



**HARVARD** Kennedy School

Program on Education Policy  
and Governance

# Should School Boards Run Schools?

A virtual conference series on school governance

Every Thursday at 12:00 p.m. • May 4 – June 15, 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.

### Michael Hartney, Hoover Institution



Michael T. Hartney is a Hoover Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, an adjunct fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and an assistant professor of political science at Boston College. Hartney's scholarly expertise is in American politics and public policy with a focus on state and local governments, interest groups, and K–12 education politics and policy. His work has been published in top academic journals such as the *American Political Science Review* and the *American Journal of Political Science* and received press coverage in the *Economist*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*. Hartney has also written for popular outlets including *City Journal*, *Education Next*, and *National Review*. His first book, *How Policies*

*Make Interest Groups: Governments, Unions, and American Education* (2022) examines the origins, power, and activities of America's teachers unions. It details how state and local governments enable unions to wield outsized influence in education policymaking.



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**May 4, 2023**  
**Conference Keynote Address**

### **James Peyser, former Massachusetts Secretary of Education – Speaker**



Jim Peyser served as Secretary of Education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for eight years under Governor Charlie Baker. He directed the Executive Office of Education, which is responsible for early education, K–12, and higher education in Massachusetts. As secretary, he sat on each of the boards governing the Commonwealth’s education agencies—Department of Early Education and Care, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Department of Higher Education as well as the University of Massachusetts system. He was Governor Baker’s top advisor on education and helped shape the Commonwealth’s education reform agenda.

Prior to his appointment as Secretary, he served as the Managing Director at NewSchools Venture Fund, a non-profit grant-making firm that seeks to transform public education in high-need urban communities by supporting innovative education entrepreneurs. From 1999 through 2006, Jim served as Chairman of the Massachusetts Board of Education. Prior to joining NewSchools, Secretary Peyser was Education Advisor to Governors Bill Weld, Jane Swift, and Mitt Romney, where he helped shape state policy regarding standards and assessments, school accountability, and charter schools. In 1995, he served as Under Secretary of Education and Special Assistant to the Governor Weld for Charter Schools.

Jim previously spent seven years as Executive Director of the Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research, where he helped to launch the Massachusetts Charter School Resource Center, which supported the development of the state’s first charter schools. Before joining Pioneer Secretary Peyser held various positions at Teradyne, Inc. in Boston, an electronic test equipment manufacturer.

Secretary Peyser holds a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from The Fletcher School (Tufts University) and a Bachelor of Arts from Colgate University.



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**May 11, 2023**

**Do school boards represent parents' interests?**

### **Michael Hartney, Hoover Institution – Speaker**



Michael T. Hartney is a Hoover Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, an adjunct fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and an assistant professor of political science at Boston College. Hartney's scholarly expertise is in American politics and public policy with a focus on state and local governments, interest groups, and K–12 education politics and policy. His work has been published in top academic journals popular outlets including *City Journal* and *Education Next*. His first book, *How Policies Make Interest Groups* (2022) examines the origins, power, and activities of America's teachers unions in education policymaking. Michael holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Notre Dame and a bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt.

### **Craig DiSesa, The Middle Resolution – Commentator**



Craig DiSesa is the President of The Middle Resolution, a Virginia-based political action committee dedicated to identifying and electing pro-free-market candidates to office. With a background in small business sales and business management, Craig initially joined the Board of Directors of the Middle Resolution in 2009. He directed its legislative initiatives by promoting public policy focused on the expansion of free market economics in healthcare and education. Craig was intimately involved in legislation to offer parents education options through tax credits and other initiatives to provide more choice for all students regardless of income levels. As president of The Middle Resolution, he oversees campaign operations, legislative initiatives, and accountability to voters.

### **Beth Ann Rosica, Back to School PA – Commentator**



Beth Ann Rosica is an advocate for high-quality education and academic outcomes for children nationwide. Her career of more than 30 years has been dedicated to support marginalized, low-income, and minority students who may not be able to advocate for themselves. She is passionate about academic excellence for every child. Dr. Rosica served on the Board of Directors for Advancing Evidence-Based Practice, a national association committed to identifying and implementing best practices in the field of education and behavioral healthcare. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Andrews University with a focus on instructional strategies and inclusion for educationally disadvantaged students.



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**May 18, 2023**

### **Do unions have too much power over school boards?**

#### **John Singleton, University of Rochester – Speaker**



John Singleton is the Wilmot Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Rochester. His primary research interests are in Public Economics and the Economics of Education. In particular, his work focuses on answering policy-relevant questions using a combination of novel data sources, careful identification, and/or structural modeling. Singleton’s research has appeared in leading journals including *American Economic Review*, *Journal of Public Economics*, and *Economics of Education Review*, and popular outlets like *Education Next*. He holds a Ph.D. from Duke University, where his dissertation was supported by a National Academy of Education/Spencer Foundation fellowship.

#### **Bradley Marianno, University of Nevada Las Vegas – Commentator**



Bradley Marianno is an Assistant Professor of educational policy and leadership and director of the Center for Research, Evaluation, and Assessment. His research focuses on the consequences of local and state education policy change for educational governance with a substantive focus on teacher labor policy, teachers unions, and collective bargaining. His research is published in top education and policy journals like *Educational Researcher*, *Policy Studies Journal*, *Education Finance and Policy*, *Economics of Education Review*, and *Educational Policy*. Marianno has a Ph.D. in urban education policy from the University of Southern California and master’s degrees in sociology and economics from Brigham Young and USC, respectively.

#### **Nick Melvoin, Los Angeles Unified School District – Commentator**



Nick Melvoin is vice president of the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education, to which he was elected in 2017. As an LAUSD board member, he has focused on putting students and families at the center of District decision-making by increasing parent and community engagement, making the district more transparent and accountable, directing more resources to schools, and protecting the most vulnerable students. He chairs the district’s “Committee of the Whole,” dedicated to bringing transparent conversations about LAUSD’s budgetary process and priorities to the public. Nick holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master’s in Urban Education from Loyola Marymount University, and a law degree from NYU.



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**May 25, 2023**  
**Are school boards democratic?**

### **Vladimir Kogan, Ohio State University – Speaker**



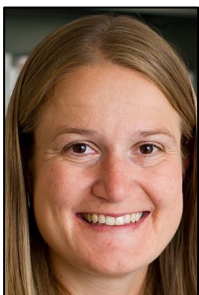
Vladimir Kogan is an associate professor of political science and director of undergraduate studies at Ohio State University. He studies state and local government in the United States, and his research focuses on the intersection of politics and public policy in areas including education and social policy. Kogan serves on the editorial board of *Urban Affairs Review* and is affiliated with OSU's Institute for Democratic Engagement and Accountability, the Education Governance and Accountability Project, and the Translational Data Analytics Institute. He has written a variety of academic and popular publications. Kogan holds a Ph.D., masters, and bachelor's degrees in political science, all from the University of California, San Diego.

### **Jonathan Collins, Brown University – Commentator**



Jonathan Collins is the Mary Tefft and John Hazen White Sr. Assistant Professor of Political Science, Education and International and Public Affairs at Brown University. His research focuses on race and ethnic politics, urban politics, state and local politics, education politics and policy, and democratic innovation. As a researcher, Collins has been at the forefront of the study of public participation at school board meetings. He is the founder and director of the Brown University PAVED Research Initiative through which he is leading new participatory budgeting initiatives aimed at empowering minority communities. He has also written on African American voting behavior, local election reform, and school finance policy.

### **Sarah Reckhow, Michigan State University – Commentator**



Sarah Reckhow is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University. She was awarded a fellowship from the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study for 2018–2019. Her research and teaching interests include urban politics, education policy, nonprofits and philanthropy, and racial and ethnic politics. Reckhow's work on urban schools has focused on policy reforms in New York City, Los Angeles, Oakland, and Detroit. She has recently published articles in the *Journal of Urban Affairs*, *Policy Studies Journal*, and *Planning Theory*. Reckhow received her Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley in 2009. Previously, she taught at Frederick Douglass High School in the Baltimore City Public Schools.



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**June 1, 2023**

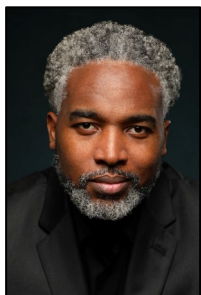
### **Do school boards govern, or are they rubber stamps?**

#### **Robin Lake, Center on Reinventing Public Education – Speaker**



Robin Lake is director of the Center on Reinventing Public Education, a non-partisan research and policy analysis organization developing transformative, evidence-based solutions for K–12 public education. Her research focuses on U.S. public school system reforms, including public school choice and charter schools; innovation and scale; portfolio management; and effective state and local public oversight practices. Lake has authored numerous studies and provided expert testimony and technical assistance on charter schools, district-charter collaborations, and urban school reform. She has provided invited testimonies to the U.S. House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee as well as various state legislatures.

#### **AJ Crabill, Council of Great City Schools – Commentator**



Improving student outcomes is AJ Crabill's focus. He serves as Conservator at DeSoto, Texas Independent School District. During his guidance, DeSoto made double digit literacy gains and improved from F ratings in academics, finance, and governance to B ratings. He's also Faculty at Leadership Institute of Nevada and Director of Governance at the Council of the Great City Schools. He served as Deputy Commissioner at the Texas Education Agency and spearheaded reforms as board chair of Kansas City Public Schools that doubled the percentage of students who are literate and numerate. Crabill is a recipient of the Education Commission of the State's James Bryant Conant Award, which recognizes extraordinary individual contributions to education.

#### **Michael Ford, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh – Commentator**



Michael Ford is an associate professor of public administration, MPA program director, and the director of the Whitburn Center for Governance and Policy Research. His research focuses on public and private board governance, education policy and finance, and the relationship between the public and nonprofit sectors. Ford brings significant practitioner experience in state and local policy to the classroom, striving to connect academic Public Administration to real world practice. He holds numerous appointments to community boards, including the Oshkosh Common Council and Plan Commission. He holds a Ph.D. in urban studies and a master's in political science, both from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

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**June 8, 2023**

### How can school boards navigate the culture wars?

#### **Andy Rotherham, Bellwether Education Partners – Speaker**



Andrew Rotherham is a co-founder and External Relations leader at Bellwether, a national nonprofit that exists to transform education to ensure systemically marginalized young people achieve outcomes that lead to fulfilling lives and flourishing communities. Rotherham also works in Bellwether's Policy and Evaluation practice area and serves on the Virginia Board of Education. He occupies a unique place in the U.S. education sector working across silos. He has been appointed to senior policymaking roles by Democrats and Republicans, works at the intersection of research and policy, media, and practice, and is a longtime champion of heterodoxy, empiricism, and pragmatism in education policy.

#### **Max Eden, American Enterprise Institute – Commentator**



Max Eden is a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), where he focuses on education reform, specifically K–12 and early childhood education. He has authored a number of reports and studies on education and is the coauthor of the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* bestseller *Why Meadow Died: The People and Policies That Created the Parkland Shooter and Endanger America's Students* (Post Hill Press, 2019). Mr. Eden has testified about school violence before Congress and about the “school-to-prison pipeline” before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. He has been published in policy journals and the popular press, including *National Review* and *The Washington Post*. He has a BA in history from Yale University.

#### **Scott Levy, Harvard Center for Education Policy and Research – Commentator**



Among the many boards and associations of which he is a member, Scott Levy serves as president of the Westchester Putnam School Boards Association. He is a partner at Lynrock Lake LP, a visiting fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and a board member of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence at Yale Medical School. Prior to that, he spent over 20 years working in financial services as an investment banker and investor. Levy serves on the board of Blythedale Children's Hospital and sits on the Harvard University Alumni Association Board of Directors. He graduated with a degree in economics from Harvard College and completed a fellowship in public education policy at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.



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**June 15, 2023**

**If not school boards, who? The case for alternatives in school governance**

### **Beth Schueler, University of Virginia – Speaker**



Beth Schueler is an assistant professor of education and public policy at the University of Virginia. She studies education policy, politics, and inequality with a focus on efforts to improve low-performing K–12 schools and districts. She uses both quantitative and qualitative methods to learn which policies are most effective at improving educational organizations and what makes these policies more or less politically viable. Her work has been published in journals such as *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *Education Finance and Policy*, and *Public Opinion Quarterly*. Prior to joining the faculty at UVA, she was a postdoctoral research fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

### **Terry Grier, Houston Independent School District – Commentator**



Terry Grier served as superintendent of Houston Independent School District from 2009 to 2015. During his tenure as superintendent, HISD's dropout rate declined more than 3 percentage points, scholarship offers to graduates increased five-fold, and the number of college credits earned by students on Advanced Placement exams nearly doubled. Dr. Grier was the 2014 winner of the Council of the Great City Schools Urban Educator of the Year Green-Garner Award. He was also named a 2015 Children's Defense Fund "Champion of Children" for his work to provide every HISD student with free breakfast and eyeglasses for those who need them. In 25 years, Dr. Grier worked for eight different school districts. He holds a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University.

### **Domingo Morel, New York University – Commentator**



Domingo Morel is an associate professor of political science and public service at NYU. His research focuses on racial and ethnic politics, urban politics, education politics and public policy. He is the author of *Takeover: Race, Education, and American Democracy* (2018, Oxford University Press), which won the W.E.B. Du Bois Distinguished Book Award. His forthcoming book *Developing Scholars: Race, Politics, and the Pursuit of Higher Education* (2023, Oxford University Press) examines the history and politics of college access programs created for students of color in the 1960s. In addition to his scholarship, Morel has years of applied experience in education, political affairs, and public policy. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from Brown University.