



**BEST PRACTICES  
CLEARINGHOUSE**

- Lessons from the Field -

## Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates

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*Wednesday, August 9, 2023 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET*  
*SPEAKER BIOS*

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### Ruth Ryder

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education



Ms. Ruth Ryder is the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Policy and Programs – Formula Grants in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) at the U.S. Department of Education. In this role, Ms. Ryder oversees a broad range of management, policy, and program functions related to formula and discretionary grant programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA). Ms. Ryder was previously the deputy director of the Office of Special Education Programs in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, which she joined in 1988. Prior to joining the Department, Ms. Ryder was a program administrator in a Washington state school district. There she had responsibility for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title 1 and Title II programs, state-remediation, gifted education, outcome-based education, and state- and district-wide testing programs. Ms. Ryder has a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Elementary Education and a Master’s degree in Special Education.

## Kayla Patrick

Policy Advisor, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, U.S. Department of Education



Ms. Kayla Patrick is a Policy Advisor in the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development where she leads on a range of issues including school-based mental health, full-service community schools and school discipline and climate. Previously she served as Senior Data and Policy Analyst at The Education Trust; where she led policy and advocacy around college and career readiness, as well as school discipline and climate. Ms. Patrick is lead author of several actionable and impactful reports including *Inequities in Advanced Coursework*, *And They Cared: How to Create Better, Safer Learning Environments for Girls of Color*, and *Strategies to Solve Unfinished Learning*, *Dress Coded: Black Girls, Bodies and Bias in D.C. Schools*. Ms. Patrick has also worked at the National Women’s Law Center, where she conducted research and data analysis on issues that impact women and girls. Ms. Patrick holds a B.A. in Political Science from Wellesley College and an M.A. in Education Policy from Teachers College at Columbia University.

## Joseph Bishop

Executive Director, UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools, CA



Dr. Joseph Bishop is co-founder and Executive Director of the Center for the Transformation of Schools at UCLA. He has held a number of state and national educational leadership positions with the Learning Policy Institute, the National Opportunity to Learn Campaign with the Schott Foundation for Public Education, Opportunity Action, the Coalition for Teaching Quality, the Partnership for 21st Century Learning and the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund. Dr. Bishop has been featured in a number of digital and print media sources, including National Public Radio, the Washington Post, Ed Source and Education Week.

He is the lead author and editor of [\*Our Children Can’t Wait: The Urgency of Reinventing Education Policy\*](#) from Teachers College Press and host of a podcast called [\*Our Children Can’t Wait\*](#).

Dr. Bishop’s scholarship explores the relationship between policy and its impact on educational equity, racial justice and social justice movements. Some of specific policy areas of expertise include community schools, tiered systems of support, early childhood education, students experiencing homelessness and the foster system, educator shortages, school finance, school climate, school exclusion and school discipline reform. Dr. Bishop earned his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership, Policy and Organizations from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

## Typhanie Jackson

Executive Director of Student Services and Special Education, New Haven Public Schools, CT



Ms. Typhanie Jackson received her B.S. in social work from Southern Connecticut State University in 1997, and her M.S.W. from New York University in 1998. She received her sixth-year degree in educational leadership from Southern Connecticut State University in 2007, and she currently is a doctoral student at University of Connecticut with a research interest related the schooling experience of African American males.

Ms. Jackson worked as an educator of over twenty years, primarily servicing students who are most at risk, in residential facilities, juvenile detention, outplaced treatment facilities, and therapeutic schools. She joined New Haven Public Schools in July 2007 as Supervisor, Social Work and Special Education. In October of 2010 she became Director of Student Services, overseeing Social Work, Special Education, Psychological Services, Homebound, Homeless Services for Special Education students, and Expulsions. In 2019, she created New Haven Public Schools' Social and Emotional Learning Department. She was promoted to the position of Executive Director of Student Services and Special Education in July 2021.

Ms. Jackson is an energetic, passionate educator who is driven to create school environments that would help students maximize their potential.

## Monica Abbott

SEL Coordinator, New Haven Public Schools, CT



Mrs. Monica Abbott has been an educator in New Haven Public Schools for over 20 years, since 2002, embarking on her career as a 6th-grade science teacher and later transitioning to teach 2nd grade. Her dedication to education and passion for social emotional learning led her to join the Social Emotional Learning Team as an SEL Coach. Driven by a commitment to personal growth and professional development, she pursued a 6th-year degree in Educational Leadership with a specific focus on Urban Education from the University of Connecticut.

Throughout her journey, Mrs. Abbott's diverse career path encompassed various roles, including teacher facilitator, teacher mentor, PBIS coach, culture and climate coordinator, and classroom teacher. She was appointed as the New Haven Public School District SEL Coordinator in 2020, continuing to make a positive impact on students' lives and fostering an environment of emotional well-being within the educational community.

## Thomas Woods-Tucker

Deputy Commissioner and Chief Equity Officer, Kentucky Department of Education, KY



Dr. Thomas Woods-Tucker, Ph. D. was named the Kentucky Department of Education's deputy commissioner and chief equity officer in the Office of Teaching and Learning in October 2020.

He came to KDE from Douglas County Schools in Colorado, where he was the superintendent. Woods-Tucker previously has served in district leadership positions in Ohio, where he was named the 2016 American Association of School Administrators National Superintendent of the Year and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators State Superintendent of the Year. In 2013, he earned the National Alliance of Black School Educators National Superintendent of the Year Award.

Originally from northeastern Arkansas, Dr. Woods-Tucker earned his doctorate in communications and higher education and a master's in educational administration from The Ohio State University. He received a bachelor's in English education from Philander Smith College (Little Rock, Ark.).

## Kristine Meurer

Executive Director, Student, Family, and Community Supports Division, Albuquerque Public Schools, NM



Dr. Kristine Meurer, Ph.D., is the Executive Director for the Student Family and Community Supports Division for Albuquerque Public Schools. Dr. Meurer has over 45 year experience in education and health promotion. She completed both her undergraduate and graduate work at Eastern Michigan University, and completed her Ph.D. in Health Promotion at the University of New Mexico in Spring 1995. She is a 2011 New Mexico Business Weekly Women of Influence and a recipient of the 2006 Red Hot Chili Pepper Award from New Mexico Dietetic Association. She is currently serving as the lead for Social Emotional Learning for Albuquerque Public Schools. Dr. Meurer has extensive experience developing and implementing programs for at-risk students, including students living in Foster Care. Dr. Meurer has experience in developing and implementing policies and practices for multiple school health initiatives. She served on the New Mexico Children's Court Improvement Commission focusing on educational stability for children in custody. Most importantly, Dr. Meurer is the proud parent of two Albuquerque Public Schools graduates.