

From Reckoning to Recovery: Student Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Wednesday, June 21 | 1:00–2:30 p.m. EDT

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Marty West | Member, National Assessment Governing Board
Member, Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Academic Dean and Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Marty West is the academic dean and Henry Lee Shattuck professor of education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. West is also a faculty research fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research; editor-in-chief of *Education Next*, a journal of opinion and research on education policy; and deputy director of the Program on Education Policy and Governance at Harvard's Kennedy School. West is a political scientist who studies the politics of K-12 education in the United States and how education policies affect student learning and non-cognitive development. He previously worked as a senior advisor to the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, taught at Brown University, and was a research fellow at The Brookings Institution.



Peggy Carr | Commissioner, National Center for Education Statistics

Peggy Carr is the commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Carr formerly served as associate commissioner of the assessment division for NCES, a role she held for nearly 20 years. In that role, she was responsible for national and international large-scale assessments, and most notably, managed the administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Prior to NCES, Carr served as the chief statistician for the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education. She holds a bachelor's degree from North Carolina Central University and master's and doctoral degrees from Howard University.



Cheryl L. Dyson | Superintendent, Frederick County Public Schools

Cheryl L. Dyson is in her second year as superintendent for Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) in Maryland, where the core mission is supporting every child, every day. Dyson's systemic goals include: an organizational culture of achievement; maintaining operational excellence; providing effective intervention strategies for all students; developing timely, transparent, and concrete ways for families to engage with FCPS and provide feedback; and implementing practices and procedures that ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff. Dyson's 25 years of service in public education include positions of associate superintendent, teacher, administrator, and central office leader. Dyson earned her doctorate in organizational leadership from Hood College in Frederick.



Thiago Hardy | Grade 10 Student, Oakdale High School (Ijamsville, Maryland)

Thiago Hardy's diverse background and unique interests have shaped him into a dynamic force in sports and science. With a multicultural upbringing and fluency in Spanish and English, Hardy effortlessly navigates different cultures and bridges gaps in communication. His passion for soccer drives him to excel as both a player and a team motivator, while his curiosity for biology fuels his scientific exploration. Hardy's multifaceted nature, cultural background, linguistic abilities, and athletic prowess enable him to make a lasting impact in both fields.



Lisa Kopka | Algebra 7 and Honors Geometry Teacher, Thomas W. Pyle Middle School (Bethesda, Md.)

Lisa Kopka is a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) in mathematics with over a decade of teaching experience. Dual-certified in special education, she taught algebra and honors geometry in grades six through eight at Thomas W. Pyle Middle School in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Next school year, she will lead the math department as a content specialist at Rocky Hill Middle School in Clarksburg. Kopka is also a volunteer, presenter, and facilitator with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and Maryland State Education Association. She holds a bachelor's degree in art from Temple University and a master's degree in special education from George Mason University.



Amanda Portner | Literacy Specialist, Thurmont Middle School (Thurmont, Maryland)

As the Literacy Specialist at her school, Amanda Portner touches the lives of students and faculty daily. She works with her students and teachers countywide to help improve achievement and instruction, inspires others with her contagious enthusiasm, and conducts numerous professional workshops. Amanda earned her bachelor's in English education from Shippensburg University, and her master's in English curriculum/instruction, and her administrative certificate from Hood College. She also has leadership roles with the Maryland Writing Project, the Black-Eyed Susan Reading committee, and worked closely with the Maryland State Department of Education during its transition to Common Core.



Kurt Russell | 2022 National Teacher of the Year
History Teacher, Oberlin High School (Oberlin, Ohio)

Kurt Russell – 2022 National Teacher of the Year and 25-year veteran of the classroom – teaches history at Oberlin High School in Oberlin, Ohio. Russell’s classes include African American History and Race, Gender, and Oppression – a class he developed. He also serves as faculty advisor for the student-led Black Student Union, whose work has led to positive impacts for students across racial groups. He holds a bachelor’s degree with a major in history and a minor in Black studies from the College of Wooster and a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction from Ashland University.



Sean Steinmetz | Grade 10 Student, Oakdale High School (Ijamsville, Maryland)

During his freshman year, Sean Steinmetz was a multi-sport athlete, wrestling on the varsity team and playing on the JV baseball team. His favorite course was AP U.S. History and his favorite pastime was making his friends and teachers laugh. This summer, Steinmetz is spending time volunteering, including serving with the World Languages Program through Frederick County Public Schools.



Innaya Virk | Grade 10 Student, Oakdale High School (Ijamsville, Maryland)

Innaya Virk is an ambitious high schooler who spends her time volunteering at the soup kitchen on Sundays, assisting her mosque, going on hikes and walks to the lake, and reading to expand her knowledge. Virk takes pride in her service to the community and finds joy in connecting with nature. She is passionate about making her mark and always puts in her best effort no matter what she does.