

# Emerging School Models

## Moving from Alternative to Mainstream

September 28 – 29, 2023



### Conference Moderators

#### **Paul E. Peterson, *Harvard University***



Paul Peterson is the Henry Lee Shattuck Professor of Government at Harvard University. He directs the Program on Education Policy and Governance at Harvard, is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and is senior editor of *Education Next: A Journal of Opinion and Research*. He also serves as a member of Hoover's Education Success Initiative (HESI) focusing on the improvement of education policy and providing public education solutions for state education and policy leaders. Formerly he was the director of the Center for American Political Studies at Harvard and of the Governmental Studies Program at the Brookings Institution. Paul received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Chicago. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Education, he is the author or editor of over 30 books, four of which have been identified as the best work in their field by the American Political Science Association.

#### **Daniel Hamlin, *University of Oklahoma***



Daniel Hamlin is an associate professor of education policy in the department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Oklahoma. His research investigates the effects of education policies on academic achievement, student safety, parental involvement, and school climate. His work appears in a number of scholarly journals, including the *American Educational Research Journal*, *Sociology of Education*, the *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Educational Policy*, and *Urban Education*. He is also the recipient of research grants from the National Science Foundation, the Randall and Lenise Stephenson Foundation, and the organization of Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems. Prior to joining OU, Hamlin was a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He earned his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Toronto.

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### September 28, 2023 Keynote Address

#### Kevin Stitt, Governor of Oklahoma – Keynote Speaker



J. Kevin Stitt is the 28th governor of Oklahoma. An entrepreneur and businessman, Stitt founded the banking and mortgage company Gateway in Tulsa in 2000 with only \$1,000 and a computer. Through a merger in 2018, he helped establish Gateway First Bank, one of Oklahoma’s largest banks by assets. In the same year, Oklahomans spoke in record numbers that they wanted Stitt to apply his business acumen to transform the state when he was elected governor. He received more votes than any gubernatorial candidate in state history in his first bid for elected office.

Governor Stitt has taken a groundbreaking approach to his administration by appointing the most female cabinet secretaries in state history and tapping expert advisors from the private sector, including the state’s first chief operating officer. He helped the state build its largest savings account in history, which proved to be prophetic in the face of an oil and gas downturn.

Governor Stitt is a fourth-generation Oklahoman who graduated from Oklahoma State University. He and his wife, Sarah, have been married for 25 years and have six children.

### September 29, 2023 Opening Remarks

#### Manny Diaz, Jr., Florida Commissioner of Education – Keynote Speaker



Manny Diaz, Jr. is a lifelong educator, having begun his career in education teaching social studies and coaching baseball in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools system. He served as an assistant principal and later became the chief operating officer at Doral College. He was appointed Commissioner of Education by the Florida State Board of Education in June 2022.

Commissioner Diaz previously served with distinction in the Florida Legislature, originally elected to the House of Representatives in 2012, where he quickly became known as an expert and champion of education. In 2018, he was elected to the Florida Senate. During his legislative career he sponsored numerous educational initiatives to support Florida’s students, families, and public-school teachers.

A devoted husband and father of four, Diaz understands the importance and value of providing students with a world-class education and is honored to serve the state of Florida.

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### Thursday, September 28

## Microschools: An affluent niche or breaking out?

#### Matthew Kramer, *Wildflower*



Matt Kramer co-founded the Wildflower Foundation in 2016 to support the growth of a decentralized network of tiny, teacher-led Montessori schools—currently 59 schools in 14 states plus Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. Previously, he served as the chief program officer, then president, then co-CEO of Teach For America from 2005 to 2015. Matt has chaired the boards of Bright Water Montessori, 50CAN, and Embracing Equity, and served on the boards of Leadership for Educational Equity and Students For Education Reform. Matt attended Montessori school through 6th grade and received an undergraduate degree in economics from Harvard College. He currently lives in the Twin Cities with his wife, two Montessori-educated daughters, two dogs, and one bunny.

#### Shiren Rattigan, *Colossal Academy*



Shiren Rattigan is the pioneering founder of a Colossal Academy, a microschool network that emphasizes entrepreneurial education. As owner and principal educational curator of Colossal Academy and a UC Berkeley Extensions educator, Shiren's work has been recognized in *Forbes*, *Sun Sentinel*, *LiberatED*, and *ReimaginED*. A VELA Education Fund and YASS Stop Award quarterfinalist, her 12 years in adolescent education have solidified her role not only as a teacher but also as a passionate advocate for young voices. Beyond education, Shiren is a dedicated wife and mother to three exceptional daughters.

#### Ashley Soifer, *National Microschooling Center*



Ashley Soifer is the Chief Innovation Officer of the National Microschooling Center, where she leads direct microschool supports, the development of new programs, and parent and leader outreach. Ashley guides the Center's movement-building work with parents, educators, and community members, including helping organizations and individuals launch microschools that live up to the potential of their diversified visions. Born and raised in Southern Nevada, Ashley is committed to improving education in Nevada, and firmly believes that the best way to do that is to ensure that educational opportunities not only exist but thrive. She and her husband, Don, are raising three microschooling children in Las Vegas.

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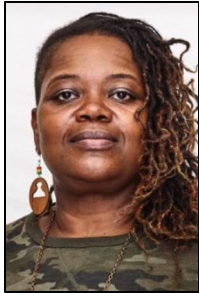
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### Thursday, September 28

### Homeschooling options: Hybrids and more

#### **Bernita Bradley, *Engaged Detroit Homeschool Co-op***



Bernita Bradley is a social entrepreneur who advocates for and with families in Detroit, Michigan. She is the founder of The Village, an outreach and recruitment company which ensures that future outcomes for children are prioritized within community, philanthropic, and education environments. In 2020, Bernita founded Engaged Detroit, a Homeschool Co-op to support parents on their journey of becoming their child's teacher. Bernita understands that successful community partnerships are authentic and must be built on fidelity. She serves as director of Parent Voice with The National Parents Union and assures that youth and parent voices are present at every change-making table.

#### **Emily Hill, *Haven School***



Emily Hill is the founder and director of Haven School, a collaborative classical nature school in Colorado. With over a decade of school leadership experience, she is passionate about integrating education vision with practice—cultivating place-based learning communities for children and their grownups. Emily is happiest when she is teaching—in the classroom, outdoors, or training teachers. She lives in Black Forest, Colorado, with her husband Owen and their four teenage children.

#### **Eric Wearne, *Kennesaw State University***



Eric Wearne is an Associate Professor and Director of the National Hybrid Schools Project at Kennesaw State University. He is the author of *Defining Hybrid Home Schools in America: Little Platoons* (2020). Eric's research has been published by the *Journal of School Choice*, the *Peabody Journal of Education*, and *Home School Researcher*, among others. He is the editor of a forthcoming book on unconventional teacher preparation programs: *New Pathways in Teacher Preparation and Certification: Perspectives on Alternative Teacher Education Methods* (Routledge, 2023). Eric began his career as a high school English and Debate teacher and has taught in conventional K–12 public and hybrid school settings.

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### Thursday, September 28

## What are the conditions necessary for success in virtual schools?

#### **John Hagemeister, *Bridges Virtual Academy***



John Hagemeister has served in the role of teacher and administrator during his 28-year career in education. As the executive director of Bridges Virtual Academy, he has led the school from its origin as a local program serving 30–40 students, to its current status as the highest-rated Virtual Charter School in Wisconsin, serving over 700 students statewide. BVA’s unique instructional model demonstrates that partnerships between parents, teachers, and students, combined with innovative academic instruction, provides high levels of student growth and achievement. John resides in Merrill, Wisconsin, with his wife Michelle and nine children ranging in age from 10 to 26.

#### **Benjamin Scafidi, *Kennesaw State University***



Ben Scafidi is a professor of economics and director of the Education Economics Center at Kennesaw State University. He is also a Friedman Fellow with EdChoice (the legacy foundation of Milton and Rose Friedman), a senior fellow with the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, and was recently appointed by Governor Brian Kemp to serve a second stint on the Georgia Charter Schools Commission. He received a BA in Economics from the University of Notre Dame and a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Virginia.

#### **John Watson, *Evergreen Education Group***



John is the founder of the Evergreen Education Group, which for 23 years has been a leading advisory firm serving schools, state agencies, foundations, and companies in the digital learning field. Evergreen launched and runs the Digital Learning Annual Conference—the only national conference serving online and hybrid schools—and the Digital Learning Collaborative, the association of schools, agencies, and providers. John and Evergreen’s work have been cited in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Education Week*, and other outlets, and he has provided invited testimony to state legislatures, charter school commissions, and other government entities.

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### Friday, September 29

## Bringing emerging models to scale: Are ESAs a regulatory nightmare?

#### Robert Enlow, *EdChoice*



Robert C. Enlow is the President and CEO of EdChoice. Before the formation of EdChoice in 2016, Robert was an integral part of the Milton and Rose Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice from its launch in 1996. Under his leadership, EdChoice has become one of the nation's most respected and successful advocates for educational choice, working in dozens of states to advance parental freedom in education by disseminating research, undertaking training, sponsoring seminars, conducting advertising campaigns and investing in and organizing community leaders. Robert has authored numerous articles, book chapters, and op-eds that have appeared in journals, books and papers across the country.

#### John Kirtley, *Step Up For Students*



John F. Kirtley is Chairman of Step Up For Students, a non-profit that manages six taxpayer funded K–12 ESA scholarship programs in Florida that serve over 300,000 students. He is Co-Chair of Florida Federation For Children, a PAC that works to elect candidates of both parties to the Florida legislature who support educational choice. He is Co-Chair of The American Federation For Children, a non-profit that works to elect pro education choice legislators, enact education choice laws, and implement those laws. He is the founder of three private equity firms, the latest being Keswick Partners. He resides in Tampa, Florida.

#### Lisa Snell, *Stand Together Trust*



Lisa Snell serves as Senior Fellow, Education at Stand Together Trust. Prior to joining STT, Snell served as the director of education and child welfare at the Reason Foundation, where she oversaw research and outreach on school choice and school finance reform efforts. She has testified before the California state legislature and has authored policy studies on school choice, school finance and weighted student funding, universal preschool, school violence, charter schools, and child advocacy centers.

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### Friday, September 29

#### Recent rise of classical charter schools

#### Heather Brown, *ResponsiveEd*



Heather Brown has been an educator for over 30 years, first in early childhood education and later as a founding teacher at a K–12 Classical Charter School, John Adams Academy. During her time at JAA, she served as a teacher, dean, headmaster and finally in executive leadership playing a key role in expansion, teacher training, and school development. In 2021, Heather joined Founders Classical Academy as a headmaster and regional director. She has successfully launched four charter schools over the course of her career and looks forward to continuing to share her love of cultivating virtue through Classical Education in the Public Charter School arena.

#### Albert Cheng, *Classical Education Research Lab*



Albert Cheng is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Education Reform in the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Arkansas, where he teaches courses in education policy and philosophy. He is the director of the Classical Education Research Lab, where he conducts empirical research about classical education. He is also a Senior Fellow at Cardus, serves on the governing board of Anthem Classical Academy in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and is an affiliated research fellow at the Program on Education Policy and Governance at Harvard University. Albert taught high school math at James Logan High School in Union City, California after completing his undergraduate studies in pure mathematics.

#### Maegen Satcher, *Hillsdale College*



Maegen Satcher is a classical pedagogy trainer for the K–12 Education Office. As a classical pedagogy trainer, Maegen leads communities of teachers and helps to build relationships among the national network of classical educators within Hillsdale College member schools. She leads professional development sessions, conducts classroom observations, and provides feedback to teachers and school leaders. Prior to joining the K–12 Office, Maegen was the Dean of Academics at St. Johns Classical Academy in Fleming Island, Florida. She began teaching in 2003 and has taught middle school and elementary grades, with most of her experience coming as a first-grade teacher. Maegen lives in Middleburg, Florida, with her husband and has three adult children.

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### Friday, September 29

## How should emerging models incorporate A.I.?

#### **John Bailey, Vestigo Partners**



John serves as a strategic advisor to entrepreneurs, policymakers, investors, and philanthropists, including the Walton Family Foundation, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, Trustible.ai, and the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). He served as a domestic policy advisor in the White House, where he coordinated efforts during the credit crisis to stabilize \$200 billion in student loans. He also served as a negotiator for the Trade Adjustment Assistance reauthorization. As Deputy Policy Director to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, John contributed to the first National Pandemic Strategy and the President’s package of high-skilled immigration reforms. He also served as Director of Educational Technology at the U.S. Department of Education.

#### **Daniel Buck, Fordham Institute**



Daniel Buck is an Editorial and Policy Associate at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. He is a former English teacher and the author of *What Is Wrong with Our Schools?* He earned his master’s degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, along with bachelor’s degrees in English literature and the Spanish language. His work has appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *National Affairs*, *First Things*, *Education Next*, and many other publications.

#### **Joel Rose, New Classrooms Innovation Partners**



As a 5th-grade teacher, Joel Rose was committed to providing all of his students with an education they needed and deserved. Despite long hours and extensive training, he struggled with how best to organize daily instruction around the unique needs and strengths of each of his students. To address this challenge, Joel co-founded New Classrooms Innovation Partners as an independent, non-profit organization in order to bring innovative learning products and models to more students. Joel has published articles about personalized learning, innovation, and school models in *The Atlantic*, *The 74*, and *Education Next*.