



**BEST PRACTICES
CLEARINGHOUSE**

- Lessons from the Field -

Strategies for Engaging Families to Support Students' Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Academic Well-Being and Success

Wednesday, September 20, 2023 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET
SPEAKER BIOS

Cecily Darden

Special Assistant, Family Outreach, U.S. Department of Education



Ms. Cecily Darden is the Special Assistant for Family Outreach in the US Department of Education. She is committed to building strong connections between children's homes and schools. As a researcher by training, her passion is supported by the evidence that strong family engagement positively impacts the academic success and wellbeing of students as well as leads to rewards for their families and teachers.

Prior to joining the Biden-Harris administration, Ms. Darden's Rooted Learning supported organizations to implement equitable community engagement and systems change for sustainable growth. Previously, she led measurement with the Flamboyant Foundation, where she supported the identification and dissemination of effective family engagement strategies and innovations. Ms. Darden also served the students of Prince George's County Public Schools for nearly a decade where she led the human capital strategic initiatives after several years supporting student-focused measurement of district initiatives. Ms. Darden's additional prior work experience also includes adjunct faculty and educational research positions with American University, University of Maryland-College Park and the American Institute for Research.

Her volunteer passion has been serving the children of Montgomery County, MD where she is raising two young men, and has held many school and county volunteer roles. A proud undergraduate alumna of Spelman College in Atlanta, GA, Ms. Darden's graduate studies were in Sociology at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Marion Baldwin

Senior Technical Assistance Consultant, American Institutes for Research



Ms. Marion Baldwin is a senior technical assistance consultant in the Youth, Family, and Community Development program area at American Institutes for Research. Ms. Baldwin has more than 25 years of experience supporting the implementation of educational programs and initiatives at local, state, and national levels. She is adept at working with state departments of education, school districts, schools, and community-based organizations to support them in achieving desired program goals. Ms. Baldwin also leads recruitment, assists with data collection, and facilitates interpretation of research findings with practitioners on Institute of Education Sciences-funded research. She provides professional development to staff and is a member of the AIR Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council. Ms. Baldwin holds a master's degree in educational administration from the University of Arkansas - Little Rock.

Celia Luviano Vargas

Family Member and advocate, TX



Ms. Celia Luviano Vargas is from Mexico. Celia began her journey of learning in the United States by attending the Family Literacy Center in Richardson ISD where due to the ages of her children, she simultaneously took part in the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI) program, and the Parents As Teachers Program (PAT). Through the Family Literacy Center, she was able to begin her own education taking ESL classes, preparing for and passing her GED. Ms. Luviano Vargas has been a volunteer and a PTA member in all her children's schools in RISD for the past 18 years and counting. She has been a member of Padres Unidos at Richardson High School for the last 4 years to present. Ms. Luviano Vargas helps the community by sharing her experiences and the steps she has taken to advance her own education as well as her children's. She is a proud parent of 3 amazing children.

Maria Ethetton

Family Engagement Coordinator, Richardson Independent School District, Dallas, TX



Ms. Maria Ethetton completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Texas at Arlington, and her master's degree at the University of Granada in Granada, Spain. Ms. Ethetton has been in education for 24 years. She has served as a bilingual teacher, an Adult Basic Education ESL teacher, and a Parent Community Outreach Support Specialist previous to her current role, in the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion department, as Family Engagement Coordinator of Richardson ISD. Her own experiences as a child of an immigrant Mother who struggled with barriers to navigating the education system in the U.S. led her to where she is today. Ms. Ethetton is passionate about empowering all parents to advocate for themselves, and their children, especially during their academic journey.

Sarah Butcher

Co-Founder and Director, Roots of Inclusion, WA



Ms. Sarah Butcher is the Co-Founder and Director of Roots of Inclusion. As a parent, Ms. Butcher understands and values the importance of an equitable, accessible, and inclusive education system. She identifies opportunities and connections across systems and leverages relationship building, advocacy, and policy to improve outcomes for young people. Ms. Butcher holds a deep commitment to ensuring those most impacted by a system are part of the design process for improving it.

Ms. Butcher serves on multiple Washington State workgroups and projects connected to improving outcomes for students by evolving systems to be more equitable, inclusive, and supportive of the whole child. She is the former co-chair of the Washington State SEL Advisory Committee and former Vice-Chair of the Washington State Special Education Advisory Council.

In 2014 she was recognized as a ParentMap Superhero and as the Washington State PTA Advocate of the Year for her advocacy work on Social Emotional Learning and for students with disabilities.

Before devoting her energy and expertise to evolving Washington’s education systems to be equitable and inclusive, Ms. Butcher was a junior broker at Wells Fargo Institutional Investments. Ms. Butcher holds a Graduate Certificate in Adaptive Community Leadership from Saybrook University.

She spends her off-time exploring local running trails, cooking, and enjoying new adventures with her husband, 3 children, and 3 dogs.

Kimberly David

CEO, Project Success of Vermillion County, Inc., Danville, IL



Ms. Kimberly David is the CEO of Project Success of Vermillion County, Inc. in Danville, Illinois. Project Success works to “Empower Children and Families to Reach Their Highest Potential” by providing high-quality out of school time programs. Project Success supports six school districts in Vermillion County, serving over 1,700 students and their families. The agency prides themselves on building relationships with families to support a great youth and family experience.

Erin Bartlett Lipsker

Restorative Practices and Mediation Program



After growing up in Spokane and attending Gonzaga University for an undergraduate degree in history and political science, followed by a master's in teaching, Ms. Bartless Lipsker has joined the Department of Family and Community Engagement for Spokane Public Schools, the second largest district in the state of Washington. As a former teacher, a proud mom of three, and the wife of an educator, Ms. Bartless Lipsker is a fierce advocate for teachers, students, and their families. With a strong belief that all people deserve to be seen, valued, and supported, Ms. Bartless Lipsker works to create inclusive and equitable environments where people can thrive, and communities can deepen their bonds, and cultural awareness. Ms. Bartless Lipsker's heart is rooted in the well-being of the entire school community and is committed to using restorative dialogue and mediation to foster relationships and address conflict within a restorative context centered on the humanity of all.