

OUR FEATURED SPEAKERS



Mary Ann Blankenship became Executive Director of the Kentucky Education Association in September 2005, following a 25-year career as an association staff member. She served as KEA UniServ staff in Jefferson County and in KEA's communications and negotiations offices. Ms. Blankenship also worked for the Maryland State Teachers Association, the National Education Association, and the Tennessee Education Association. Ms. Blankenship grew up in Louisville and is a 1972 graduate of Georgetown College. She began her career teaching English and French in Lexington and served as President of the Fayette County Education Association in 1976-77, when it bargained its only contract with the Fayette County Public Schools. Her career includes extensive work in communication, research, school law, and instructional profession development. Ms. Blankenship lives in Midway, Kentucky, with her history professor husband, Cary, their two cats and two dogs.



Michael T. Childress is the executive director of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, a state government agency created by the General Assembly in 1992 to bring a future-oriented perspective to decisionmaking in the Commonwealth. The work of the Center includes research, policy analysis, communications with all branches of government, and public outreach. Mr. Childress received his B.A. from the University of Kentucky in 1984 and an M.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1986—both in political science. From 1988 to 1993, he was an analyst at the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California. While at RAND, he authored numerous studies on topics ranging from demographic trends in the third world to the implications of declining budgets for the U.S. Army. In August of 1993, he became the first executive director of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center. Mr. Childress oversees the Center's numerous research activities and has authored reports on the future of tobacco, entrepreneurship, child care, technology use, electronic commerce, state and local taxation, immigration, health, and transportation.



Claude W. Christian holds a B.A. in Music Education from Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans, and an M.A. in Secondary Education from the University of Kentucky. He is nearing completion of doctoral work in Instruction and Supervision at UK with a focus on instructional equity and cultural and social competency. He has taught at all levels, beginning as an elementary music instructor in New Orleans. He later became an assistant band director, then head director at Francis T. Nicholls High School, where he rebuilt the music program from 35 to over 125 students in his two-year tenure. Mr. Christian taught secondary educational methods at UK for three years. His last teaching post was as an Arts and Humanities instructor at Morton Middle School in Lexington. In Kentucky Mr. Christian has worked as an educational consultant and trainer for the Bethune Institute and Kentucky PRISM, and as a minority recruiter for the UK graduate school. Mr. Christian has presented at local, state, national, and international educational conferences on issues of cultural competence, achievement gap issues, equity pedagogy, and complex instruction practices. He now serves as the Student Services Branch Manager in the Division of Federal Programs Resources and Instructional Equity at KDE. At KDE, he has worked on several programs and initiatives, including the Partnership for Minority Student Achievement and Organizational Culture Initiative. Married for 16 years to Penny Christian, Mr. Christian has four daughters.



Dr. Allyson Hughes Handley was appointed as Senior Policy Advisor for postsecondary economic development at the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) in November 2004. Previously, she was Secretary of the Governor's Executive Cabinet. Dr. Handley earned her BA from the University of Western Ontario, and she holds masters and doctoral degrees in education from The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Prior to coming to Frankfort, she was president of Cogswell College in Sunnyvale, California. She was the first woman to serve as president of Midway College, Kentucky's only women's college, from 1998-2002. Dr. Handley has held faculty appointments at The Johns Hopkins University, National University, the University of San Diego, and McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She served as vice president for development and alumni relations as well as dean of the school of education and human services at National University. Dr. Handley's career began as a high school English and art teacher. She was principal of the Kennedy Institute, a clinical day school within The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, and served as a consultant to K-12, higher education, and business organizations. Recently, Dr. Handley was instrumental in creating and advancing the statewide CPE Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Task Force. A member of the International Women's Forum, Dr. Handley also serves on the board of Georgetown College.



Rick Hulefeld holds a Bachelor of Science in International Affairs from Georgetown University, a Master of Arts in Humanities from the University of Chicago, and a Masters in Education from Xavier University. He has studied at the University of Madrid and was an exchange student in Peru. Along with his wife he began Children, Inc. in 1979. He has served as Children, Inc.'s executive director since its beginning. Mr. Hulefeld and his wife Mary have reared their five children in an inner-city Covington neighborhood.



Dr. M. Rebecca Kilburn is a Senior Economist at the RAND Corporation and the Director of the Promising Practices Network (PPN) on Children, Families and Communities and RAND Child Policy. The (PPN) is a Web site that presents evidence-based information on improving the well-being of children and families. Last year, Harvard's Kennedy School named PPN as one of the finalists in the Innovations in American Government Awards competition. In addition to overseeing all aspects of work on PPN, she also conducts policy-relevant research related to children and families. In the area of child care, she has studied the impact of U.S. regulations on child care choices and the role of availability on child care use and maternal work in China. Dr. Kilburn was also one of the co-authors of *Investing in Our Children*,

RAND's path-breaking 1998 report on the cost-benefit analysis of early childhood interventions, and a recent analysis update that adds nearly an additional decade of research data. Her current projects include an impact evaluation of a home visiting program for first-time parents in Northern New Mexico and a study of the long-term aggregate outcomes from Georgia's universal Pre-K program. Dr. Kilburn is also a Professor of Policy Analysis at the Pardee RAND Graduate School and has taught economics at The University of Chicago and UCLA. In 2001, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors appointed her to two advisory bodies on children's issues: the Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council and the County Policy Roundtable for Child Care. Dr. Kilburn has a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Chicago.



Doug Mesecar, acting Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, U.S. Department of Education, coordinates these activities at the federal level and with state groups. A native of Grand Rapids, Mesecar earned a B.A. in political science, graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Hope College in 1993. In 1996, he did graduate work at the University of Denver, earned a teaching certificate, then taught fifth grade. He had been a congressional intern and staff member before moving in 2001 to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce to work for Chairman John A. Boehner and the panel writing the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. Mr. Mesecar became chief of staff for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education in 2003, helping implement NCLB. He became deputy chief of staff in the Office of the Secretary, then moved to Edison Schools Inc. He returned to the Department in 2007. Mr. Mesecar and his wife,

Shannon, and their two children live in Lovettsville, Virginia.



Dr. Patrick Schuermann is a Research Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Public Policy at Peabody College of Vanderbilt University. Currently, his principal research agenda focuses on issues associated with alternate models of compensating teachers and principals. Dr. Schuermann is the Director of Technical Assistance for the Center for Educator Compensation Reform, the Comprehensive Assistance Center for the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF). In this capacity, he provides assistance to states, districts, schools, and partnering organizations participating in the federally-funded TIF. The Center was created in 2006 to support 36 TIF programs focused on developing and implementing performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems in high-need schools.



Stu Silberman is a veteran educator whose career started as a teacher. He has held administrative posts ranging from principal to superintendent over the course of his 34-year career, and was twice named Kentucky Superintendent of the Year – once by the Kentucky Association of School Administrators and once by the Kentucky School Boards Association. He has been Superintendent of Fayette County Public Schools since 2004, bringing his mantra "It's About Kids," to the District. His tenure has been marked by a commitment to transparency and openness, fiscal responsibilities, and a community-wide effort to redesign education in Fayette County called 2020 Vision. He and his wife Kathy have three adult daughters and one granddaughter. He holds a bachelor's and a master's degree from the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga. He has an honorary doctorate from Kentucky Wesleyan College.



Dr. Kim Townley currently is an Associate Professor of Early Childhood in the College of Education at UK. Dr. Townley has been involved in the field of early childhood development and education for over 30 years. Her work began in South Carolina as a public school kindergarten teacher. Dr. Townley has served as a Child Development Associate instructor for Head Start, a validator for the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, and has been a faculty member and director of early childhood laboratory schools at Chadron State College, the University of Nebraska, and UK. In her tenure as a Laboratory Director, she implemented full-day programming for infant/toddlers, evening child care, and the blending of a public Pre-K program. Most recently, Dr. Townley served for three years as Director of the Division of Early Childhood Development at the Kentucky Department of Education and

five years as Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, coordinating development and implementation of Kentucky's KIDS NOW early childhood initiative, which was unanimously passed by the General Assembly in 2000. The KIDS NOW early childhood initiative works across state agencies and with the public and private sectors to support families, so each child reaches his or her fullest potential. Dr. Townley's research has encompassed the broad domain of environmental influences on the development of young children, including teacher burnout, the effectiveness of the Kentucky Preschool Program, and peace education. Dr. Townley has been recognized for her work with awards from the March of Dimes, Kentucky Child Now, Children's Inc., the Kentucky School Age Coalition, the Kentucky Interagency Coordinating Council, Family Place, the University of Missouri, and UK.

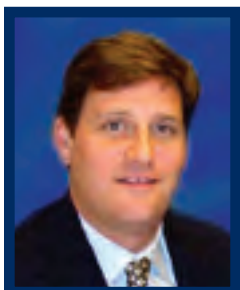


Dr. Marc Tucker is the founder, president and chief executive officer of the National Center on Education and the Economy. With Judy Coddling, he created America's Choice and serves as the Vice Chair of its Board of Directors. He created the first Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce in 1989. Its report, *America's Choice: high skills or low wages!*, played an important role in starting the standards movement in American education. Following the release of that report, Dr. Tucker asked Lauren Resnick to join him in creating the New Standards coalition, which developed state-of-the-art, internationally benchmarked standards and performance assessments that influenced the practices of many states. Earlier, with Governor James Hunt, Dr. Tucker had designed and built the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and served briefly as its first president. Dr. Tucker was appointed

by President Clinton to the National Skill Standards Board and served as the chair of its research and policy committee. Prior to that, he served as Associate Director of the National Institute of Education, then the nation's agency for education research, in charge of its policy research programs. More recently, Dr. Tucker created the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, and served as its Vice Chair and Staff Director. He authored the new commission's report, *Tough Choices or Tough Times*, released in December 2006. With former Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall, Dr. Tucker wrote *Thinking for a Living: Education and the Wealth of Nations*, which won the Sidney Hillman prize and was named one of the Ten Best Books of 1992 by *Business Week*. Dr. Tucker has authored other books, many articles, and opinion pieces, and testified extensively before U.S. Congress and state legislatures.



Dr. Amy Watts is a Policy Analyst with the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center. In this capacity, she provides statistical data analysis using a variety of methods and models. She has authored and coauthored publications ranging from the future of postsecondary education to health care coverage, the aging population, and regional economic growth. Her professional activities include past adjunct teaching positions at local universities, including the Martin School of Public Policy at UK, and current service as Secretary of the Board for the Kentucky Economics Association. She holds a B.A. in economics from UK. In 2001, she received her Ph.D. in economics from the University of New Mexico with concentrations in econometrics and environmental and natural resource economics.



Ross Wiener is the Vice President for Program and Policy at the Education Trust and directs the policy and practice team where he connects policymakers, reporters, and advocates with data, research, and examples from the field regarding what can be done to close achievement gaps. Prior to joining the Education Trust, he spent four and a half years as a trial attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. As an attorney in the Educational Opportunities Section, he investigated and prosecuted violations of federal civil rights laws in schools and school districts across the country, including cases involving desegregation, disability rights, harassment, and services for limited-English proficient students. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and he received a law degree with high honors from the George Washington University Law School. He clerked for Judge Kermit V.

Lipez of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.