



**BEST PRACTICES
CLEARINGHOUSE**

- Lessons from the Field -

Welcoming Newcomer Students

Wednesday, March 13, 2024 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET
SPEAKER BIOS

Montserrat Garibay

Assistant Deputy Secretary & Director for the Office of English Language Acquisition, U.S. Department of Education



Ms. Montserrat Garibay is the Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director for the Office of English Language Acquisition at the U.S. Department of Education. She was formerly Senior Advisor for Labor Relations at the Office of the Secretary.

Ms. Garibay was a bilingual pre-kindergarten teacher for eight years and National Board-Certified Teacher in Austin, Texas. She came to the U.S. from Mexico City as an undocumented immigrant and became a citizen 20 years later. She graduated from the University of Texas-Austin with a Master of Education.

Megan Ritter

National Strategic Outreach Lead, Refugee Program Interagency Outreach and Response, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Administration of Children and Families, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services



Ms. Megan Ritter is the National Strategic Outreach Lead for Refugee Programs within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Her line of effort focuses on developing and maintaining strategic national partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations. Prior to her current position, she worked on ORR's state-funded programs, as well as for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Brenda Custodio, Ph. D.

Owner, Newcomer and ELL Services; Education Program Specialist, The Ohio State University, OH



Dr. Brenda Custodio is a former secondary ESL teacher in Columbus, Ohio. She currently works in teacher education at The Ohio State University and Ohio Dominican University, as well as serving as a consultant in the areas of literacy, newcomers, trauma, and SIFE. She is the author of three books on supporting English learners; *How to Design and Implement at Newcomer Program*, and two that she co-authored with Judith O'Loughlin: *Students with Interrupted Formal Education: Bridging Where They Are and What They Need* (Corwin) and *Supporting the Journey of English Learners after Trauma* (University of Michigan Press). She and Judith O'Loughlin are currently working on a new book for the University of Michigan Press on serving and supporting newcomers.

Judith B. O'Loughlin

Educational Consultant, Language Matters Educational Consultants, OR



Ms. Judith B. O'Loughlin, M.Ed., is an independent education consultant, with over thirty years of experience as an English, ESL, and special education teacher. She has taught ESL at the K-12 and adult education levels, as well as a graduate adjunct in two university TESOL endorsement programs. Her work for school districts, departments of education, universities, and OELA grant programs has focused on standards-based and English language development program design for newcomers and SIFE, instructional strategies, differentiated instruction for multilingual and bilingual special education

learners. She has been a teacher-trainer and consultant for NJ City University, the Center for Applied Linguistics, The Ohio State University, and SOKA University in Tokyo, Japan. Her publications include *The Academic Language Accelerator*, (Oxford University Press), *Students with Interrupted Formal Education: Bridging Where They Are and What They Need*, (Corwin/Sage), and *Supporting the Journey of English Learners After Trauma* (UMich Press). The latter two publications co-authored with Dr. Brenda Custodio. Ms. O'Loughlin was recognized as one of TESOL's "50 at 50" leaders in the field of English language teaching, CATESOL Sadae Iwataki Service Award, NJTESOL-NJBE Leadership Award, and Seton Hall University's Multicultural Education Teacher of the Year.

Geovanni Mendez

Student, Youth Lived Experience Expert

Mr. Geovanni Mendez is a junior at Bernstein High School in LAUSD. He immigrated from Guatemala to Los Angeles in the late Spring of 2022. Since immigrating, he has maintained 3.5 GPA. He has been an advocate among his peers speaking to district leaders about the needs and assets of newly arrived immigrant youth. He is a mentor to other students and has participated in various leadership programs. He also works at a local restaurant. After graduating in 2025, Mr. Mendez hopes to go to a 4-year university and pursue a career in medicine.

Dr. Sara-Jean Lipmen

Newcomer Instructional Coach, Los Angeles Unified School District, CA



Dr. Sara-Jean, or "SJ," Lipmen an educator, researcher, advocate and native Los Angeleno with roots in Mexico and Guatemala. She has taught, run programs, directed schools, supervised educators, led professional development, created curricula, published articles and worked with students, at all stages of life, in a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, all over the world. She has a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and has won multiple awards and recognition for innovation in education in the USA and UK. Most recently, in 2021, she completed her Diploma in Psychological First Aid for Migrants, Refugees, and Displaced Persons. She currently works as an Assistant Professor at the Rossier School of Education at USC and as a Newcomer Instructional Coach at Bernstein High School in LAUSD. Dr. Lipmen lives with her partner and is proudly raising their beautiful children in the LA urban jungle.

Angelia Ross

Principal, International Newcomer Academy, Fort Worth Independent School District, TX



Ms. Angelia Ross stands as a committed educational leader, presently holding the position of Principal at the International Newcomers Academy (INA) within the Fort Worth Independent School District (Fort Worth ISD). With a dedicated tenure of eight years at the helm of the International Newcomer Academy and a cumulative 21 years immersed in the realm of emergent bilingual education, Angelia Ross consistently channels her extensive background and educational acumen to reshape the landscape of innovation in education. Her focus spans various facets, including the empowerment of emergent bilinguals, fostering inclusivity and cultural cohesion, crafting content-based language instruction tailored for newcomers, and prioritizing trauma-informed approaches in the service of both immigrant and refugee students and their families.

With a profound appreciation for the transformative influence of purpose-driven leadership, Ms. Ross brings a wealth of experiences that uniquely shape her educational approach. Her diverse upbringing, spanning various corners of the globe during her formative years, serves as a wellspring of inspiration. As a former Peace Corps volunteer, she developed a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and an unwavering commitment to establishing safe spaces for student learning, coupled with a keen understanding of the distinct challenges faced by immigrant and refugee students. Over the years, Ms. Ross has assumed diverse roles within the district, including positions as Assistant Principal and Dean of Instruction in both Middle and High School settings. Additionally, she has made significant contributions as an ELAR curriculum writer. Her steadfast dedication to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment stands as a consistent cornerstone of her career.

Ms. Ross holds a Bachelor of Business Administration and Marketing from Northwood University, a Master's in International Studies with a minor in Conflict Resolution from the American University, and a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from The University of Texas at Arlington. Her academic journey also includes an Advanced Leadership Certificate from Texas Christian University, completion of the UNT Principal Impact Collaboration, and ongoing pursuit of a Doctorate degree in curriculum and instruction at Kansas State University. As Principal Ross continues her educational journey, her mission remains unwavering – to create a nurturing and empowering educational environment for all students at the International Newcomers Academy.

Sary Portillo

Multilingual Family Engagement Manager, Denver Public Schools Office of Multilingual Education, CO



Ms. Sary Portillo is a University of Denver Colorado graduate and currently holds the position of Manager of Multilingual Family Engagement within the Multilingual Education department at Denver Public Schools. With a student population of over 35,000 Multilingual learners representing more than 200 languages, Ms. Portillo's team specializes in providing essential support to Newcomer Students and Families as they navigate enrollment, multilingual education programming options, and the U.S. and DPS school systems. With over 10 years of experience in Family, School and Community Engagement and working with marginalized communities, Ms. Portillo has a proven track record of spearheading new initiatives to break down barriers and positively serve these new communities. Currently, Ms. Portillo is leading district-wide initiatives to ensure newcomer families across DPS feel safe and welcome. Through city and community partnerships Ms. Portillo has developed processes both internally and externally to proactively respond to future increases of New Arrival students.