

## Welcome and Overview

### **Wynn Rosser, Ph.D.,** President & CEO, TLL Temple Foundation

Wynn Rosser is President & CEO of the Foundation. Wynn earned his bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from Texas A&M University as well as an associate degree from Kilgore College.

Wynn's awards and recognition include the H.S. Warwick Research Award for Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation in the area of Alumni Relations and Educational Advancement and the Distinguished Former Student of Texas A&M University's Department of Agriculture Leadership Education and Communications. He also was awarded an honorary associate of arts degree from El Paso Community College.

He and his wife, Dr. Manda Rosser, are raising three children on a farm with more than 40 animals including alpaca, horses, rabbits, sheep, goats, chickens, dogs and cats. He enjoys reading, running, and cycling, and he is active in his church.

Wynn is committed to system-level changes – especially for low income and rural residents as well as to a regional approach to grant making and philanthropic leadership.

He is past chair of the Grantmakers for Education Board of Directors and is chair of the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium (TEGAC). He is also a lecturer in the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M.

### **Alfreda B. Norman,** Senior Vice President, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

Alfreda Norman oversees the Dallas Fed's communications and public outreach programs. She has responsibilities for corporate communications, publications/web services, community development, economic education and financial institution relationship management.

Since joining the Bank in 2004, she also served as an officer and vice president of the Community Development Department, promoting financial stability for low- and moderate-income communities and individuals.

Before joining the Bank, Norman was one of the first neighborhood development officers hired by Bank of America in Texas. She also has extensive experience working with the public and private sectors and held management positions at the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs and the Container Store corporate headquarters in Dallas.

In addition, she is affiliated with many cultural and civic organizations, including Big Thought, Communities Foundation of Texas, The Dallas Assembly, North Texas Asset Funders Network, Southwestern Medical Foundation, Executive Women's Roundtable and the Dallas Mayor's Task Force on Poverty.

Norman earned a bachelor's degree from Southern Methodist University and is a graduate of the University of Virginia's Graduate School of Retail Banking.

## Keynote Lunch Presentation: Philanthropy and Public Education Policy Advocacy in the National Context

**John B. King Jr.**, President and CEO, Education Trust

John B. King Jr. is the president and CEO of The Education Trust, a national nonprofit organization that seeks to identify and close opportunity and achievement gaps, from preschool through college. King served in President Barack Obama's cabinet as the 10th U.S. Secretary of Education. In tapping him to lead the U.S. Department of Education, President Obama called King "an exceptionally talented educator," citing his commitment to "preparing every child for success" and his lifelong dedication to education as a teacher, principal, and leader of schools and school systems.

Before becoming education secretary, King carried out the duties of the U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education, overseeing all policies and programs related to P-12 education, English learners, special education, and innovation. In this role, King also oversaw the agency's operations. King joined the department following his tenure as the first African American and Puerto Rican to serve as New York State Education Commissioner.

King began his career in education as a high school social studies teacher in Puerto Rico and Boston, Mass., and as a middle school principal.

King's life story is an extraordinary testament to the transformative power of education. Both of King's parents were career New York City public school educators, whose example serves as an enduring inspiration. Both of King's parents passed away from illness by the time he was 12 years old. He credits New York City public school teachers — particularly educators at P.S. 276 in Canarsie and Mark Twain Junior High School in Coney Island — for saving his life by providing him with rich and engaging educational experiences and by giving him hope for the future.

King holds a Bachelor of Arts in government from Harvard University, a J.D. from Yale Law School, as well as a Master of Arts in the teaching of social studies and a doctorate in education from Teachers College at Columbia University. King serves as a visiting professor at the University of Maryland's College of Education and is a member of several boards, including those for The Century Foundation, The Robin Hood Foundation, Teach Plus, and the American Museum of Natural History. He also serves on several advisory boards, including Former First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher Initiative, the Rework America Task Force, the GOOD+ Foundation's Fatherhood Leadership Council, the National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement at the University of California, and the National Center for Learning Disabilities.

King lives in Silver Spring, Md., with his wife (a former kindergarten and first-grade teacher) and his two daughters, who attend local public schools. You can follow King on Twitter via [@JohnBKing](https://twitter.com/JohnBKing).

**Jessie Rasmussen, President, Buffett Early Childhood Fund**

Jessie Rasmussen's career has focused on improving outcomes for children and families, first as an early childhood practitioner and administrator and later as a Nebraska state senator and state human services director in both Nebraska and Iowa. At the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, she played an instrumental role in the development and passage of legislation that established a \$60 million early childhood endowment funded through a public and private partnership. She is now president of the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, where she manages early childhood investments.

**Edgar Villanueva, Vice President of Programs and Advocacy, Schott Foundation**

Edgar Villanueva joined the Schott Foundation as Vice President of Programs and Advocacy on June 1, 2015. In this role, Edgar guides the Foundation's resource delivery strategy, including the provision of grantmaking, communications, network building, and policy advocacy supports.

Edgar has significant philanthropy experience, beginning his grantmaking career in 2005 as a Senior Program Officer at the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, a \$600 million health equity-focused foundation in Winston-Salem, NC. Most recently, Edgar served as a Program Officer for the National and Midwest Portfolios at the Marguerite Casey Foundation in Seattle, WA. There he managed a multi-million dollar grants portfolio focused on building capacity for progressive change through multi-issue movement building.

Edgar also brings executive director experience to his new role, having served in that capacity for Quality Enhancement for Nonprofit Organizations (QENO), a partnership between the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW), philanthropic and civic organizations focused on providing capacity building to regional nonprofits and foundations. In 2011, he was named the founding Executive Director of the North Carolina American Indian Health Board, a statewide nonprofit working to advance health equity for American Indians through research, education, and advocacy.

For many years, Edgar has been a social justice advocate for youth and communities of color, and he has held leadership roles on various boards and advisory committees such as The Executives' Alliance to Expand Opportunities for Boys and Men of Color and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Forward Promise National Advisory Committee.

Edgar earned a bachelor of arts from Jackson College of Ministries, a bachelor of science in public health from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a master of health administration from the UNC Gillings Global School of Public Health. He is a native of North Carolina and an enrolled member of the Lumbee Tribe.

## Keeping the Spotlight on School Finance After the 86th

### **Representative Diego Bernal**, Texas House of Representatives

Representative Diego Bernal was born in South Texas and raised in San Antonio. After graduating from Thomas Jefferson High School, he attended the University of Michigan, where he earned his undergraduate degree, Master's in Social Work, and law degree. As a social worker, he helped young gang members in Detroit transition out of a rough life and into school or the workforce. He continued this work in Harlingen, Texas with Communities in Schools (CIS), working with at-risk youth to improve literacy by founding a student newspaper.

During law school, he devoted himself to civil rights advocacy. He spent a summer in New York City with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and a year at the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) back in San Antonio.

After graduating from law school, he returned to San Antonio permanently as a MALDEF staff attorney, advocating and litigating on behalf of working people, children, and immigrant communities. He worked for systemic changes to ensure equitable funding for Texas public school and fought against discrimination in schools and the workplace. He also fought to safeguard the integrity of our electoral systems, making sure that every citizen has an equal right to vote.

Outside of work, he pursued another passion: music. Diego has released four successful albums and contributed to other local, national and international projects.

Diego is dedicated to the principles of equality and justice. He is committed to improving the quality of life in San Antonio and Texas on every level and his experience in law, advocacy, and art contributes to the vision he brings to the Texas House of Representatives.

In June 2011, Diego was elected to the San Antonio City Council representing District 1. He worked alongside Mayor Julian Castro, former Secretary of Housing & Urban Development. Diego wrote and passed the strictest payday loan regulation in the state of Texas. Bernal also passed the Non-Discrimination Ordinance (NDO), ensuring everyone is treated equal and fairly.

Representative Bernal was elected to the Texas House of Representatives in February 2015. He represents District 123, home to downtown and north central San Antonio, parts of the city's West Side, along with the City of Castle Hills. He currently serves as the Vice Chairman of the House Committee on Public Education and is also a member of the Local and Consent Calendars Committee and the House Committee on Transportation.

He is married to Elyse Bernal and they are the proud parents of Xan Rosa Bernal. Elyse graduated from the University of the Incarnate Word and is currently the Executive Director of a breast cancer research and awareness nonprofit organization.

**Nicole Conley-Johnson**, Chief Financial Officer, Austin Independent School District

Nicole Conley Johnson is the chief financial officer for the Austin Independent School District, where she is responsible for managing a more than \$1 billion budget. AISD serves 130 school communities with more than 84,000 students, including her two sons.

She has more than 15 years of financial management experience, more than a decade of which has been in an executive role. She has amassed a breadth of knowledge from serving large, complex urban systems, including: the New York City Department of Education, District of Columbia Public Schools, Fairfax County Public Schools and Atlanta Public Schools. She is nationally recognized for her deep expertise in school finance and for turning around troubled financial systems.

At AISD, she leads and manages the district's financial division, which comprises more than 1,600 team members and includes the bond program, construction management, facilities, federal and state accountability and grants, food services, HUB program, innovation and development, purchasing, service center, transportation, and warehouse operations. Recently, Austin voters approved \$1 billion bond program to modernize AISD schools and address critical deficiencies.

Under her leadership, AISD has earned some of the highest financial ratings in the state by multiple ratings agencies, including a superior rating by the State of Texas. The district also has earned awards and accolades such as the Government Finance Officers Association's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts' Leadership Circle Award for Budget Transparency and the Association of School Business Officials International's Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting, as well as its Meritorious Budget Award.

Speaker of the Texas House Joe Straus recently appointed her to the Texas Commission on Public School Finance, which will recommend ways the legislature can reform and improve the state's system of paying for public education. In 2011, she was named the Non-profit CFO of the year by the Austin Business Journal and she earned the Umstattd Award from Phi Delta Kappa, University of Texas Chapter for outstanding service to public education.

As a mom and CFO, she brings community perspectives into the finance and business operations and remains keenly focused on the bottom line: students' success.

**Justin Silverstein**, Co-CEO, APA Consulting

Justin Silverstein began with APA as an intern in May of 1997 coming on full time in September of 1998. Today he serves as co-CEO of the company and oversees the companies school finance work. APA has helped states examining their school finance formulas since 1983 working on studies in all 50 states over this time. Justin has led studies in many states including Alabama, Colorado, Maryland, and Wyoming. Mr. Silverstein thinks school finance studies come in three general types. There are structural studies that examine how a state's school funding system

considers student and district differences without a consideration of the equity or adequacy of the system. Equity studies that examine the student and taxpayer equity of students. These studies ask how similar districts are treated, how are the differences between districts treated, and how fairly are taxpayers treated. Adequacy studies examine the level of resources needed for students, teachers, schools, and districts to ensure that state standards can be met. Most of the studies led by Justin include all three types of studies. He has helped create and refine two of the most popular adequacy study methodologies, the successful schools and professional judgment approaches. Mr. Silverstein prides himself on his ability to work with policymakers to create a transparent and understandable set of recommendations for a state.

**David Anderson, HillCo Partners**

David D. Anderson has managed the HillCo Partners' education policy team since 2003. David is recognized across Texas and the country for his insights on educational policy and in the educational sales and marketing arena. He has handled client interests in curriculum policies, graduation requirements, high school completion, instructional materials, assessment & accountability, school finance, disciplinary alternative education, career & technical education, and early childhood.

From 1997 until 2003, he was the managing director of curriculum at the Texas Education Agency. He coordinated the TEKS implementation and worked on various statewide initiatives in curriculum, assessment, professional development, and instructional materials.

David grew up in McGregor. Following graduation from McGregor High School in 1969, he attended the University of Texas at Austin, where he received an undergraduate degree in 1973 and a master's degree in 1976. He has done additional post-graduate work at UT-Austin and at Harvard University.

## 2020: Philanthropy's Role in Ensuring an Accurate Texas Count

### **Ann Beeson**, Chief Executive Officer, Center for Public Policy Priorities

A renowned social justice lawyer, former philanthropy executive, and frequent public speaker and writer, Ann Beeson joined the Center in 2013. She was previously the Executive Director of U.S. Programs at the Open Society Foundations, where she promoted human rights, justice, and accountability nationwide. Beeson was the national Associate Legal Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, where she worked from 1995-2007. She argued twice before the U.S. Supreme Court, litigated numerous cases around the country, and launched groundbreaking programs to stop the erosion of civil liberties in the name of national security and to protect free speech and privacy on the Internet. Beeson has been recognized as one of the nation's top lawyers by *American Lawyer Magazine* and the *National Law Journal*. A proud Texan, Beeson has embraced a wide range of innovative strategies to advance social change. Before joining the Center, she launched a new non-profit to involve the creative sector in social change. In 2012-13, she was a Senior Fellow and Lecturer at the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life at the University of Texas, where she co-produced a public media series to inspire more people to get engaged in their communities. She grew up in Dallas, Texas, and received undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Texas. Beeson obtained her law degree from Emory University School of Law, and served as law clerk to the Honorable Barefoot Sanders, then chief judge of the Northern District of Texas.

### **Arturo Vargas**, Chief Executive Officer, NALEO Educational Fund

Arturo Vargas is the Chief Executive Officer of NALEO Educational Fund, a national nonprofit organization that strengthens American democracy by promoting the full participation of Latinos in civic life. He also serves as the Chief Executive Officer of NALEO, a national membership organization of Latino policymakers and their supporters. Arturo has held these positions since 1994.

Prior to joining NALEO Educational Fund, Arturo held various positions at the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), including Vice President for Community Education and Public Policy. Before joining MALDEF, he was the senior education policy analyst at the National Council of La Raza in Washington, D.C.

Arturo is a nationally recognized expert in Latino demographic trends, electoral participation, voting rights, the Census, and redistricting.

Arturo holds a master's degree in Education and a bachelor's degree in History and Spanish from Stanford University.

## TEGAC's Priority Education Policy Issues in the 86th: Effective Teaching, Pathways to College and Career, and Early Grade Success in the 86th Legislative Session

### **Katie Benningfield**, Teacher, Dallas ISD

Katie Benningfield is a 2018-19 Teach Plus DFW Policy Fellow. Katie teaches 6th grade Pre-AP science at Dallas ISD's Two-Way Dual Language Talented and Gifted Academy. Katie serves as the Board Chair for The Collective Board, Teach For America's Alumni of Color organization. She has previously developed a city-code based education program as a Policy & Advocacy Summer Fellow with the Dallas City Attorney's Office and Leadership for Educational Equity, and was a Racial Justice Fellow with Teach For America. She graduated from Texas A&M University with a BA in Political Science and English and received her MEd in Education from Southern Methodist University.

### **Treveon Murdock**, Teacher, YES Prep Houston

Treveon Murdock is a 2018-19 Teach Plus Texas Policy Fellow. Treveon is a high school biology, criminal justice, and forensic science at YES Prep Public Schools. He is the district course facilitator of biology and coaches track and field. He received a BS in Criminal Justice from Sam Houston State University and an MA in Criminology from the University of Houston-Clear Lake.

### **Harrison Keller, Ph.D.**, Deputy to the President for Strategy and Policy, University of Texas

Dr. Harrison Keller is Deputy to the President for Strategy and Policy and a Clinical Professor of Public Policy Practice at The University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Keller is responsible for driving achievement of the president's strategic vision for the university by coordinating long-range planning, policy development, and implementation among academic and administrative units, and for organizing and overseeing strategic initiatives related to inter-institutional partnerships.

Beyond campus, Dr. Keller works closely with state and national policymakers and thought leaders to inform higher education policy deliberations in line with institutional priorities. He has served as an appointed member on multiple state and national commissions, committees, and task forces.

Dr. Keller is a recognized innovator in educational policy and programs to improve college readiness and student success, especially for poor, first-generation and underrepresented minority students. He is the founder and Principal Investigator of the OnRamps dual enrollment initiative that provides college-level courses to thousands of high school students across the state of Texas, and the Texas OnCourse initiative chartered by the Texas Legislature to improve secondary college and career advising across the state.

Dr. Keller previously served at UT Austin as Vice Provost for Higher Education Policy and Research, and as Executive Director of the Office of Educational Innovation and the Center for Teaching and Learning. Prior to coming to UT Austin, Dr. Keller was Director of Research for the Texas House of Representatives and Senior Education Advisor for the Speaker of the Texas House.

**Jacquie Porter**, Director of Early Childhood, Texas Education Agency

Jacquie Porter serves as the Director of Early Childhood for the Texas Education Agency. For over a year with the Agency, Jacquie has been focused on implementing initiatives committed to technical assistance, public and private partnerships between child care centers and school districts, and family engagement. Prior to her current position at the agency, Jacquie served as the Director of Early Childhood for the Austin Independent School District for 9 1/2 years where she was responsible for the 3PK, Prekindergarten and Kindergarten programs for the district. She has also taught in Prekindergarten and elementary school and served as a Primary Literacy Specialist.

**John Fitzpatrick**, Executive Director, Educate Texas

John is the executive director of Educate Texas, CFT's statewide education initiative. His role spans five areas: strategy, fundraising, advocacy, culture/talent and what he calls Team CFT.

From 1997-2004, John had a dual role as the executive director of Skillpoint Alliance, a central Texas nonprofit, and vice president for education and workforce development at the Austin Chamber of Commerce.

John moved to Texas in 1994 to attend grad school at the LBJ School at UT Austin, where he met his wife, Kristen Vassallo. Before that, he worked on Capitol Hill for Republicans and Democrats on education, workforce development, trade and other issues.

John taught eighth-grade English and U.S. history for a year in Long Island, New York. He holds a bachelor's in sociology from Wesleyan University, where he also played soccer.