



The Alliance for Excellent Education Presents a Webinar

Building the Capacity of Teachers to Prepare Students for College and Careers

Friday, August 13, 2010 ♦ 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm (EST)

Speaker Biographies

Nancy Farnan, PhD

Director, School of Teacher Education, San Diego State University

Nancy Farnan began her career as a middle and high school English teacher and reading specialist. Currently, she is a professor at the College of Education at San Diego State University and has been director of the School of Teacher Education since 2003. Dr. Farnan's research centers on the teaching of writing and on teacher education and development. She codirected an award-winning credential program and for the past four years, she has participated in the development of an innovative, online model of student teacher supervision. Supported by a \$1.5 million grant from the James Irvine Foundation, her recent work involves overseeing collaboration between School of Teacher Education faculty members and secondary schools that are integrating rigorous academics and career technical education to prepare adolescents for the range of college and career options. With support from the grant, seven teacher preparation institutions in California are participating in a growing network of universities preparing teachers for Linked Learning pathway programs.

In August 2009, Dr. Farnan received San Diego State University's distinguished faculty award, the Monty. Each year, one faculty member from each college in the university receives this prestigious award. Dr. Farnan speaks regularly at state and national conferences, serves on several editorial review boards, and has had her work published in *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, *Journal of Reading*, *Teacher Education Quarterly*, and *The New Advocate*. She has written numerous books and book chapters, and works closely with several community and state agencies, including San Diego Workforce Partnership's Youth Council, San Diego County Office of Education, and California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Dr. Farnan received a BS in English education from Wright State University; an MA in reading from San Diego State University, an a PhD in reading/language development through a joint program with Claremont Graduate School and San Diego State University.

Maria Voles Ferguson

Vice President for Policy, Alliance for Excellent Education

Maria Ferguson is vice president for policy at the Alliance for Excellent Education. Before joining the Alliance, Ms. Ferguson served as director of the National School Boards Foundation (the foundation), a nonprofit organization that works in conjunction with the National School Boards Association (NSBA) to strengthen and support school board leadership in states and local communities. In that capacity, Ms. Ferguson directed the foundation's operations and initiatives and led the NSBA's efforts to restructure the foundation's stewardship plan, governance structure, and budget.

Before joining NSBA, Ms. Ferguson was a consultant specializing in research, communications, and strategic planning and worked with a wide range of clients including Target Corporation, Brookings Institution, the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Regional Education Laboratories, Sidwell Friends School, and several national foundations. Prior to that, Ms. Ferguson was director of field operations for New American Schools. She worked with teachers and administrators, federal, state and local government officials, business and community groups, and other education stakeholders as they implemented exemplary models that focused school resources on effective teaching and greater student achievement.

Ms. Ferguson also served as a political appointee in President William J. Clinton's administration. As director of communication and outreach services for ED's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, her efforts directly supported the national education agenda of President Clinton and U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley.

Ms. Ferguson began her career as a journalist, working as a photography editor for some of the nation's leading journalism outlets, including Cox newspapers, the Associated Press, and *U.S. News & World Report*. Ms. Ferguson earned her BFA from New York University in 1986. She has also done MBA course work at the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business.

Lori Meyer

Vice President, Collaborative Communications

Lori Meyer is vice president of Collaborative Communication Group's research and policy analysis efforts, with an emphasis on moving research to action in order to drive change. Ms. Meyer has a deep and broad network in the education community, having worked with a variety of associations, nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups, and government agencies. Her experience includes the design and development of research studies, serving as lead author and public panelist on policy reports, providing professional development to education stakeholders, and strategic advice and consulting to a variety of policymakers and organizational leaders.

As part of the Collaborative team, Ms. Meyer is currently leading a study of the availability of work-based learning opportunities for high school students in California during out-of-school time, funded by the James Irvine Foundation. She has also contributed research and writing for the award-winning *Leading Learning Communities* publication and the Aspen Institute's Commission on No Child Left Behind. She has worked with the National Academy Foundation

to provide extensive research on current investments in education in New Orleans and Los Angeles, and is currently partnering with the Alliance for Excellent Education to better understand high school reform efforts in California.

Erin Preston

Digital Art Teacher, Kearny School of Digital Media and Design (San Diego)

Erin Preston is a digital art teacher at the School of Digital Media and Design (DMD) at Kearny High Educational Complex in San Diego, California. DMD is the first certified Linked Learning Pathway school by ConnectEd: California Center for College and Career, which aims to connect academics to real-world experiences through interdisciplinary projects. Ms. Preston just finished her first year of project-based learning instruction with a tenth-grade teaching team, which works in full core-content-area interdisciplinary collaboration. Her teaching team won the “Best Rookie Project” at California Council on Teacher Education’s 2010 San Diego Unified School District’s Project-Based Learning Showcase.

Before joining the DMD staff, Ms. Preston worked in both education and art as a digital video artist, public artist, and freelance designer. Her work has been exhibited at the Egyptian Theater in Hollywood, Orange County Museum of Art, and Niche LA/Lounge 441. While attending college, she taught art at the Community Day School (a continuation school) and at a private elementary school. After college, she taught in special education for two years at The Institute for Effective Education.

Ms. Preston earned a bachelor of fine arts degree from Otis College of Art and Design, a single subject teaching credential in art from San Diego State University (studying in the first Multiple Pathways/Linked Learning cohort), and a designated subjects credential in arts media and entertainment.

Patrick M. Shields, PhD

Director, Center for Education Policy, SRI International

Patrick Shields directs the Center for Education Policy at SRI International. Dr. Shields’ research focuses on effective educational policy for economically poor and ethnically diverse populations. For the past twelve years, he has led the research efforts for Teaching and California’s Future, a project that tracks the health of the teacher workforce in California.

Dr. Shields currently serves as a member of the Committee of Visitors for the Center for Informal Learning and Schools and on the editorial board of Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis. Previously, Dr. Shields served on the National Academy of Sciences’ Committee on the Influence of Standards in Mathematics, Science, and Technology. He also served as senior policy advisor to the Center for Research on Educational Diversity and Excellence at the University of California and as a member of the NCTM Standards Impact Research Group.

Dr. Shields received his PhD from Stanford University, where he has taught evaluation design.

Pier Sun Ho

Associate Director, Pathway and Curriculum Development, ConnectEd

Pier Sun Ho is associate director for pathway and curriculum development at ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career. Ms. Sun Ho's specialization is around the design and use of integrated curriculum within Linked Learning pathway programs. Over the past three years with ConnectEd, she has trained hundreds of teachers on working together in multidisciplinary academic and career-technical teams to develop and implement integrated curriculum. Ms. Sun Ho has also written multiple integrated units as resources for teacher teams within engineering and health science pathways.

Previously, she worked as an educator and educational researcher for more than a decade. Ms. Sun Ho taught science and mathematics in Massachusetts for six years before returning to graduate school at the University of Michigan. During her graduate studies, she wrote science curriculum, designed and delivered professional development, and conducted research in Detroit public schools with the National Science Foundation-funded BioKIDS project as part of a systemic reform initiative supporting technology rich, inquiry-oriented science instruction in urban school districts.

Ms. Sun Ho holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, master's degrees in educational administration and ecology and evolutionary biology, and is currently finishing her PhD in science education with the University of Michigan.