

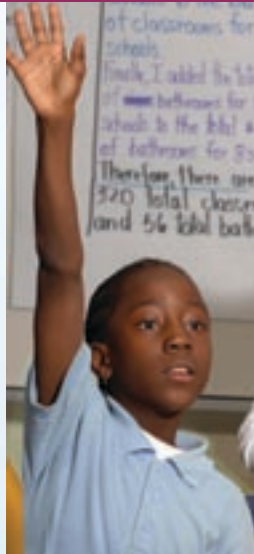
U.S. Department of Education

Office of Innovation and Improvement



National Charter School Policy Forum

May 5, 2008 • Washington, DC





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Agenda

- 10:00-10:15 AM** **WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**
Margaret Spellings
Education Secretary, U.S. Department of Education
- 10:15-11:30 AM** **THE INTERSECTION OF CHARTER SCHOOLS & PHILANTHROPY**
Moderator:
David Dunn
Chief of Staff, U.S. Department of Education
Discussants:
Stefanie Sanford
Deputy Director, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Julie Clark-Goodyear
Executive Director, Foundation for a Greater Opportunity
Ted Mitchell
Chief Executive Officer, NewSchools Venture Fund
- 11:30 AM-12:00 PM** **LUNCH KEYNOTE**
Paul G. Pastorek
Superintendent, Louisiana State Department of Education
- 12:00-12:30 PM** **NCLB LUNCH DISCUSSION WITH CONGRESSIONAL STAFF**
Roberto Rodriguez
Chairman Edward M. Kennedy, Senate HELP Committee
Alice Johnson Cain
Chairman George Miller, House Education & Labor Committee
Chad A. Miller
Ranking Member Buck McKeon, House Education & Labor Committee

12:30-1:45 PM **INCREASING CHARTER SCHOOL CAPACITY IN URBAN CENTERS**

Moderator:

Raymond Simon
Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Education

Discussants:

Frederick M. Hess
Director of Education Policy Studies, American Enterprise Institute

John Lock
President and CEO, Charter School Growth Fund

Richard Barth
Chief Executive Officer, KIPP Foundation

Derrell Bradford
Deputy Director, Excellent Education for Everyone (E3)

1:45-2:00 PM **BREAK**

2:00-3:15 PM **ENSURING CHARTER SCHOOL QUALITY OVER MEDIOCRITY**

Moderator:

Doug Mesecar
Assistant Deputy Secretary, Office of Innovation and Improvement

Discussants:

Andrew J. Rotherham
Co-Director, Education Sector

Matt Candler
Chief Executive Officer, New Schools for New Orleans

Gerard Robinson
President, Black Alliance for Educational Options

Nelson Smith
President, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

3:15-3:30 PM **CLOSING REMARKS**

Doug Mesecar
Assistant Deputy Secretary, Office of Innovation and Improvement



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Framework

Topic: *The intersection of charter schools and philanthropy in developing and expanding strong systems of high-quality charter schools and increasing parental options*

Topic Description

The philanthropic community has supported the charter school movement from the beginning. Based on the promise of creating choices for families, stimulating competition for district schools, and developing innovative educational programs, philanthropists have seen charter schools as a powerful change agent in which to invest resources. Funders have supported the charter movement in several ways. They have backed individual charter schools as well as networks of charter schools, such as charter school management organizations. They have invested in solutions to pressing operational challenges, such as facilities financing and leadership development. And they have made grants to develop charter school support organizations locally, regionally, and nationally that have, in many ways, strengthened the movement. As charter schools move from a small experiment to a significant portion of public schools in many communities, philanthropies have become increasingly interested in finding ways to promote quality in the charter sector. Foundations are taking on a greater role in defining and demanding quality from their grantees, and charter schools are increasingly accountable to their funders for student achievement, strong governance, and fiscal and operational solvency. In addition, donors have sought to move beyond funding individual schools to address large “system” issues that will shape the charter sector over time, such as public policy, authorizing, human capital, and finance. This increasing role for funders in defining quality and forging the charter sector’s systems is a topic of lively discussion among charter advocates, raising questions about the best ways for philanthropists to contribute to a growing, successful charter movement.

Key Questions

- How have your foundations promoted the development of high-quality charter schools?
- How have your foundations promoted the scale-up of successful charter models?
- And, how have you balanced scale with quality?

Dialogue

- How have your foundations selected the schools you have funded? What are the indicators of a successful grantee? Have those indicators changed as the charter sector has matured?
- How have philanthropic efforts in the charter sector changed—more broadly—since chartering began?

- How have your foundations pursued your missions/agendas through charter school funding? What successes have you experienced?
- Beyond schools themselves, what other kinds of organizations have you and other funders supported related to charter schools?
- How can philanthropists themselves and/or their foundations contribute to a positive policy climate for charter schools?
- What role should philanthropy play in the charter sector as it matures and moves beyond the concept of “experiment” and becomes a more permanent aspect of the public school landscape?
- Given philanthropy’s importance in the charter movement, are there any pitfalls of philanthropic involvement that should be considered? Do private funders wield too much control? Not enough?

Recommended Reading

General background reading:

Jump-starting the Charter School Movement: A Guide for Donors. (2004). Washington, D.C.: Philanthropy Roundtable. (An updated version is due for publication in 2008). Available at: http://www.philanthropyroundtable.org/store_product.asp?prodid=174.

Tough, Paul. (2008, March 9). *How Many Billionaires Does It Take to Fix a School System?* New York Times Magazine. Available online at: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/09/magazine/09roundtable-t.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&th&emc=th.

Case studies of specific funders’ approaches:

Read, Tory. (2008). *Closing the Achievement Gap—Creating Quality Choices: CHARTERS.* Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Available at: http://www.aecf.org/~media/PublicationFiles/2Charters_r10.pdf.

Transforming Urban School Districts through Choice: Foundation for Education Reform and Accountability. (2007). Boston: Pioneer Institute. Available at: <http://pioneerinstitute.org/pdf/ROE20.pdf>.

Hassel, Bryan & Toch, Thomas. (2006). *Big Box: How the Heirs of the Wal-Mart Fortune Have Fueled the Charter School Movement.* Washington, D.C.: Education Sector. Available at: http://www.educationsector.org/usr_doc/CTDWalton.pdf.

Topic: Increasing charter school capacity in urban centers through strategic partnerships, authorizing practices and replication of successful models

Topic Description

Educational outcomes in our nation's central cities are persistently low, seriously impairing the future of many urban children and their families. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that charter schools serve a predominantly urban population. But in most cities, demand for parental options outstrips the supply of charter schools. As a result, developing the capacity of urban centers to open more and support existing charter schools is a priority for the charter sector. Some important pillars for capacity include:

Authorizing. Cities need authorizers that have both the technical ability and the legal power to charter and oversee high quality schools. Some states have expanded the number and types of charter authorizers, recognizing that school boards alone may not provide a supportive environment for charter schools. At the same time, other states have constrained authorizing by capping the number of new schools. Whatever entities have the power, improving authorizing quality has been a strategic goal of the charter sector in recent years.

Strategic partnerships. If urban charter schools can develop effective partnerships, they can take advantage of the myriad opportunities afforded by an urban setting and provide their students with wider access to their cities. Managing such strategic partnerships well and ensuring the supports provided by outside organizations do not create more difficulties than benefits should be an important goal for capacity building in urban charter schools.

Replication and growth. When charter schools succeed, finding ways to expand their reach to more children is an important capacity challenge. Even proven programs have sometimes had difficulty maintaining quality and meeting diverse needs as they serve more communities. And whether the goal is to replicate an existing model or launch a new approach, finding talented people to lead charter schools is an ongoing challenge. Overcoming these barriers is an important priority for authorizers, policymakers, and charter advocates.

Key Question

What policies and strategies have the potential to significantly increase the number of quality charter schools in big cities?

Dialogue

- How can charter support organizations promote urban capacity building?
- What can mayors do to make their cities conducive environments for a strong charter sector? How can mayors include charter schools in their larger educational reform agendas? In states with charter school caps, what can be done to lift or modify them?
- What strategies would increase the pipeline of top-notch charter founders in cities? What about the pipeline of high-quality charter schools founded and led by people of color?
- How should authorizers fulfill a commitment to quality without over-regulating schools? What policies could promote authorizer quality while protecting charter school autonomy?
- What strategic partnerships should urban schools develop? Given the availability of healthcare, social services, arts, sports, professional, and governmental organizations in urban centers, how should charter schools prioritize their community partnerships?

- Partnerships between area charter schools can facilitate economies of scale with fiscally and operationally challenging areas such as providing special education services and developing professional and leadership skills among staff. What can be done to help charter schools develop such strategic partnerships among themselves?
- What policies could help successful charter schools replicate? What is the right mix between new start-up schools and replication of existing schools?

Recommended Reading

General background reading:

Rotherham, Andrew J. (2007). Smart Charter School Caps: A Third Way on Charter School Growth. In Robin Lake (Ed.), *Hopes, Fears, & Reality: A Balanced Look at American Charter Schools in 2007* (pp. 65-74). Seattle, WA: National Charter School Research Project, Center on Reinventing Public Education. Available at: http://www.crpe.org/cs/crpe/download/csr_files/pub_hfr07_web.pdf.

Ziebarth, T. (2007, March). *Peeling the Lid Off State-Imposed Charter School Caps*. Washington, D.C.: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Available at: <http://www.publiccharters.org/content/publication/detail/1973/>.

Ziebarth, T. (2006, May). *The Renaissance of Urban Education: Charter Schools in America's Cities*. Washington, D.C.: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Available at: <http://www.publiccharters.org/content/publication/detail/1040/>.

Luekens, M. T. (2004, April). *Who's the Boss? An Examination of the Characteristics, Experience, and Training of Charter School Principals*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA. Available at: http://www.air.org/news_events/documents/AERA2004CharterPrincipals.pdf.

Strategic Partnerships:

Wohlstetter, P., Smith, J., Malloy, C.L., & Hentschke, G.C. (2005). *Charter School Partnerships ... 8 key lessons for success*. Los Angeles: Center on Educational Governance—University of Southern California. Available at: http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/cegov/publications/Final_charter_schools.pdf.

Wohlstetter, P. & Smith, J. (2006). *Improving Schools Through Partnerships: Learning from Charter Schools*. Phi Delta Kappan. Available at: http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/cegov/improving_schools_kappan.pdf.

Authorizing Practices:

Principles and Standards for quality charter school authorizing. (2007). National Association of Charter School Authorizers. Available at: http://www.qualitycharters.org/files/public/final_PS_Brochure.pdf.

Supporting Charter School Excellence Through Quality Authorizing. (2007). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement. Available at: <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/choice/charter/authorizing/authorizing.pdf>.

Managing School Performance: a new working paper series from the Center on Reinventing Public Education's (CRPE) National Charter School Research Project and Doing School Choice Right Project. This collection of nine working papers provides research-based practical guidance to authorizers across the whole range of authorizer practices, from building supply and selecting applicants, through oversight and support, to intervening in and closing failing schools. Developed through CRPE's "Providing Public Oversight" research initiative in partnership with Public Impact. Available at: <http://www.crpe.org>.

Destler, K. (2006). Charter Authorizing: It's a dirty job, but somebody's got to do it. In R.J. Lake & P.T. Hill (Eds.), *Hopes, Fears, & Reality: A Balanced Look at American Charter Schools* (pp. 49-59). Seattle, WA: National Charter School Research Project, Center on Reinventing Public Education. Available at: http://www.crpe.org/cs/crpe/download/csr_files/hfrdec1_web.pdf.

Replication:

Colby, S., Smith, K. & Shelton, J. (2005). *Expanding the Supply of High Quality Public Schools*. San Francisco: The Bridgespan Group. Available at: <http://www.bridgespangroup.org/PDF/ExpandingtheSupplyofHighQualityPublicSchools.pdf>.

Lake, R. (2007). *Identifying and Replicating the "DNA" of Successful Charter Schools: Lessons from the Private Sector*. Seattle, WA: National Charter School Research Project, Center on Reinventing Public Education. Available at: http://www.ncsrp.org/cs/csr/view/csr_pubs/13.

Quantity Counts: The Growth of Charter School Management Organizations. (2007, August). Seattle, WA: National Charter School Research Project. Available at: http://www.crpe.org/cs/crpe/download/csr_files/pub_ncsrp_quancount_aug07.pdf.

Charter Management Organizations: Toward Scale with Quality. (2006). San Francisco: NewSchools Venture Fund. Available at: <http://newschools.org/files/CMO-monograph.pdf>.

Wicoff, K. Howard, D. & Huggett, J. (2006). *Replicating High-Performing Public Schools*. San Francisco. The Bridgespan Group. Available at: http://www.bridgespangroup.org/kno_articles_replicatingschools.html.

Topic: *Ensuring charter school quality over mediocrity in the design and implementation of high quality charter schools in urban and rural areas, especially in areas where the need for the highest quality schools is most pressing*

Topic Description

The charter school movement began in 1992, largely with an emphasis on opening numerous schools in order to serve a large number of children and create a critical mass of charter schools in public school systems. Today, 15 years later, charter schools have had some spectacular successes. Yet the sector has also hosted some miserable failures and a great deal of mediocrity in outcomes. At the same time, the charter community has become much more knowledgeable about how to support the development and implementation of high-quality charter schools. Recognizing that charter schools have various needs across their lifecycle—from developing the pipeline of high-quality applications and founding groups, through shaping the critical start-up years, to supporting the long-term viability of established schools—numerous organizations have begun to provide services and supports that meet these various needs and promote quality simultaneously. While these efforts have helped, many charter advocates think more needs to be done to promote quality in the ranks of charter schools: clearing away remaining policy barriers to success, leveling the funding playing field with district schools, and improving charter authorizing without over-regulating. The field has become increasingly aware that despite the best efforts of charter founders and supporters, some schools will fail. Closing these schools has proven more challenging than expected due to blunt performance measures, significant legal challenges, and opposition from some vocal stakeholders. Finding ways to overcome these challenges is vital to fulfilling the accountability side of the charter bargain.

Key Question

A high-quality charter sector depends on two approaches, effectively defining and promoting “quality” for charter schools and getting serious about closing bad charter schools. What specific steps can policymakers, authorizers, and advocates take to make both happen?

Dialogue

- What policies and strategies have the potential to increase the quality of charter schools?
- Is insufficient funding—especially for capital needs—a constraint on charter quality? What policies show the most promise of addressing the facilities financing challenge?
- Have restrictions placed on charter schools significantly limited their ability to improve school quality? What aspects specifically of charter laws or policies, are restraining schools? What can’t charter schools do that has an effect on quality?
- What issues are states and authorizers dealing with related to virtual charter schools and specifically, what steps need to be taken to create and sustain high quality virtual charter schools?
- What strategies are necessary to improve informed school choice by students and families?
- How can charter support organizations support charter school quality more effectively?
- What are the central constraints that make it difficult to close low-performing charter schools? What changes could policymakers, authorizers, or others implement to make closures more feasible?

Recommended Reading

A Framework for Academic Quality: A Report from the National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality. Building Charter School Quality Consortium. Available at: http://bcsq.org/downloads/BCSQ_Consensus_draft.pdf.

This framework is the result of a national consensus process that is part of Building Charter School Quality: Strengthening Performance Management among Schools, Authorizers, State Charter Support Organizations, and Funders, a National Leadership Activities Project funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Charter Schools Program. The consensus panel put forth this framework for charter school operators, authorizers, and funders to assess charter school academic performance and quality.

Candler, Matt (2007, October). Supply-Side Reform on the Ground. Prepared for the American Enterprise Institute Conference, "The Supply Side of School Reform and the Future of Educational Entrepreneurship," Washington, D.C.: Forthcoming in *The Future of Educational Entrepreneurship*, edited by Frederick M. Hess (to be published by Harvard Education Press in fall 2008). Available at: http://www.aei.org/docLib/20080416_CandlerPaper.pdf.

Charter School Quality and Accountability Playbook: The How-to Guide for Planning and Supporting Quality and Accountability Programs. (2008). Washington, D.C.: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing. (2007). National Association of Charter School Authorizers. Available at: http://www.qualitycharters.org/files/public/final_PS_Brochure.pdf.

Rotherham, A. & Mead, S. (2007). *A Sum Greater Than the Parts: What States Can Teach Each Other About Charter Schooling.* Washington, DC: Education Sector. Available at: http://www.educationsector.org/research/research_show.htm?doc_id=521913.

Huerta, L.A., d'Entremont, C. & Gonzalez, M.F. (2006, September). "Cyber Charter Schools: Can Accountability Keep Pace with Innovation?" *Phi Delta Kappan*, pp 88:1, 23-30.



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Biographies



Richard Barth
Chief Executive Officer, KIPP Foundation

Richard Barth joined KIPP in December of 2005. As president and CEO of the KIPP Foundation, Barth led the organization through the process of identifying five organizational imperatives to ensure the sustainability of the KIPP network as it grows to more than 100 schools in the next 5 years. In the past 2 years, he has overseen the expansion of KIPP's leadership development programs, put in place a disciplined approach to managing growth, recruited two new outside directors to the KIPP Foundation board, and secured more than \$25 million in new, long term funding commitments. This year, Barth is participating in the inaugural class of the Aspen Institute-New Schools Fellows program. Barth came to KIPP from Edison Schools, where he served as President of District Partnerships and managed Edison Schools' partnership in Philadelphia. Prior to joining Edison, Barth was one of the founding staff members at Teach For America. He earned a B.A. in American history from Harvard University in 1989.



Derrell Bradford
Deputy Director, Excellent Education for Everyone (E3)

Derrell Bradford is the Deputy Director and Director of Communications for E3, New Jersey's largest school choice advocacy group, and a Co-Director of the Center for Education Justice, a public interest law firm focused on protecting the education rights of parents and students in New Jersey school districts. Bradford is also a member of the advisory board of the Coalition for Access to Educational Resources, a national workgroup supporting the reauthorization of supplemental educational services tutoring under the No Child Left Behind Act. He also serves as the vice-chair of the Greater Newark Chapter of the Black Alliance for Educational Options, and on the steering committee of the New Jersey School Choice Alliance, a collection of civic, community-based, and business organizations that support the implementation of school choice in the state. A native of Baltimore, Maryland, Bradford is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where he received a B.A. in English and creative writing. Bradford has an extensive background in editorial development, graphic and web design, and publishing, gained while working for Simon & Schuster and City Guide Publications in New York City as its Managing Editor, before joining E3.



Matt Candler
Chief Executive Officer, New Schools for New Orleans

Matt Candler has been involved in the charter school movement for the past 10 years and has taught and coached at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Candler worked for Paul Vallas in Chicago on the nation's first large scale program designed to combat social promotion; co-founded a K-5 charter school in North Carolina; and started a consulting practice specializing in start-up support for charter school founders. In 2001, he joined the KIPP Foundation in San Francisco at the Vice President of School Development. His team established 37 new charter schools across the country and was responsible for recruiting school leaders, securing contractual and charter relationships with school districts, and securing facilities and financing for each school. In 2004, Candler became the Chief Operating Officer of the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, where he managed a \$40M endowment to help open, operate, and sustain successful charter schools throughout the city. He joined New Schools for New Orleans as the CEO in October of 2006. Candler has an M.B.A. from Kellogg University with a concentration in education management, managerial economics, and decision-making.



Julie Clark-Goodyear
Executive Director, Foundation for a Greater Opportunity

Julie Clark-Goodyear is the Executive Director of Foundation for a Greater Opportunity. In 2000, the Foundation for a Greater Opportunity partnered with the Center for Educational Innovation-Public Education Association (CEI-PEA) to charter the Carl C. Icahn Charter School in the South Bronx. Clark-Goodyear currently serves as the Secretary on the Board of Directors for the Icahn Charter School. In addition, she serves on the Executive Committee of the New York Coalition of Charter Schools, CEI-PEA. Clark-Goodyear received her M.A. in liberal studies, with a special concentration in The American Self, from the Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut.



David Dunn
Chief of Staff, U.S. Department of Education

David Dunn is the Chief of Staff to U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. In this position, he continues a career devoted to improving accountability and raising standards in America's schools. Dunn served as Acting Under Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education from January to December 2006. Prior to coming to the U.S. Department of Education, Dunn served as Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy at the White House Domestic Policy Council. He served in this role starting in August 2002. His portfolio of issues included all areas of education policy, from early childhood through higher education. Before joining the White House Domestic Policy Council, Dunn was the Associate Executive Director of the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), where he acted as the association's chief lobbyist. Dunn was also the association expert on school finance and school accountability. Prior to his work at TASB, he spent 15 years in education and fiscal policy analysis for the State of Texas. He acted as lead staff for an education policy center that developed the blueprint for Texas' School Accountability System in the early 1990s. Dunn has an M.A. in government from the University of Texas at Austin and a B.A. in political science from Baylor University.



Frederick M. Hess
Director of Education Policy Studies, American Enterprise Institute

Frederick M. Hess is a Resident Scholar and Director of Education Policy Studies at American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and executive editor of Education Next. Rick is a nationally recognized authority on education reform and a frequent speaker and commentator on educational issues including choice, accountability, entrepreneurship, philanthropy, collective bargaining, leadership, federal policy, and teacher quality. His many books include *When Research Matters* (Harvard Education Press 2008), *No Remedy Left Behind* (AEI Press, 2007), *No Child Left Behind: A Primer* (Peter Lang, 2006), *Educational Entrepreneurship* (Harvard Education Press, 2006), *Urban School Reform: Lessons from San Diego* (Harvard Education Press, 2005), *Common Sense School Reform* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), *Revolution at the Margins* (Brookings Institution, 2002), and *Spinning Wheels* (Brookings Institution, 1998). His work has appeared in scholarly and more popular outlets including *Harvard Educational Review*, *Urban Affairs Review*, *Social Science Quarterly*, *American Politics Quarterly*, *Teachers College Record*, *Educational Policy*, *Education Week*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, *Educational Leadership*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, and *National Review*. Hess currently serves on the review board for the Broad Prize in Urban Education, the board of directors of StandardsWork, the advisory board for the National Council on Teacher Quality, and the research advisory board for the National Center on Educational Accountability. He is a former high school social studies teacher, a former professor of education and government at the University of Virginia, and has taught as a visiting scholar at Georgetown University, Harvard University, and the University of Pennsylvania. Hess holds his M.Ed. in teaching and curriculum and his M.A. and Ph.D. in government from Harvard University.



John Lock
President and Chief Executive Officer, Charter School Growth Fund

John Lock is President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Charter School Growth Fund (the Fund). He is a successful hands-on private equity investor, operational manager, business advisor, and investment banker. Throughout his career, Lock has focused on helping people and organizations realize their potential. He has extensive experience managing early-stage companies and has served as CEO, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operating Officer, and board member of companies that range from technology to insurance to financial management. In these various roles, Lock has led companies through startup, expansion, turnaround, merger, acquisition, strategic re-alignment and streamlining towards greater efficiencies. Just prior to joining the Fund, Lock served as Executive Director and teacher at a charter high school located in Lawndale, an underserved community located in the Los Angeles area. Lock is a graduate of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington, DC.



Doug Mesecar
Assistant Deputy Secretary, Office of Innovation and Improvement

Secretary Margaret Spellings named Doug Mesecar Assistant Deputy Secretary for innovation and improvement in March 2008. In his post, he leads the Department's efforts to support innovations in education and make strategic investments in promising education practices, most importantly implementing the public school choice and supplemental educational services provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). He oversees the administration of 28 grant programs related to education improvement, school choice, teacher quality, technology, and arts in education. His office also disseminates information from NCLB about parental options and rights. Finally, he oversees the Office of Non-Public Education—the Department's liaison to the nonpublic education community.

Prior to his current appointment, Mesecar served as the Acting Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation and Policy development. As Assistant Secretary, he oversaw the Department's efforts in planning, evaluation, policy development and budget activities. Born and raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Mesecar earned his bachelor's degree in political science Phi Beta Kappa from Hope College in nearby Holland, Michigan, where he also played 4 years on the college's Division III basketball team. After graduating from college in 1993 and working for a year in the private sector, Mesecar moved to Washington, DC, to work as an entry-level staffer on Capitol Hill, where he received his first up-close exposure to federal education policy. In 1996, he pursued graduate studies in education at the University of Denver, where he also earned a teaching certificate, and then taught fifth grade at Witt Elementary School in the Jefferson County, Colorado, School District. After gaining experience as a teacher, Mesecar returned to Washington, DC, to work on federal education policy for a member of Congress in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 2001, he moved to the professional staff of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce to work for Chairman John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) as the panel wrote the NCLB and the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. Mesecar joined the Department as the chief of staff in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) in 2003, helping to implement NCLB.

From 2004 to 2005, he was Deputy Chief of Staff in the Office of the Secretary, after which he joined the New York-based Edison Schools Inc., where he worked until being asked to return to the Department in 2007. Mesecar, his wife, Shannon, and their two children, Rohwan and Ellarie, live in Lovettsville, Virginia.



Ted Mitchell
Chief Executive Officer, NewSchools Venture Fund

Ted Mitchell is the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the NewSchools Venture Fund (NewSchools), a venture philanthropy organization committed to improving public education, particularly for those who have traditionally been underserved. Mitchell assumed the role of CEO of NewSchools in the fall of 2005 after having served on the NewSchools Board of Directors for 7 years. Prior to joining NewSchools, Mitchell served as the 12th president of Occidental College in Los Angeles. His tenure at Occidental was marked by a dramatic improvement in both the College's national reputation and its engagement in the community, as well as by unprecedented financial growth. A former deputy to the president at Stanford University and Vice Chancellor at University of California, Los Angeles, Mitchell is a national leader in the effort to provide high-quality education for all students and has long been active in California and Los Angeles educational reform initiatives. He currently chairs the Governor's Committee on Educational Excellence, charged with making recommendations to improve California's system of K-12 finance and governance, and is president of the California State Board of Education. Ted graduated from Stanford with two B.S. degrees in economics and history, and also earned a M.A. in history and a M.Ed. in education there.



Paul G. Pastorek
Superintendent, Louisiana State Department of Education

Superintendent Pastorek served on the State Board of Education from 1996-2004, including the last 3 years as President of the Board. On his departure from the Board, Louisiana was noted as having the best rated statewide accountability program in the United States. He was responsible for developing the strategic approach for state contribution to 66 local school districts' budgets during the 8 years he was in office. Pastorek has been working to improve public education for the last 20 years. At first, he was a passionate volunteer in a New Orleans public junior high school. He was appalled at some of the things he saw in that inner city school and began to read literature and worked with the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce

to improve the education of children in New Orleans. His work came to the attention of Governor Mike Foster who appointed him to serve on the State Board of Education. After stepping down from the Board in 2004, Pastorek formed a nonprofit foundation called Next Horizon to create a statewide think tank that has worked to support the state Department of Education in developing strategies to take Louisiana to the next level of success beyond accountability.

He is an attorney and was licensed by Louisiana to practice in 1979. He has been associated with Adams and Reese for more than 27 years, first as a litigator, and later a corporate and transactional attorney. Pastorek has served the firm in numerous management capacities. During his tenure with the firm it grew to more than 300 attorneys with offices throughout southeastern United States and Washington, DC. In February 2002, Pastorek left Adams and Reese after being appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as General Counsel to NASA. He served as both the chief legal official for the agency and as a trusted advisor to fellow Louisianan and then NASA administrator, (now LSU Chancellor), Sean O’Keefe. In addition, he served on and led several senior management and leadership committees, including leading the team that developed NASA’s “transformational” reorganization plan announced in June 2004. For his service at NASA, Pastorek received NASA’s Exceptional Achievement Medal and Distinguished Service Medal. After 2 years of service, Pastorek left NASA to return to Adams and Reese. Pastorek is a volunteer in his community, has served on several boards, participated in many business groups, and is the recipient of numerous awards and medals from various organizations and groups.



Gerard Robinson
President, Black Alliance for Educational Options

Gerard Robinson is the President of the Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO), a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose mission is to actively support parental choice to empower families and to increase quality educational options for Black children. Prior to his position at BAEO, Robinson served as a senior research associate for the School Choice Demonstration Project at the University of Arkansas from 2006 to 2007 and as a senior fellow at the Institute for the Transformation of Learning at Marquette University from 2004 to 2006. As a senior fellow, he assisted in reform efforts related to Milwaukee’s private and public school choice programs, worked with the Marquette University Chapter BAEO-College Summit Partnership to help urban high school students’ transition to college, and provided testimony before the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly Joint Public Hearing on “Closing the Achievement Gap.” Robinson also led a team that helped create the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded Quest nonprofit organization, and participated as a member of the Wisconsin team that worked with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers on a U.S. Department of Education-funded project. This collaboration resulted in the publication of *Quality Charter School Authorizing in Wisconsin: Authorizer & Charter School Accountability Under No Child Left Behind* (April 2006).

Robinson’s professional endeavors have included numerous initiatives involving urban school reform and policy development. As Executive Director of a nonprofit organization in New York City, he opened a charter school in New Jersey. He also participated in the crafting of public policy through his fellowship with the California State Senate, as a resource person in the Virginia General Assembly and the U.S. House of Representatives, and as a legislative liaison for the superintendent of the District of Columbia Public Schools. He also was an elementary school teacher in Los Angeles and a teacher in the Pre-College Academic Program at St. Peter’s College in Jersey City, New Jersey.

Robinson received a M.Ed. degree from Harvard University, a B.A. from Howard University, and an A.A. from El Camino Community College. He is completing a Ph.D. at the University of Virginia. Robinson’s

scholarly interests include federal education policy, state and mayoral takeovers, civil rights, and K-12 after school activities.



Andrew J. Rotherham
Co-Director, Education Sector

Andrew J. Rotherham is Co-Founder and Co-Director of Education Sector, a national education policy think tank. He also writes the award-winning blog Eduwonk.com, which an Education Week study cited as among the most influential information sources in education today. In addition, Rotherham serves on the nine-member Virginia Board of Education, a position he was appointed to by Governor Mark Warner in 2005. Previously, he served at The White House as Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy during the Clinton administration. Rotherham is the author of more than 100 articles, book chapters, papers, and op-eds about education policy and politics and is the co-editor of three influential books on educational policy, most recently *Collective Bargaining in Education: Negotiating Change in Today's Schools* with Jane Hannaway (Harvard Education Press, 2006). He serves on advisory boards and committees for a variety of organizations including The Broad Foundation, Harvard University, the National Governors Association, and the National Charter School Research Project. Rotherham is also a trustee of the Cesar Chavez Public Charter High School for Public Policy and a member of the board of directors for the Indianapolis Mind Trust, and the National Council on Teacher Quality.

Stefanie Sanford
Deputy Director, U.S. Program Advocacy, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Stefanie Sanford is the Deputy Director of U.S. Program Advocacy for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, leading the new team that develops public policy strategies for the Foundation's domestic programs. Prior to this appointment, she led the National Advocacy team for the Education Division. Before joining the foundation, Sanford served as Deputy Director of Policy for Texas Governor Rick Perry, where she managed policy development across all issue areas and advised the Governor on legislation related to technology topics in education, e-government, higher education, workforce development, biotechnology and rural broadband deployment. Prior to this appointment, Sanford served as Special Assistant for Technology for Lt. Governor Perry, directing operations of the Advisory Council on the Digital Economy, a special interim committee comprised of 21 CEOs of the top Texas high tech companies.

Early in her career, Sanford served as policy advisor and speechwriter to the Speaker of the Texas House and as Division Chief, speechwriter and legislative advisor to the former state Attorney General. After taking leave from the state to attend graduate school, she was selected to be a White House Fellow, one of the nation's most prestigious programs for young leaders, and served in the White House Office of Cabinet Affairs. Sanford holds a B.S. from Texas Christian University, an M.P.A. from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and a Ph.D. in political communication from the University of Texas.



Raymond Simon
Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Education

President George W. Bush nominated Raymond Simon to the position of U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education and the Senate confirmed him on May 26, 2005. As Deputy Secretary, Simon plays a pivotal role overseeing and managing the development of policies, recommendations, and initiatives that help define a broad, coherent vision for achieving the President's education priorities, especially the No Child Left Behind Act.

He also provides overall supervision and direction of program organizations of the Department. He had previously served as the Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education. Simon was the Chief State School Officer for Arkansas for 6 years—a position he held until his initial appointment by President Bush. He also served as superintendent of the Conway (Arkansas) School District from 1991 to 1997.

A native of Conway, Arkansas, Simon has been involved in Arkansas education since 1966, when he began his career as a mathematics teacher at North Little Rock High School. While at North Little Rock, he was also director of school food services and director of computer services until moving back to Conway to serve as assistant superintendent for finance. In addition, Simon has been an adjunct professor for both educational technology and school finance at the undergraduate and graduate levels. He received a B.S. and M.S. in mathematics from the University of Central Arkansas, and holds an educational specialist degree in school administration from the University of Arkansas.



Nelson Smith
President, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

Nelson Smith became the first president of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (the Alliance) in December 2004. The Alliance is a national nonprofit that works to increase the growth and quality of charter schools through advocacy, communications, and capacity-building initiatives. Previously, Smith served as Vice President for Policy and Governance at New American Schools; was the first Executive Director of the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board; and was Vice

President for Education and Workforce Development at the New York City Partnership. From 1985 to 1992, he oversaw numerous programs at the U.S. Department of Education devoted to improving education through research-based methods. He has written extensively on the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on the charter sector. For the Progressive Policy Institute, Smith authored studies of the charter school movements in California and Texas, and for the Education Commission of the States he wrote *The New Central Office*, an exploration of how central-office functions change as public school districts move toward charter-based systems. His articles about charter schooling and education policy have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Education Next* and other publications.

A 1972 graduate of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, Mr. Smith is a resident of the District of Columbia, where he is active in civic and arts organizations. He is a member of the Board of Trustees for the E. L. Haynes Public Charter School.



Margaret Spellings
Education Secretary, U.S. Department of Education

Margaret Spellings is the U.S. Secretary of Education. As the first mother of school-aged children to serve as Education Secretary, Spellings has a special appreciation for the hopes and concerns of American families.

Secretary Spellings is working to ensure that every young American has the knowledge and skills to succeed in the 21st century. She has partnered with states to implement and enforce the No Child Left Behind Act, which commits our schools to bringing all students up to grade level or better in reading and math by 2014. The law has led to rising test scores and shrinking achievement gaps in states across the country.

She has been a leader in reform to make education more innovative and responsive. She supported teachers with new financial incentives for gains in student achievement and parents with new educational choices and options. She announced new rules to ensure that students with disabilities and English language learners are educated to the highest standards. She also proposed a landmark Plan for Higher Education that would improve accessibility, affordability and accountability.

Secretary Spellings believes we must not retreat from the world in the face of increased competition. She is leading the effort to pass President George W. Bush's American Competitiveness Initiative, which would strengthen math and science instruction and encourage high schools to offer more rigorous and advanced coursework. She worked to implement Academic Competitiveness and National Science & Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) grants, which are providing millions of dollars to low-income students who major in math, science, or critical foreign languages.

Prior to her tenure as Education Secretary, Spellings served as Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, where she helped create the No Child Left Behind Act and crafted policies on education, immigration, health care, labor, transportation, justice, housing, and other elements of the President's domestic agenda. Previously, Spellings worked for 6 years as Senior Advisor to Governor George W. Bush with responsibility for developing and implementing the Governor's education reforms and policies. From the White House and the State house to the school board and college campus, Spellings has been involved with education policy at every level.

Born in Michigan, Spellings moved with her family at a young age to Houston, Texas, where she attended public schools. She graduated from the University of Houston with a B.S. in political science.



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