATION RESEARCH AND POLICY

Sophie brings to the Rennie Center a combination of experience in consulting, education research and policy, data analysis, and hands-on classroom engagement. Throughout her experiences and coursework, she has developed a strong commitment to correcting and preventing educational inequities in public education. Sophie works as a project lead on the Condition of Education project, the Center's flagship annual report and data dashboard.



During her graduate studies in Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Michigan, she joined the Education Trust-Midwest's Data and Policy Analysis team as a Graduate Student Fellow where she analyzed opportunity gaps in Michigan schools. She received a B.A. in Political Science and Educational Studies from Tufts University, throughout which she worked as a teacher's assistant in a Kindergarten classroom.

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