



21 CSLA

40 LOS ANGELES
EDUCATION
PARTNERSHIP
ANNIVERSARY

MARCH 14-15, 2025
HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA

*Equity in Action:
Rising to the Moment*

ALIGNMENT - RESISTANCE - COMMUNITY

“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Welcome Leaders



Dawn Kurtz

CEO, Los Angeles Education Partnership

It is both an honor and a privilege to welcome you to this pivotal gathering of educational leaders, innovators, and changemakers. As we convene at the Equity in Action: Rising to the Moment conference, we are reminded of the immense responsibility we bear to ensure that education remains a force for good, a tool for empowerment, and a beacon of opportunity for every student, regardless of their background.

In these times of unprecedented challenges, we are called upon not only to reflect on the current state of our educational systems but also to actively shape the future. We must recognize that the work of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) is not a one-time effort but an ongoing commitment. It is a journey—one that demands continuous improvement, adaptation, and relentless determination. As leaders in this field, we must rise to the moment, embracing our duty to ensure that every student has access to the quality education they deserve.

At the heart of this mission is the understanding that equity is not a “nice-to-have” but a fundamental right for all students. It is essential that we build systems, practices, and policies that not only acknowledge but actively celebrate diversity and address inequities. Our work must be intentional, collaborative, and courageous, breaking down barriers that have long existed and dismantling systems of privilege that have kept too many students from realizing their full potential.

As educational leaders, our role in advancing this work cannot be overstated. We are the stewards of change, the architects of environments where every student feels seen, heard, and valued. Through continuous improvement, we refine our leadership, ensuring that our decisions are rooted in equity and lead to sustainable transformation. It is through our collective action—rooted in DEIB principles—that we can create classrooms, schools, and communities where all students can thrive.

This conference is more than a gathering; it is a call to action. It is an opportunity to strengthen our resolve, deepen our knowledge, and share our best practices with one another. It is a chance to remind ourselves that in the face of challenges, we have the power to create lasting change. The work of education is never done, but together, through our shared commitment to justice and the power of our community, we will rise to the moment and ensure that the future of education is one of inclusion, opportunity, and justice for all.

Thank you for being here, for your leadership, and for your dedication to this critical work. Let us move forward together, united in our mission to protect and transform education for the generations to come.

Welcome Leaders



John Resendez

*Director of CORE, LAEP
Regional Director, 21CSLA, SoCal Region*

Welcome back to those of you who have been in community with us before and a warm welcome to those of you who are new to this community. I hope that you will find the next two days to be a brave and empowering space full of opportunities to learn, connect, and plan your path of resistance on behalf of those you serve and the values of justice, strength, and togetherness. My name is John Reséndez and I have the honor of being both the Director of CORE (Cultivating Organizational Resilience and Empowerment) with the Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP) and the Regional Director of 21CSLA's SoCal Region.

We have come together this weekend during unprecedented times. Our cherished craft, our sacred service, our life's calling are under attack as are those for whom we care, love, nurture and support. This is the third conference that I have had the pleasure of hosting. In March of 2024 we had the Gathering of Giants where we began to incubate this cherished community. In November of last year, we met at Equity Camp where we began to cultivate the collective equity story of our region. Now, we are here at Equity in Action, with our sleeves rolled up and our eyes firmly fixed on the road of justice as we work to reimagine our work in the face of those who would tell us its time has passed.

I offer you the following framework for our time together and beyond: Alignment ~ Resistance ~ Community. If we can align on common values, language, and objectives, determine what the work of resistance looks like for ourselves and those we serve, and continue to grow this community so that we can turn to one another for comfort, partnership, and action, then we will have spent our time here well. My hope is that every leader leaves here this weekend with an actual plan of action that you can take and immediately implement in your schools, districts, and communities.

Now is the time for us to marshal our resolve, foster our relationships, and lead from a place of power. For despite the rhetoric and the vitriol that continues to come our way, we know that in justice we find strength and in community we find hope. Of this I am certain, now more than ever.

**We Stand on Justice
We Stand with Strength
We Stand Together**

Thank you for being here as your best and most authentic selves. Thank you for answering this call and doing so with heart and integrity, even and especially when things are most difficult. Thank you for Rising to the Moment, I am glad you are here and can't wait to see your impact.

As always,
John Reséndez



Who We Are



The 21st Century School Leadership Academy (21CSLA) is a statewide initiative dedicated to developing equity-centered educational leaders who are equipped to create inclusive, supportive environments for all students. Through comprehensive professional development, coaching, and resources, 21CSLA empowers school and district leaders to champion equity-driven practices and culturally responsive leadership.

As the designated Regional Academy for Southern California, the Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP) leads 21CSLA's work across five counties: San Diego, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Imperial. LAEP, a nonprofit dedicated to educational equity and community well-being, collaborates closely with 21CSLA to provide tailored support that addresses the unique needs of diverse communities.

Together, they deliver leadership development that promotes trauma-informed, inclusive practices, ensuring that educational leaders across Southern California have the tools to foster thriving, equitable learning environments

21CSLA

EQUITY PASSPORT

As you journey through the conference, make sure to stamp your passport with each meaningful experience. From engaging in multi-voice workshops to building connections with fellow educational leaders, every moment is an opportunity to grow and reflect. Don't forget to visit the Liberation Library, share your insights with the evaluation team, and work on your personal action plan. By the end of the conference, you'll have a collection of stamps that represent your learning, wellness, and commitment to equity. Ready to explore? Collect your stickers!

I identified a problem of practice I am exploring at this conference.



I ATTENDED A MULTI-VOICE WORKSHOP (1!)



I ATTENDED A MULTI-VOICE WORKSHOP (2!)



I ENJOYED COAX MARIE'S MUSIC.



I DID SOMETHING FOR MY OWN WELLNESS DURING THIS CONFERENCE.



I MET ANOTHER EDUCATIONAL LEADER FOR EQUITY I WILL STAY IN CONTACT WITH!



I GOT A BOOK FROM THE LIBERATION LIBRARY!



I PICKED UP A PHONE FROM THE EVALUATION TEAM AND SHARED SOMETHING I LEARNED!



I WORKED ON AN ACTION PLAN I WILL CARRY WITH ME AS I LEAVE THIS CONFERENCE!



VISIT OUR LIBERATION LIBRARY

The Liberation Library is Located in the Pacific Ballroom

We invite you to explore our collection of books. The only requirement for a book to be in our collection is that the text has shifted someone's consciousness as we dream up and build a future that works better for all people. The collection has non-fiction books, fiction books, and even children's books for you to explore!



Equity In Action: Ways of Being

PRESENCE: Be here, be now, to the best of your ability.

COMPASSION: Remember everyone is human, including you.

CURIOSITY: Be curious. You can always add to your story or discover more of someone else's.

GROWTH: Recognize that growing can be uncomfortable but it is not dangerous! Failing and stumbling is part of learning. Embrace non-closure can be edited to “Embrace non-closure because there is more room to grow

WHAT'S SHARED HERE STAYS HERE, WHAT'S LEARNED HERE

LEAVES HERE: We are gathered here sharing with one another!

Some of what we are sharing is personal and vulnerable. Please leave the details but take the lessons with you home!

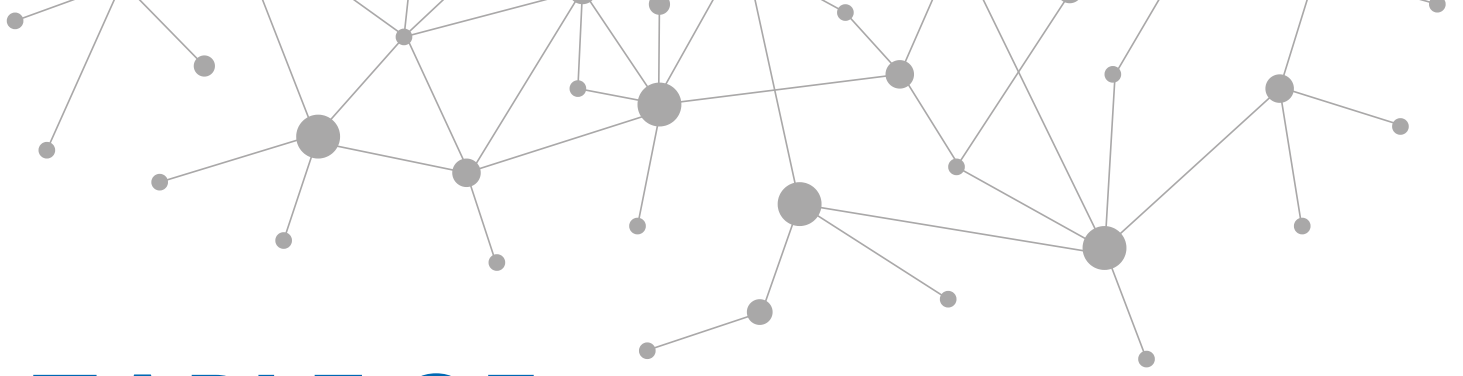


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FRIDAY AGENDA

Friday night kicks off with our welcome event!

Registration starts at 4pm, followed by a casual dinner and plenty of opportunities to get connected with other leaders and align on the work for Saturday.

4pm	Arrival & Check in to Hotel (<i>The Waterfront</i>) Check into Equity in Action (<i>Breakwater Pre-Function</i>)
4:30-5:30pm	Affinity Space Offerings: Meet in Breakwater Ballroom <ul style="list-style-type: none">Responsibly Engaging Equity Work as White People with Elizabeth Claes (open to all White Educational Leaders) (Meet in Breakwater Ballroom and move to Cliffs A)BIPOC Educational Leaders Healing Space & Mixed Roots Affinity Space Info-Session with Anthony Jackson & Dhalia Balmir (Breakwater Ballroom)
6-6:45pm	Dinner Stations Open (<i>Breakwater Terrace</i>) Dinner in Community (<i>Breakwater Ballroom</i>)
6:45-7pm	Los Angeles Education Partnership & 21CSLA Welcome with Dawn Kurtz & John Resendez (<i>Breakwater Ballroom</i>)
7-7:15pm	What We're Carrying + Setting Intentions with Jose Luis Navarro (<i>Breakwater Ballroom</i>)
7:15-8pm	We Are the Collective: An Activist Panel, Part 1 facilitated by Dr. Mark Kabban (<i>Breakwater Ballroom</i>)
8-8:30pm	Empowered Beyond Boundaries: Activating, Aligning, and Embodying the Equity Leader Within You with Coax Marie (<i>Breakwater Ballroom</i>)
8:30-10pm	Optional Offerings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Solidarity Firepits</u>: Join Affinity Leads Dhalia Balmir, Anthony Jackson, and Elizabeth Claes in a casual mix and mingle. Join other educational leaders in a ritual as old as time itself—connecting around a fire. Desserts will be provided as well as an ocean breeze! Bring your jacket. (<i>Driftwood Beach Club</i>)<u>Continue the Convo</u>: Feel like an extra drink or snack? The Cabo Wabo Bar is open for you to continue conversations with other educational leaders for equity across our region! (<i>Whitewater Courtyard</i>)

SATURDAY AGENDA

6:30-7:30am	Freedom Dreaming Breathwork with Carolene Joy (Dress cozy and warm. Option to bring pillow, blanket, yoga mat, eye mask) (Huntington Ballroom A)
6:30-8am	Breakfast Buffet Open (Breakwater Pre-Function) Breakfast in Community (Breakwater Ballroom)
8-9am	Land Acknowledgement (Breakwater Ballroom) We Are the Collective: A Community Voices Panel, Part 2 facilitated by Dr. Mark Kabban (Breakwater Ballroom)
9-9:15am	Transition
9:15-10:45am	Multi-Voice Workshops, Round 1 Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Moments in Action: Protecting Neurodiverse Students & All Students from Discriminatory Disciplinary Action with Dr. H Orletta Nguyen (Whitewater Ballroom C) • Steadfast Leadership from the Inside Out: Uncovering Our Hidden Resistance to Collective Change with Dr. Mark Kabban (Whitewater Ballroom B) • The Culture Connection: Rethinking Student Behavior and Attendance through a Culturally Responsive Lens with Dr. Ingrid Twyman (Huntington Ballroom D) • Loco Parentis: Serving, Supporting & Standing with Our Undocumented Students with Jose Luis Navarro (Huntington Ballroom C) • Beyond School Walls: Engaging with Community to Move Toward Equity with Dhalia Balmir (Huntington Ballroom B) • Commonalities & Differences: A Bullying Prevention Module About Celebrating and Embracing Differences with Mick Rabin & cofacilitated by middle school Ally Action student leaders (Cliffs A) • Reimagining Schools as Communities of Care with Dr. Rania Saeb (Whitewater Ballroom A) • LGBTQ plus Race, Ethnicity, Culture, Class: An Intersectional Conversation with Dr. Lan Nguyen (Breakwater Ballroom)
10:45-11am	Transition Snack is Served (Breakwater Pre-Function)
11-12:30pm	Multi-Voice Workshops, Round 2 (Same options and locations as Round 1)
12:30-12:45pm	Transition
12:45-1:15pm	Role-Alike Mixer & Reflective Evaluations
1:15-2pm	Lunch Buffet Opens (Breakwater Pre-Function) Lunch in Community (Breakwater Ballroom)
2-2:30pm	Rising to the Moment (Breakwater Ballroom)
2:30-3:30pm	Action Planning Worktime Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Silent Workspace</u>: For the introverts who need silence to focus, join our silent space for work time in the Liberation Library (Pacific Ballroom) • <u>Continue the Conversation</u>: Connect with, ask questions to, and build solidarity with the multi-voice facilitators, panelists, or other leaders, continuing the conversations we started this morning and moving into action (Breakwater Ballroom) • <u>Team Time</u>: Here as a team and want space to process and share what you've learned and what you want to take with you back to your site? Gather your team and head to a space where you can sit together, process, reflect, and plan action (Whitewater Ballroom) • <u>The Walk & Talk</u>: Sometimes, it just takes the right conversation to clarify what the next right steps will be. Find an educational leader for equity from another site and unpack your learning and translate it into plans for action. (Start at Breakwater Terrace & Vista Lawns)
3:30-4pm	Share Your Thinking! (Breakwater Ballroom)
4-4:30pm	Part 2: The Influencer Shift: Affirming Your Full Leadership Identity with Coax Marie (Breakwater Ballroom)



Multi-Voice Workshops

Critical Moments in Action: Protecting Neurodiverse Students & All Students from Discriminatory Disciplinary Action with Dr. H Orletta Nguyen

Participants will recognize and understand that IDEA & Education Code, specifically statutes related to discipline, are intended to protect students from unjust, unlawful, and discriminatory disciplinary practices. Participants will gain understanding of the statutes, receive models of how to enact protections in practice, and discuss challenging situations when met with resistance implementing nondiscriminatory practices.

Steadfast Leadership from the Inside Out: Uncovering Our Hidden Resistance to Collective Change with Dr. Mark Kabban

Our workshop will be dialogical, experiential, and constructivist, rooted in storytelling and meaning-making. The workshop will begin with a conversation about the panelists' work experiences, drawing explicit connections to traditions of truth-telling and courage. Participants will then participate in an interactive experience using the Immunity to Change (ITC) process that helps to guide participants in diagnosing their own goals for deepening courageous leadership while identifying the self-protective and competing commitments that may be pulling them in the opposite direction. A learning process informed by adult development research, Immunity to Change approach offers an actionable framework for aligning your cognitive and affective systems, ensuring they move in the same direction to make progress on what matters most to you. In addition, this process helps uncover critical information hidden within your emotional network—often referred to as the "second brain"—bringing it into awareness so you can actively examine past behaviors and the life experiences that have shaped your accepted truths about yourself and the world.

The Culture Connection: Rethinking Student Behavior and Attendance through a Culturally Responsive Lens with Dr. Ingrid Twyman

What if we could transform student behavior and attendance challenges into opportunities for connection and growth? In this highly interactive session, we'll go beyond the surface to explore Community Cultural Wealth and the Cultural Iceberg, uncovering the hidden strengths that students and families bring to the table. Through real-world scenarios, collaborative problem solving, and hands-on tools, you'll engage with experts in the field and leave with practical strategies to foster culturally authentic partnerships that drive positive change. By shifting to a culturally responsive lens and focusing on assets, we can create innovative, student-centered solutions that lead to real impact.

Multi-Voice Workshops

Loco Parentis: Serving, Supporting & Standing with Our Undocumented Students with Jose Luis Navarro

"Give me a place to stand and I will move the world." -Archimedes. In this workshop, we will explore the work of serving, supporting and standing with our undocumented students with community members who understand this topic deeply. Using personal stories, counter narratives, group discussions, and shared meaning making, we hope to build the capacity of Southern California educators to stand strongly with all of our students.

Beyond School Walls: Engaging with Community to Move Toward Equity with Dhalia Balmir

In today's challenging climate—where social justice programs face increasing political pushback and public education is under threat—families and communities are powerful forces for equity in schools. This fireside chat will explore how schools, families, and community organizations can work together to break down barriers, amplify marginalized voices, and drive real change. Join us for an open, living-room style conversation where panelists will share practical strategies, and actionable steps to mobilize collective action. You'll leave with opportunities to self-reflect on your positioning, suggestions for navigating school systems, advocate for equity, and build partnerships that make a difference—both inside and beyond school walls.

Commonalities & Differences: A Bullying Prevention Module About Celebrating and Embracing Differences cofacilitated by Mick Rabin and middle school Ally Action student leaders

This workshop will be co-facilitated by Ally Action student leaders who are specialists in presenting this module to their peers. Workshop participants will walk away with a fully workable self-contained lesson module that can be integrated into classroom/student group presentation schedules immediately. Commonalities and Differences is an "all-purpose" lesson designed to help students explore and affirm the many layers of our human identity and experience. It creates a highly accessible and referential schematic that counselors and educators can use to prompt students to recognize their own biases and to be self-aware of [and in turn--to check] our innate tendencies to detect differences in the layers of our human experiences that we all share. Educators will be able to facilitate this C&D lesson in a proactive way that complements or supplements existing SEL lessons. C&D also has practical applications for "teachable moments" when addressing: student name-calling , racial slurs , ableism (i.e. r-slur) , trans/homophobic rhetoric , body shaming , student requests to "come out" to their class in a way that feels organic and NOT contrived "othering" for _____ reason (fill in the blank) ,divisive language based on identity.

It is no secret that some of these topics involve layers of stigma for students and even for educators who try to constructively and respectfully address them. In practice, these topics are the ones that are most commonly avoided. . adding further to the stigma. This workshop lays the groundwork for committed emancipatory educators to frame and tackle these topics with confidence and effectively mitigate potential resistance from those who attempt to enable the status quo by rejecting inclusive practices.

Multi-Voice Workshops

Reimagining Schools as Communities of Care with Dr. Rania Saeb

In this highly interactive workshop, participants will explore strategies for designing school environments that prioritize inclusion, connection, and collective responsibility from the start. We will identify practices and structures that nurture and reinforce a culture of care, ensuring ongoing support for students and educators. We will also discuss how schools can respond to breaches in trust, exclusion, or harm with restorative approaches that rebuild relationships and community. Finally, participants will take what they've learned and commit to tangible next steps in their own schools and communities, ensuring that care and belonging are not just ideas, but daily practices.

LGBTQ plus Race, Ethnicity, Culture, Class: An Intersectional Conversation with Dr. Lan Nguyen

Join us for an engaging and dynamic panel discussion with a twist, designed to foster an open exchange of ideas and experiences. Join us as panelists contribute their unique experiences, wisdom, and expertise, sharing insights that resonate authentically with the topic at hand. By the end of the session, we intend for participants to recognize that issues impacting LGBTQ+ students and youth are relevant to everyone, gain fresh perspectives on the daily lived experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals that can enrich their professional practices, learn new concepts and ideas that inform their work, and appreciate LGBTQ+ youth and individuals as whole people, beyond the confines of identity-based challenges and traumas.



Biography

Dr. H. "Orletta" Nguyen, Ed.D. has been an educator since 1997. Dr. Nguyen has been a teacher, school psychologist, and administrator for students ranging from a variety of backgrounds and skill levels; her students have been drawn from special education, English Language Development, and Gifted and Talented Education in the pre-k to post-secondary levels.

She currently serves as the Senior Director of the San Dieguito Union High School District. Her mission as a lifelong learner and educator, are to foster self-actualization, a growth mindset, and activism in herself and others. Dr. Nguyen's passions and pursuits are addressing the individual needs of students, equity, and quality instructional practices.



Dr. H. "Orletta" Nguyen, Ed.D.

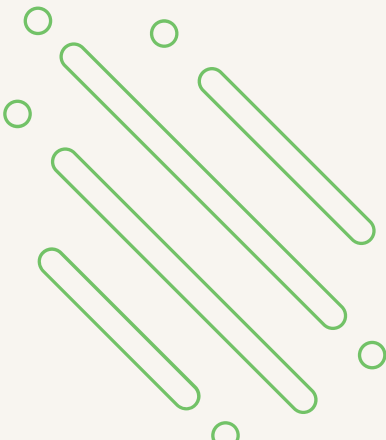
Facilitator

**CRITICAL MOMENTS IN ACTION:
PROTECTING NEURODIVERSE STUDENTS &
ALL STUDENTS FROM DISCRIMINATORY
DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:

- 1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM**
- 2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

LOCATION: WHITEWATER BALLROOM C



Biography

Amanda D'Amico advises clients in all aspects of special education law and disciplinary proceedings under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, including compliance, resolution sessions, mediation, due process hearings, special education appeals and defense of school districts in federal and state civil litigation. Amanda enjoys the constantly evolving nature of the special education arena and prioritizes staying updated on new developments and regulations that could affect her clients. She also appreciates the opportunity to potentially shape law through advocating in cases that move through influential jurisdictions, that frequently hand down decisions that entail wide-ranging impacts on school organizations throughout California and beyond.

Amanda's personable nature and strong communication skills enable her to build long-lasting professional relationships, which she nurtures in day-to-day counseling sessions. She also brings compassion and sensitivity to help clients navigate delicate and often emotional legal issues involving children and teens. A vigorous advocate for the public agencies she represents, Amanda works to craft budget-friendly outcomes that further school districts' best interests. No matter what issue she takes on, Amanda always looks beyond the matter at hand for any systemic issues that should be addressed to avoid problems down the road. She enjoys sharing knowledge with clients so they can improve their processes and frequently conducts training sessions for school districts throughout California.

Previously, Amanda represented municipalities and school districts in employment discrimination and civil rights litigation, including disability and race discrimination, harassment, wage and hour, wrongful termination and excessive force cases.

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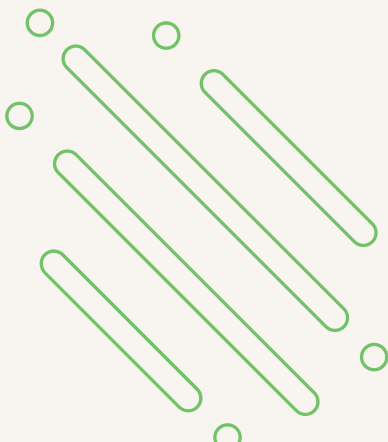
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Amanda D'Amico

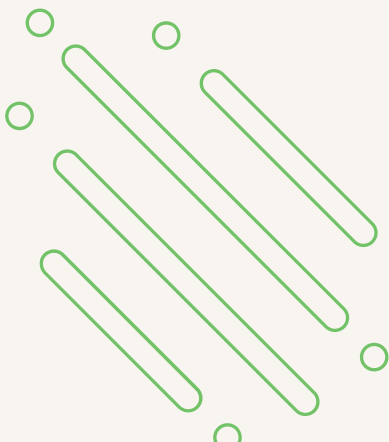
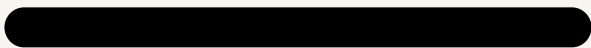
Panelist





Patrick Newton

Panelist



Biography

Patrick Newton's work is grounded in his experience as an educator, advocate and administrator in K-12 and residential settings for nearly 20 years.

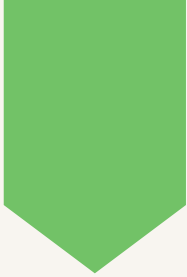
His doctoral work focused on the school conditions that contribute to school administrators' use of exclusionary discipline. His continued work is focused on creating a more adaptable and trauma informed school support framework and the dismantling of the school to prison pipeline.

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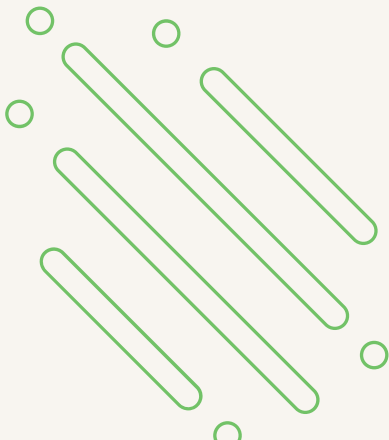
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Oscar Grajeda
Panelist



Biography

Mr. Grajeda is a dedicated bilingual school psychologist with the San Diego Unified School District, serving elementary and middle school students. As a Licensed Educational Psychologist (LEP) and adjunct faculty member at San Diego State University, Mr. Grajeda is passionate about supporting students, families, and educators through consultation, collaboration, and evidence-based interventions. With extensive experience, Mr. Grajeda works to identify students' strengths and challenges to inform targeted interventions and services that promote academic, social-emotional, and behavioral success.

Committed to capacity building within school communities, Mr. Grajeda actively engages in leadership roles, offering professional development and consultation to school staff and parents. By fostering strong home-school collaboration, Mr. Grajeda ensures that interventions extend beyond the classroom, empowering families with practical strategies to support their children's development.

At the core of Mr. Grajeda's work is a commitment to fostering inclusive and supportive educational environments. He believes that when educators, families, and communities work together, students can reach their full potential and experience lasting success.

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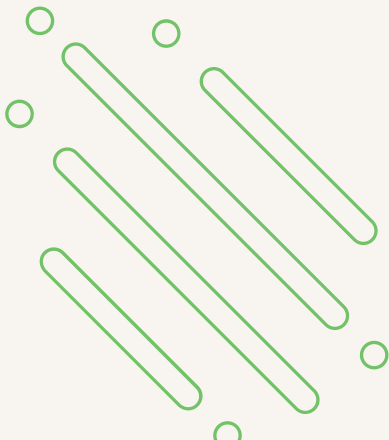
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Dr. Hinda Nadif

Panelist



Biography

Dr. Nadif is a dedicated educator with over 22 years of experience in special education. Holding master's degrees in Special Education and Administrative Leadership and a doctorate in Transformational and Organizational Leadership, Dr. Nadif has served as a Special Education Teacher, Assistive Technology Specialist, School Administrator, and District Administrator.

Currently, Dr. Nadif is part of the High-Quality IEP statewide grant, working to ensure that students with disabilities receive meaningful and effective educational plans. With a background spanning North Africa and the Netherlands and the experience of being a child of immigrant parents, Dr. Nadif brings a unique perspective to advocating for inclusive and accessible education for diverse families.

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Biography

Seth A. Schwartz is Senior Counsel at Orbach Huff & Henderson based out of our San Diego office. His practice area is focused on special education, civil rights, student services, litigation, and appeals. With more than 13 years of experience in special education litigation and law firm management, he brings a solution-oriented approach to practice and places a high value on finding ways to support his clients so they can focus on the important work of educating students.

Seth has extensive experience litigating complex special education matters through the administrative process and appeal, having handled or overseen hundreds of individual cases over the years. Seth has a particular interest in helping school districts navigate their legal obligations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and related Federal and State laws. Growing up with a sister with moderate to severe autism, he understands some of the unique challenges facing families with children with special needs in education and life.

In his personal life, he is a father to two wonderful kids, a son and daughter, husband, musician, and entrepreneur at heart. Seth's favorite podcasts are Freakonomics and The Knowledge Project

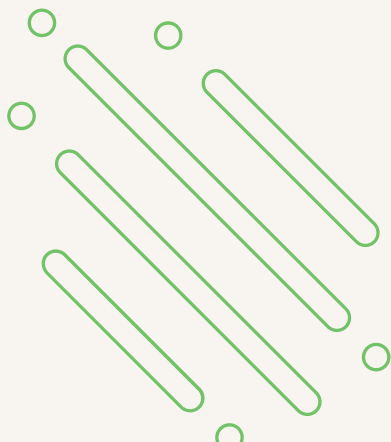


Seth A. Schwartz
Panelist

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Biography

Dr. Mark N. Kabban is the CEO of Examined Leadership Collective, an international practice that integrates decolonized leadership frameworks, Indigenous knowledge systems, and applied psychology to help educators and cross-sector leaders cultivate the steadfastness, creativity, and critical consciousness needed to build and lead healthy, innovative, and developmental organizations.

As executive director of Yalla SD for nearly a decade, he led a K-12 deeper learning academy and competitive soccer club dedicated to refugee and immigrant youth in the U.S. He also served on the faculty at the High Tech High Graduate School of Education, directing the Education Leadership Master's program. Currently, he is a professor at the American College of the Mediterranean. Dr. Kabban holds a master's degree in technology and innovation and a doctorate in educational leadership and behavioral psychology from Harvard.



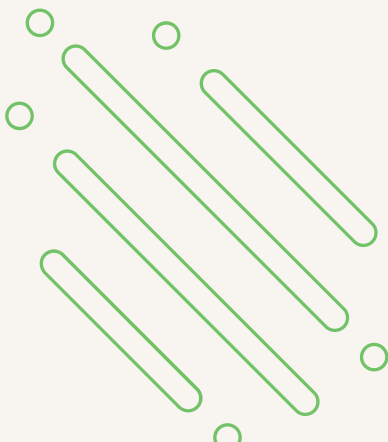
Dr. Mark N. Kabban

Facilitator

**STEADFAST LEADERSHIP FROM THE INSIDE
OUT: UNCOVERING OUR HIDDEN
RESISTANCE TO COLLECTIVE CHANGE
WITH DR. MARK KABBAN**

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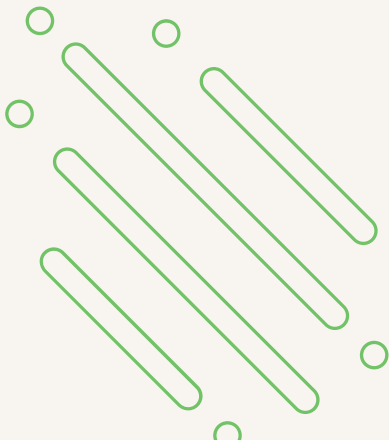
LOCATION: WHITEWATER BALLROOM B





Ami Admire

Panelist



Biography

Ami Admire is Payómkawichum from the Rincon Indian Reservation located within the boundaries of San Diego County. She is Director of 'ataaxum Pomkwaan, For the People, a youth and family serving organization whose mission is to provide community resources centered around healing and improved mental health for the continued survival of Native and Indigenous peoples.

She is blessed to work with awesome human beings who have a shared vision for an equitable future for all and is a 2019 National Indian Health Board Impact Award recipient for making a difference in our community

**STEADFAST LEADERSHIP FROM THE INSIDE
OUT: UNCOVERING OUR HIDDEN
RESISTANCE TO COLLECTIVE CHANGE
WITH DR. MARK KABBAN**

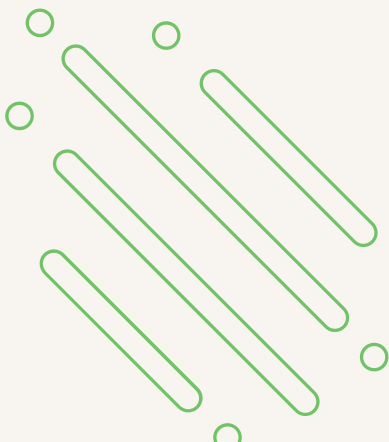
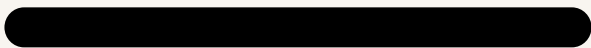
**TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

LOCATION: WHITEWATER BALLROOM B



Ratha Kelly

Panelist



Biography

Ratha Kelly is a mother, friend, and colleague who is fiercely dedicated to antiracism and liberation for all. She has classroom experience in elementary grades, has taught courses to pre-service teachers and has been a coach to many teachers new to the teaching career.

Most recently, her experience as an Asian educator navigating a predominantly white space led her to center her Master's Thesis on the Recruitment and Retention of BIPOC educators. She currently works at the Central Office in San Diego Unified School District on the Ethnic Studies for All, TK-12 initiative, as well as the Ethnic Studies Graduation Requirement.

**STEADFAST LEADERSHIP FROM THE INSIDE
OUT: UNCOVERING OUR HIDDEN
RESISTANCE TO COLLECTIVE CHANGE
WITH DR. MARK KABBAN**

**TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

LOCATION: WHITEWATER BALLROOM B

Biography

Samia Shoman is a first-generation Californian with Palestinian heritage, has dedicated over 25 years to advancing racial and social justice in education. Throughout her career in the San Francisco Bay Area, she has worked tirelessly to create inclusive, equitable learning environments for students. After 16 years as a social science teacher, Samia transitioned into administration, where she currently leads an alternative high school focused on supporting multilingual learners. Her leadership extends to the field of Ethnic Studies, where she has collaborated with educators across California to design and implement authentic Ethnic Studies frameworks.

In addition to her work in secondary education, Samia has contributed to higher education as a lecturer in the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diaspora Program at San Francisco State University's College of Ethnic Studies. She has also worked with educators and leaders nationwide, developing curriculum and publishing articles focused on teaching about Palestine.

As co-coordinator of the Middle East Children's Alliance's Teach Palestine project, Samia continues to advocate for transformative, culturally relevant education both in the classroom and beyond. Samia holds a B.A in Political Science with a minor in Spanish from the University of California, Davis, a Master's in Education from San Francisco State University, and an Ed.D in Education, Organization, and Leadership from the University of San Francisco.

**STEADFAST LEADERSHIP FROM THE INSIDE
OUT: UNCOVERING OUR HIDDEN
RESISTANCE TO COLLECTIVE CHANGE
WITH DR. MARK KABBAN**

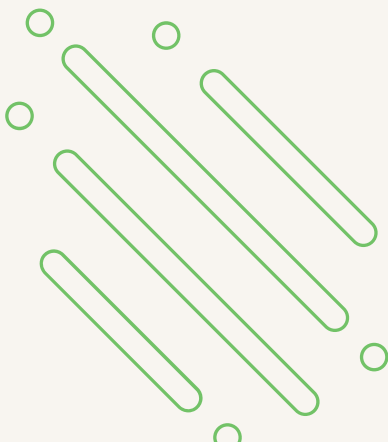
**TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

LOCATION: WHITEWATER BALLROOM B



Samia Shoman

Panelist



Biography

I am a passionate culturally responsive educator who, at the age of 10, recognized inequities in our public school system when I visited a friend's school in downtown Seattle and saw how it differed from my own elementary school in the suburbs. I knew something was wrong and I was set on a path where I would begin to question the world, and all its injustices, in a new way. As a white, middle-class, straight, Christian woman I recognize that I have certain beliefs and biases that I must interrogate as I continue to deepen my understanding and enactment of asset-based pedagogies including culturally relevant, culturally responsive, and culturally sustaining.

For over 25 years, I have worked side-by-side with students, teachers, and families in communities that have been historically marginalized in the various roles of teacher, coach, principal, residency director, professor, consultant, advocate, colleague, and friend. I am committed to my never-ending journey to cultural responsiveness with the mantra of "seek to understand" and I am blessed to have an army of peers, mentors, and change agents to push my thinking and support me in the fight for equity for all children in our schools.

Dr. Ingrid Twyman has spent over 20 years working closely with Latinx communities in Los Angeles. She co-founded the PUC Teacher Residency Program to increase teachers of color, placing over 80 Latinx educators in their childhood schools. As CEO of ElevatED Pedagogy, she builds educator capacity in equity, culturally responsive pedagogy, multilingual education, and SEL. An adjunct professor and co-author of *Amplify Learner Voice* (2023), she empowers schools to advance cultural responsiveness, embracing the African Proverb: "Start where you are, but don't stay there."

**RETHINKING STUDENT BEHAVIOR
AND ATTENDANCE THROUGH A
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LENS WITH
DR. INGRID TWYMAN**

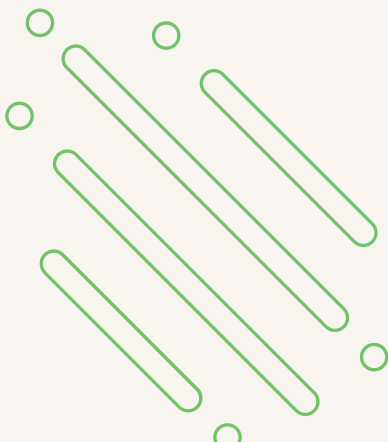
**TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO
PARTICIPATE:
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

**LOCATION: HUNTINGTON BALLROOM
D**



Dr. Ingrid Twyman, PMP

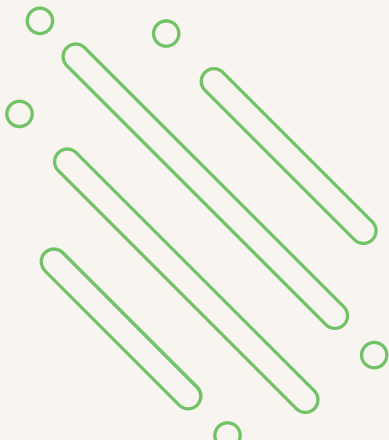
Facilitator





Justin H. Dove

Panelist



Biography

Justin H. Dove is a proud product of public schools in Cleveland Heights and Twinsburg, Ohio. Highly influenced by his mother's career as a speech-language pathologist, helping professions first appealed to him at a young age. During graduate school, Justin studied under the tutelage of Dr. Antoinette Miranda, a renowned figure who emphasized the importance of centering the needs of those marginalized by society. His professional journey has allowed him to serve Ohio, Georgia, and California students for over fourteen years. The 2024/25 school year is Justin's fourth year at Mirman School, an independent K-8 institution devoted to educating intellectually gifted children in Los Angeles.

This opportunity represents a full-circle moment, as he benefited from gifted and talented programming during his formative years. Sharing his growing insight and expertise with others is always an honor. Justin has recently delivered presentations for the Gifted Association of Missouri's Speaker Series, Sierra Canyon's Parents of Black Students (PBS) affinity group, Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG), the Black School Psychologists Network (BSPN), the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), and SPG Therapy & Education. Personally and professionally, Justin prioritizes lifelong learning, engaging in self and systems-level reflection, and being of service. Moreover, he endeavors to embody and uplift the words of Dr. Charles A. Barrett, "It's always about the children."

**RETHINKING STUDENT BEHAVIOR
AND ATTENDANCE THROUGH A
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LENS WITH
DR. INGRID TWYMAN**

**TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO
PARTICIPATE:
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

**LOCATION: HUNTINGTON BALLROOM
D**

Biography

Sharon Laney Agu was born and raised in Selma, North Carolina. She is the youngest of seven children born to Clarence and Cecelia Laney. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a focus on Marketing from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Her passion for education led her to further her studies at California State University, Dominguez Hills, where she earned a Master's degree in Education, an Education Specialist Instruction Credential, and an Administrative Credential. Sharon began her career with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) in 1997.

Throughout her tenure, she has served in various roles, including Special Education Teacher, Resource Specialist, Bridge Coordinator, Dean, and currently, Assistant Principal. As the Assistant Principal at Dorothy V. Johnson Community Day School, Sharon has the pleasure of serving the beautiful community of Watts and surrounding cities. She works with students navigating the expulsion process, camp returnees, and those who have fallen behind on credits, helping them find a path to academic and personal success. Sharon is committed to community service and literary advocacy. She is a dedicated member of the Tabahani Book Circle, a nonprofit organization that has been reading together since 1996. In addition to monthly service projects, the group provides yearly scholarships to African American students and they donate books and bring stories to life in elementary schools. As a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Sharon actively serves the communities focusing on family through economic, education, health, and international initiatives and various social action efforts aimed at enacting laws and policies that protect the rights of all citizens. Beyond her professional and service commitments, Sharon enjoys reading, attending plays, and, most importantly, being a loving grandmother to Aufrey. However, she considers her greatest achievement to be her role as a mother to Chiegeshiuka and Mckenzie.



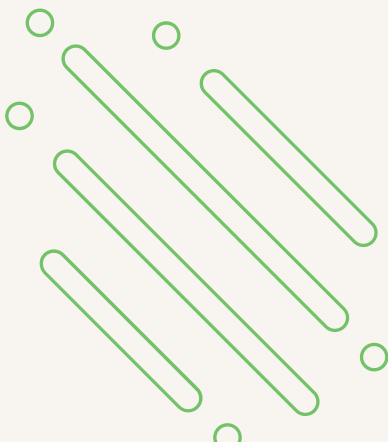
Sharon Laney

Panelist

**RETHINKING STUDENT BEHAVIOR
AND ATTENDANCE THROUGH A
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LENS WITH
DR. INGRID TWYMAN**

**TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO
PARTICIPATE:
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

**LOCATION: HUNTINGTON BALLROOM
D**



Biography



Michelle Santana

Panelist

Michelle Santana, is a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) and mental health therapist with over 15 years of training and experience. She began her career as a social worker in Orange County, later finding her passion in school based mental health. Her current role as clinical supervisor for Santa Ana Unified School District takes her back to her childhood community growing up as a mixed race English learner student with dreams bigger than her roots. For the past 7 years, she has been dedicated to advancing the restorative and healing dimensions of mental health by mentoring and training helping professionals and educators in equity-driven practices and transformative change. Michelle applies trauma-informed frameworks to both promote resilience and advocate for educational equity for students and families.

In addition to her current role, she maintains a small private practice, provides clinical consultation and serves as an adjunct professor. Her most recent achievement of completing a second Masters of Arts degree in School Leadership, has continued to ground her purpose in social justice and equity-driven leadership with the goal of eradicating systemic barriers and access to mental health in Orange County. Michelle is dedicated to her community of practice by serving as a visionary leader and mentor. She is committed to empowering students, families and educators in their communities as they navigate the balance to well-being and academic success.

**RETHINKING STUDENT BEHAVIOR
AND ATTENDANCE THROUGH A
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LENS WITH
DR. INGRID TWYMAN**

**TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO
PARTICIPATE:
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

**LOCATION: HUNTINGTON BALLROOM
D**

Biography

Andrew Montoya is a district administrator supporting Santa Ana Unified School District (SAUSD) as the Coordinator of School Climate. He has worked in education for 15 years. He earned his Bachelor's Degree from California State University, Fullerton in Psychology and English. He earned his Education Specialist degree and Pupil Personnel Services credential from California State University, Long Beach in School Psychology. Mr. Montoya currently supports student growth on a district-wide systemic level, specifically in the areas of attendance and behavior, with an emphasis on a Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports framework.

Mr. Montoya believes in equitable and culturally proficient practices that allow students, especially from disproportionately impacted groups, to grow and thrive. This includes a systemic and integrated approach to implementing Restorative Practices, Social-Emotional Learning, and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports.

Specifically, Mr. Montoya's work includes changing the narrative around student performance and needs. By using a solution-oriented (formerly known as problem-solving) approach in supporting students and families, SAUSD has established practices that see students and families as partners, treating them with respect and dignity. Mr. Montoya continues to provoke curiosity around traditional punitive practices and processes. He challenges educators to consider the role of implicit biases and encourages them to consider alternatives that account for students' diverse cultures and backgrounds. This has led to transformative action and shifts in broad perspectives, as it relates to the way in which educators view student attendance and behavior.



Andrew Montoya
Panelist

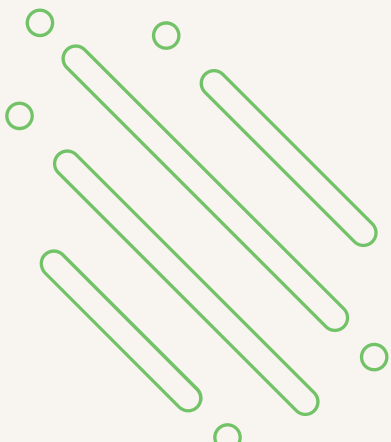
**RETHINKING STUDENT BEHAVIOR
AND ATTENDANCE THROUGH A
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LENS WITH
DR. INGRID TWYMAN**

**TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO
PARTICIPATE:
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

**LOCATION: HUNTINGTON BALLROOM
D**



Jose Luis Navarro IV
Facilitator



Biography

Jose Luis Navarro IV is the leading Coach and Consultant at the Navarro Group. Before this, he served as a Support Coordinator, leading innovative reforms in LAUSD. Notably, he's the founding principal of the award-winning Social Justice Humanitas Academy, which won the 2015 National Community School and Teacher Powered Schools National Awards.

Navarro holds several accolades, including National Board Certification, California Teacher of the Year, and Latino Educator of the Year. He's also an Adjunct Professor at California State University Dominguez Hills and a UCLA Master's Degree graduate in Education Leadership. Prior to teaching, he worked as a Prineville Hotshot firefighter and a Peace Corps Volunteer. Navarro's dedication stems from the belief that all students deserve care and support, inspired by his own children.

**LOCO PARENTIS: SERVING, SUPPORTING
& STANDING WITH OUR
UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS WITH JOSE
LUIS NAVARRO**

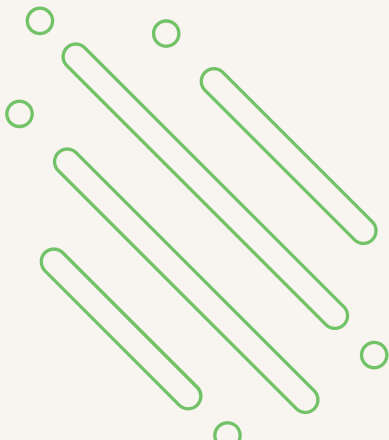
TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM

LOCATION: HUNTINGTON BALLROOM C



Cynthia Mota (né Vega)

Panelist



Biography

Cynthia Mota (né Vega) is a social justice educator who has worked tirelessly for over 24 years to empower historically marginalized communities in the heart of Los Angeles.

Grounded in a deep belief in the power of education as a tool for liberation, Ms. Mota's work has spanned classrooms, leadership roles, and community partnerships, always centering the voices and experiences of students.

Ms. Mota has led professional development on anti-racist pedagogy, transformative SEL practices, and equity-driven instructional strategies. Passionate about bridging gaps in access and opportunity, Ms. Mota is driven to empower educators and students alike through her unwavering commitment to justice, critical consciousness, and lifelong learning.

**LOCO PARENTIS: SERVING, SUPPORTING
& STANDING WITH OUR
UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS WITH JOSÉ
LUIS NAVARRO**

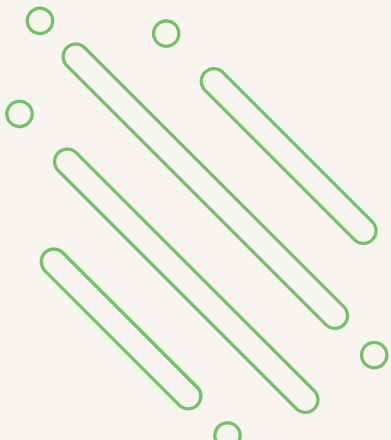
TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM

LOCATION: HUNTINGTON BALLROOM C



Erica Alfaro

Panelist



Biography

Erica Alfaro is an award-winning author, keynote speaker, and education advocate. In 2019, her graduation photos went viral, making headlines worldwide. Her story was featured by major media outlets such as CNN, The Huffington Post, Yahoo News, and many more. Despite facing numerous adversities, Erica defied the odds and became the first woman in her family to earn a formal education and college degree.

She completed an associate degree and earned a certificate in office administration from MiraCosta Community College. Erica went on to obtain a bachelor's degree in psychology from California State University San Marcos and a master's degree in education from San Diego State University. Education became Erica's pathway out of poverty and opened the door to countless opportunities.

**COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES
MARCH 15TH, 2025, 7:15PM:
WE ARE THE COLLECTIVE: AN
ACTIVIST PANEL, PART 2
FACILITATED BY DR. MARK
KABBAN**

**LOCO PARENTIS: SERVING, SUPPORTING
& STANDING WITH OUR
UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS WITH JOS
LUIS NAVARRO**

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM

LOCATION: HUNTINGTON BALLROOM C

Biography

Oscarin Ortega a native of the San Diego area, personally endured early childhood trauma, leading him on a self-destructive path marked by mental health difficulties, addiction, homelessness, and incarceration. His transformative journey, fueled by education on, training, and mentorship, inspired the creation of Lived Experiences. Lived Experiences was founded in 2019, a grassroots nonprofit organization in San Diego, California, dedicated to investing in individual microsystems to address the root causes of emotional and physical trauma.

This approach fosters meaningful, sustainable change, creating positive ripple effects throughout families and communities. By building resilience and well-being, we are committed to lasting transformations that empower individuals and strengthen their ecosystems.



Oscarin Ortega

Panelist

**LOCO PARENTIS: SERVING, SUPPORTING
& STANDING WITH OUR
UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS WITH JOSÉ
LUIS NAVARRO**

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE

- 1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM**
- 2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

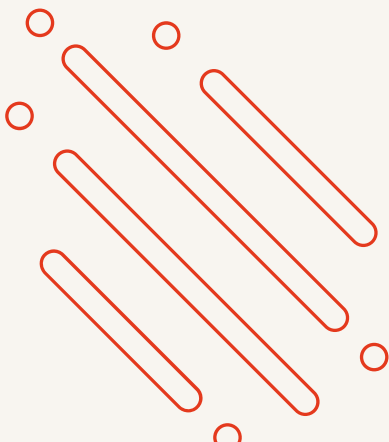
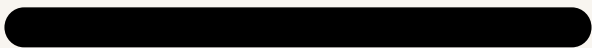
LOCATION: HUNTINGTON BALLROOM C

**COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES
MARCH 14TH, 2025, 7:15PM:
WE ARE THE COLLECTIVE: AN
ACTIVIST PANEL, PART 1
FACILITATED BY DR. MARK
KABBAN BBAN**



Dhalia Balmir

Facilitator



Biography

Dhalia Balmir is an experienced restorative justice practitioner, strategist and visionary leadership coach passionate about fostering dialogue and facilitating transformative change.

Dedicated to dismantling systemic barriers, promoting educational equity, and guiding individuals and organizations toward authentic growth, she is committed to building bridges through her work with educators, district leaders and community members in grades K-12. Dhalia holds a Masters in Leadership and is currently pursuing a PhD in Education for Social Justice at the University of San Diego.

She is deeply invested in advancing equitable education practices.

BEYOND SCHOOL WALLS: ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITY TO MOVE TOWARD EQUITY WITH DHALIA BALMIR

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM

LOCATION: HUNTINGTON BALLROOM B

Biography

Casey (she/her) is a storyteller, strategist, and lifelong advocate for social justice with a background in journalism, global communications, and grassroots organizing. She has worked with the United Nations, international NGOs, and local movements to drive systemic change through advocacy and media. She is the mother of 3 biracial children in the Poway Unified School District.

Casey is a leading voice for education equity in San Diego having led the Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) Committee in Poway Unified for four years. Through JEDI, she mobilized communities to challenge systemic injustice and advocated directly with school district administrators to push for meaningful change. She won several awards for her work through the PTA, but when she was doxxed for her anti-war, Palestinian liberation activism, PTA closed the JEDI Committee. Casey is an Australian descendant of Irish ancestors who resisted colonial violence, shaping her deeply held commitment to collective liberation.

Now, Casey is a Co-Creator of JUST Education Collective, a women-owned grassroots collective dedicated to educational justice through mutual aid, solidarity, and coalition building. JUST Ed supports families, students, and educators by amplifying stories of harm, providing advocacy tools, and mobilizing communities to challenge systemic inequities in K-12 public schools. Visit:

www.justeducationcollective.com to learn more.

Casey Doan (she/her)

+1(858)405-9051



Casey Doan

Panelist

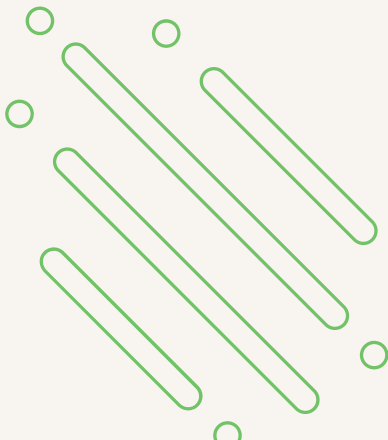
BEYOND SCHOOL WALLS: ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITY TO MOVE TOWARD EQUITY WITH DHALIA BALMIR

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE

1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM

2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM

LOCATION: HUNTINGTON BALLROOM B



Biography

Marina Fleming (she/her/hers)

Marina is a passionate advocate for liberatory education. She's driven by her role as a mother to two teenagers, including a daughter and a child who identifies as genderqueer, and her lived experience as a white Latina. Marina combines her personal and professional experiences to work both inside and outside the system to foster community and amplify the voices, needs and strengths of those that are historically disregarded in school systems. Her activism is driven by the central belief that we must take care of each other and create spaces where all can thrive.

She has over 15 years experience working in education as both a middle school science teacher and school counselor. Marina has also served as a crisis counselor for LGBTQIA+ youth and facilitates SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) seminars for caregivers to foster deeper conversations around inclusivity and equity.

She founded Families for Equity in Education, the DEI committee for the North Coastal Council of PTAs (Del Mar, Solana Beach, Encinitas, and San Dieguito school districts) and started Pride in Our Schools, a grassroots parent coalition that builds community among LGBTQIA+ families and advocates for the needs of LGBTQIA+ students. Most recently, along with several of her co-panelists, she's a co-creator of Just Education Collective. We seek to support families navigate barriers in the school system through mutual aid advocacy and resource sharing.



Marina Fleming

Panelist

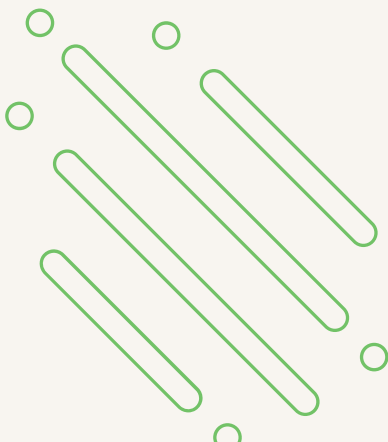
BEYOND SCHOOL WALLS: ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITY TO MOVE TOWARD EQUITY WITH DHALIA BALMIR

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE

1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM

2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM

LOCATION: HUNTINGTON BALLROOM B



Biography

I graduated from UC Santa Barbara with a BA in Biology and spent 14 years working as a scientist. During this time, I also served as the treasurer for the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) in San Diego for two years before taking a break to focus on raising my children. Four years ago, I transitioned into technical sales, specializing in products for molecular biologists in both academia and the pharmaceutical industry, in order to gain a more flexible schedule that would allow me to be the type of parent I aspired to be. While I have always remained somewhat involved in advocacy through letter-writing, petition signing, and raising awareness, the recent devastating genocide in Gaza served as a profound wake-up call, reigniting my commitment to activism. As I searched for a way to channel my efforts, I chose to focus on education, recognizing that the next generation holds the power to ensure the Palestinian narrative is accurately represented. I began by engaging with the schools attended by my children, and as I became more deeply involved, I encountered an increasing number of like-minded individuals and organizations.

It quickly became apparent that we were all working toward the same goals independently, and I recognized that our collective efforts could be far more effective if we collaborated. In response, I reached out to the leaders of various pro-Palestinian organizations I had encountered, and together we established a coalition that includes CAIR, ADC, Jewish Voices for Peace, the Majdal Center, and Karama. I also invited the most active parents from my community to join the cause, with plans to recruit 40 more across multiple districts. To solidify our mission, the leaders of our collaboration held a day-long workshop to develop a mission statement, define our scope, and set goals for the year. We are now close to finalizing a name for our initiative. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that students of all backgrounds—Palestinian, Muslim, and Jewish—are equally represented in the California educational curriculum.

BEYOND SCHOOL WALLS: ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITY TO MOVE TOWARD EQUITY WITH DHALIA BALMIR

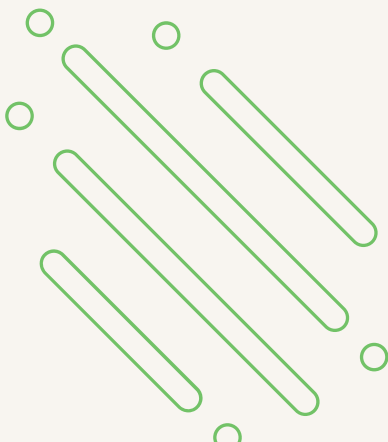
TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM

LOCATION: HUNTINGTON BALLROOM B



Nadia Swanson

Panelist



Biography

Mick Rabin taught in the classroom for 21 years. Working at a Title-1 school with limited resources and under district policies of limited scope, Mick needed to get creative. So, in between the other daily tasks that teachers perform, he has spent his career developing ways to integrate and infuse advocacy, affirmation, and respect for underrepresented populations into existing curriculum formats. Now a project resource counselor for the Office of Youth Advocacy in San Diego Unified School District (and 25 years as a board member with GLSEN San Diego), Mick has created and launched programming focused on bullying prevention and bystander intervention.

And he's facilitated numerous PDs that explore resourceful ways to promote identity representation through a curricular lens with a priority for embracing diversity within the school community and building allyship for ALL students. Mick's a husband, dad, product of SDUSD himself, comic book geek [of the first order], rock and roll concert goer (speak up. . .he's losing his hearing), and subscribes to two mantras: "Make necessary trouble" and "HaveTabasco--Will Travel."

**COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES
MARCH 15TH, 2025, 7:15PM:
WE ARE THE COLLECTIVE: AN
ACTIVIST PANEL, PART 2
FACILITATED BY DR. MARK
KABBAN**

**COMMONALITIES & DIFFERENCES: A
BULLYING PREVENTION MODULE ABOUT
CELEBRATING AND EMBRACING
DIFFERENCES (COFACILITATED BY MICK
RABIN AND MIDDLE SCHOOL ALLY
ACTION STUDENT LEADERS)**

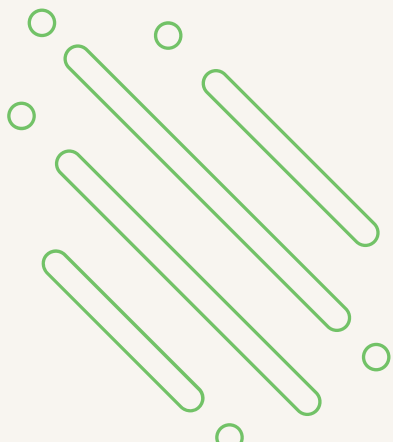
**TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

LOCATION: CLIFFS



Mick Rabin

Facilitator



Biography

Major is 13 years old and a very strong and compassionate individual. He plays football for his school and is currently quarterback. He enjoys sports, fishing, spending time out with his friends and family and staying active.



Major

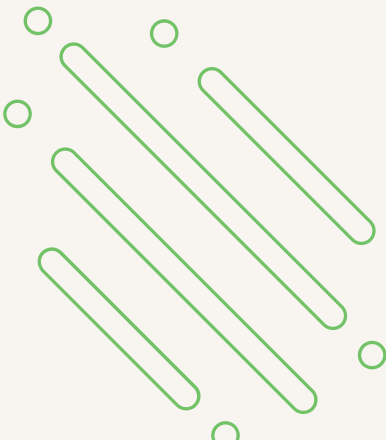
Panelist

COMMONALITIES & DIFFERENCES: A BULLYING PREVENTION MODULE ABOUT CELEBRATING AND EMBRACING DIFFERENCES (COFACILITATED BY MICK RABIN AND MIDDLE SCHOOL ALLY ACTION STUDENT LEADERS)

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE

- 1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM**
- 2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

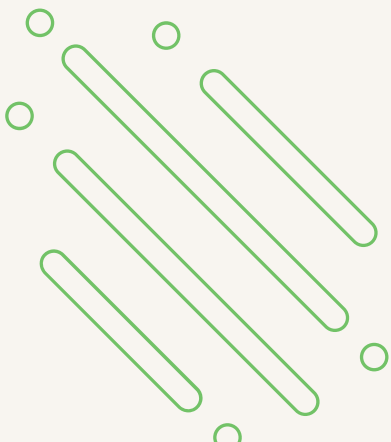
LOCATION: CLIFFS





Zozey

Panelist



Biography

Zozey is an 8th grade student in SDUSD. They enjoy musical theatre both on stage and off! This is their third year being part of Ally Action. Zozey looks forward to continuing their education in theatre arts.

COMMONALITIES & DIFFERENCES: A BULLYING PREVENTION MODULE ABOUT CELEBRATING AND EMBRACING DIFFERENCES (COFACILITATED BY MICK RABIN AND MIDDLE SCHOOL ALLY ACTION STUDENT LEADERS)

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE
1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM

LOCATION: CLIFFS

Biography

Dr. Rania S. Saeb is an Arab American educational leader, scholar, and practitioner with 16 years of experience in K-12 and higher education. She is dedicated to fostering equitable, student-centered learning environments that honor diverse cultural identities and lived experiences.

Dr. Saeb earned a Master's in Comparative and International Education from Lehigh University and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership through the Joint Doctoral Program at the University of California San Diego and California State University, San Marcos. Her career includes teaching at the American International School of Kuwait at the high school level and serving as an Examiner for the International Baccalaureate program.

Currently, Dr. Saeb is an Associate Professor at West Coast University and a faculty member at California State University, where she teaches in the Master of Arts in Educational Administration (M.A.Ed.) Program and the Single Subject Credential Program, preparing future educators and leaders to build inclusive school communities.

Rooted in her cultural identity, her research and advocacy challenge deficit-based narratives about marginalized students. She is passionate about empowering students to reclaim their stories and embrace their identities with pride. Through her workshops and research on Arab American identity formation, she remains committed to flipping the script on colonized education systems and creating more just, inclusive learning spaces for all.



Dr. Rania S. Saeb

Facilitator

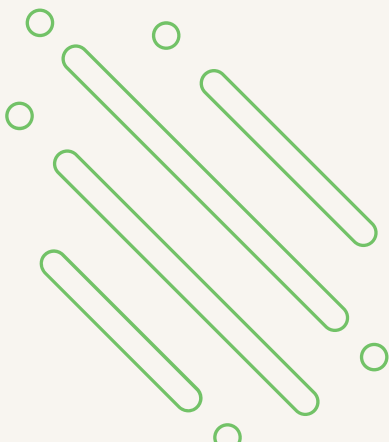
**REIMAGINING SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITIES
OF CARE WITH DR. RANIA SAEB**

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:

1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM

2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM

LOCATION: WHITEWATER BALLROOM A



Biography

Alan J. Daly, Ph. D is a Professor and the Director of Educational Leadership Doctoral Programs in the Department of Education Studies at the University of California, San Diego. Alan's research and teaching are influenced by his 16 years of public school experience in a variety of instructional and leadership roles including teacher; psychologist; and site administrator.

His research primarily focuses on the role of social networks, leadership, and knowledge mobilization and the relationship between those elements on traditionally marginalized student populations in under resourced communities.

In support of that effort, Professor Daly has published over 200 peer reviewed journal articles with the vast majority drawing on social network theory and analysis, seven books, and over 250 peer reviewed papers at international conferences. In addition, Professor Daly's work has been widely supported by national, international, and philanthropic sources focused on transforming and supporting educational spaces. He was most recently the Chair of the Department of Education Studies and a Fulbright Global Scholar in New Zealand and South Africa.



Dr. Alan Daly

Panelist

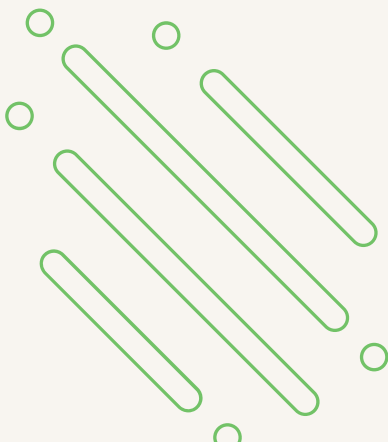
REIMAGINING SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITIES OF CARE WITH DR. RANIA SAEB

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:

1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM

2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM

LOCATION: WHITEWATER BALLROOM A



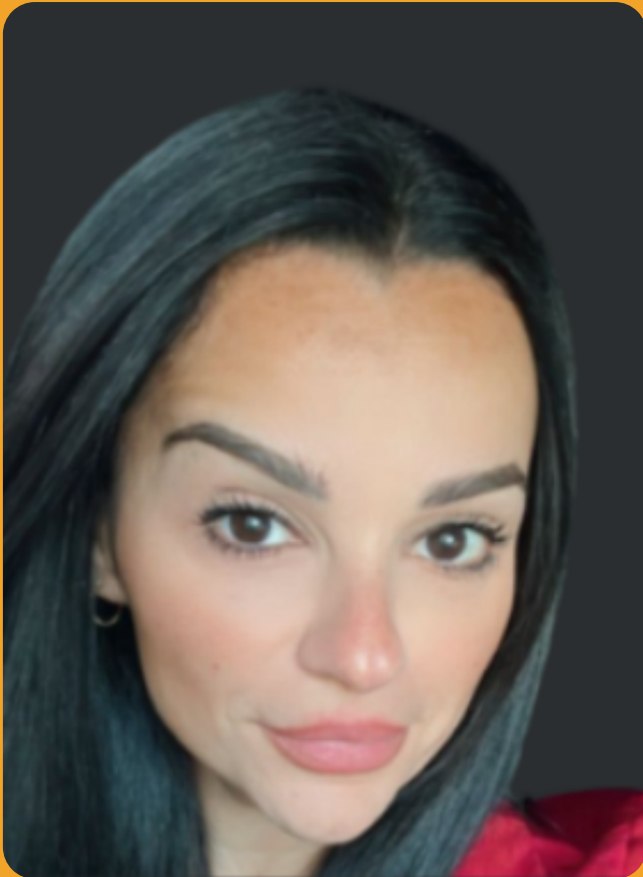
Biography

Reem Saeb is an Arab American educator and counselor with over 15 years of experience in the educational field. Born and raised in Kuwait, with a diverse heritage as half Palestinian and half Lebanese, Reem has a strong passion for cross-cultural understanding and educational empowerment. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Education from the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, and has extensive international teaching experience in both Kuwait and Lebanon, spanning six years.

After relocating to the United States, Reem taught intervention classes for five years in the San Jacinto Unified School District, where she supported students' academic and emotional growth. She furthered her academic journey at Azusa Pacific University, earning a Master's degree in Clinical and Educational Counseling.

Reem holds an Associate Professional Clinical Counselor title and is working towards her licensure in Professional Clinical Counseling. She is dedicated to providing holistic support for students and communities and is passionate about integrating educational and counseling practices to foster well-being and success.

Currently serving as a middle school counselor in the Temecula Unified School District, Reem provides support to students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, English Language Learners, McKinney-Vento, and foster youth. She works to address the social-emotional and academic needs of these students, advocating for their success and well-being.



Reem Saeb

Panelist

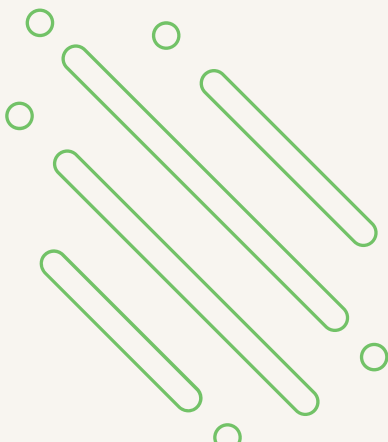
**REIMAGINING SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITIES
OF CARE WITH DR. RANIA SAEB**

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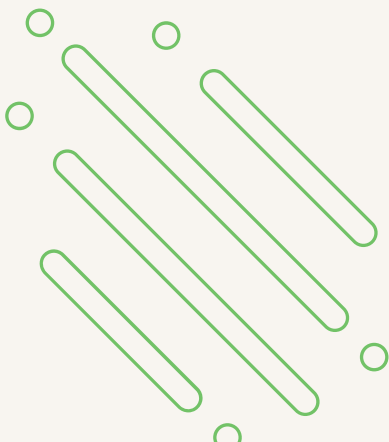
LOCATION: WHITEWATER BALLROOM A





Cassiopeia Guthrie

Panelist



Biography

Cassiopeia Guthrie is committed to inspiring the imperative: courageous, creative, equity-minded, and empowered communities ready to change the world. A K-12 credentialed educator and professional journalist, Cassiopeia currently serves as the Distinguished Teacher in Residence at California State University, San Marcos, where she teaches classes for pre-service and inservice educators.

She is also an award-winning theatre critic whose work has been seen across an array of publications with most recent bylines on SanDiegoStory.com, San Diego Magazine, and On the Craft.

REIMAGINING SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITIES OF CARE WITH DR. RANIA SAEB

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:

1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM

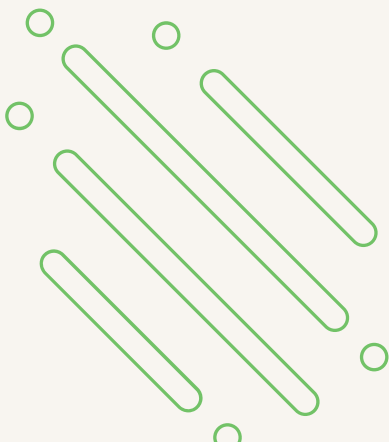
2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM

LOCATION: WHITEWATER BALLROOM A



Lan Nguyen

Panelist



Biography

Lan Nguyen is a futurist, educator, and leader who is passionate about designing and implementing more liberatory ways of engaging, teaching, and leading in schools. In her work, she critiques and examines systems of power, applies participatory and humanizing approaches to systems change, and uses a decolonial lens to understand issues of educational inequity. Lan has engaged deeply both in study and in practice over the course of her career in education in issues of equity.

As a former classroom teacher, she applied culturally responsive, brain-based, and restorative approaches. Through her roles in school districts, she helped lead implementation of various initiatives such as school culture and climate, Restorative Justice Practices, student voice and engagement, and LGBTQIA+ inclusion. Lan is currently a Program Specialist in the San Diego County Office of Education's Whole Child and Community Design Department and most recently came from WestEd where she worked on statewide projects and initiatives.

**LGBTQ PLUS RACE, ETHNICITY, CULTURE,
CLASS: AN INTERSECTIONAL
CONVERSATION WITH DR. LAN NGUYEN**

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:

- 1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM**
- 2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

LOCATION: BREAKWATER BALLROOM

Biography

Ayesha Alee Brooks is a dedicated and experienced education professional with a strong background in promoting positive school climates and cultures. In the Fontana Unified School District, she has served as the Director of Multi-Tiered System of Supports, Coordinator for Positive School Climate and Culture, and a Teacher on Special Assignment wherein Ayesha supervises specialists and coaches, analyzes program effectiveness, and coordinates professional development in areas such as restorative practices, unconscious bias, and trauma-informed care.

With a career spanning over three decades, Ayesha has held various roles including Dean of Student Support at Truman Middle School, Director at United Teachers of Los Angeles, and Coordinator for Restorative Justice at Markham Middle School. Her efforts have significantly reduced suspensions and enhanced student engagement through community-building initiatives.

Ayesha's notable achievements include receiving the ACSA Region 12 Student Services Administrator of the Year in 2021, Student Services Award from the Fontana Management Association in 2018, the National Association of Community and Restorative Justice Dennis Maloney Award for Youth-Based Community and Restorative Justice in 2017, the Unsung Hero Award from United Teachers of Los Angeles in 2014 and being named Volunteer of the Year by the Watts Gang Task Force in 2012.

Ayesha holds a Master of Science in Restorative Practices from the International Institute of Restorative Practices, a Master of Science in Education Leadership and administrative credential from California State University, Dominguez Hills, and a Bachelor of Science in Recreation from the University of Hawaii at Manoa.



Ayesha Brooks

Panelist

**LGBTQ PLUS RACE, ETHNICITY, CULTURE,
CLASS: AN INTERSECTIONAL
CONVERSATION WITH DR. LAN NGUYEN**

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:

1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM

2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM

LOCATION: BREAKWATER BALLROOM



Biography

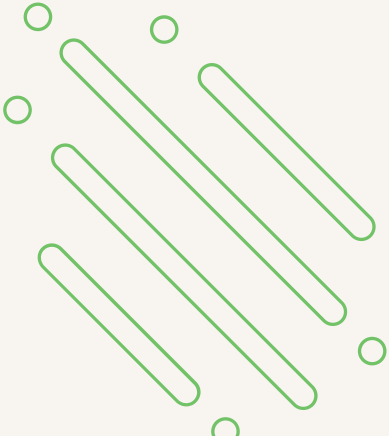
Vivian (she/her) is an Associate Couples and Family Therapist. As a Queer, Latinx, Neurodivergent affirming therapist, she works towards empowering individuals to find their unique, individual, and collective strengths, to acknowledge the roots of their suffering and the systems that underlie it, and to access opportunities to experience joy, self love, liberation, and connection. Vivian currently works with youth in foster care, their foster and biological families, and transitional age youth.

LGBTQ+ young people are over-represented in foster care as previous studies have found that they make up about 30% of all youth in foster care. While these LGBTQ+ youth enter the system for the same reasons other children do, a statistically significant percentage experience loss of connection with caregivers, family members, and communities due to reasons related to their identity. Prior to becoming a therapist, Vivian worked for 6 years as an instructional aide at a charter middle and high school for low-income scholars who strive to become the first in their families to graduate from college. It was here that she learned that much like students need to feel safe to learn, the adults who work in schools also need a safe and secure base to do the challenging work they do on a daily basis.



Vivian Pate

Panelist



**LGBTQ PLUS RACE, ETHNICITY, CULTURE,
CLASS: AN INTERSECTIONAL
CONVERSATION WITH DR. LAN NGUYEN**

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:

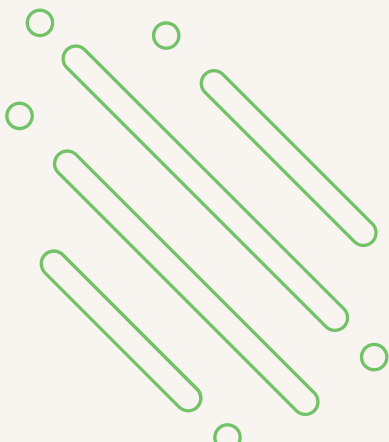
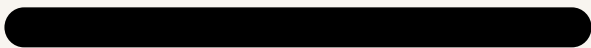
- 1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM**
- 2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

LOCATION: BREAKWATER BALLROOM



Dr. Juan Camarena

Panelist



Biography

Dr. Camarena is an Assistant Professor in the Community Based Block Multicultural Community Counseling and Social Justice Education graduate program at San Diego State University. Dr. Camarena is a California Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor, and nationally certified Sex Therapist. Dr. Camarena has taught multicultural counseling courses since 2003 and frequently integrates his background in community and school-based mental health in his teaching and research.

Dr. Camarena provides psychotherapy at his independent practice with specialties in sex, gender, Queer, and culturally-affirming therapies. He is also the mental health director of Camp Mulberry, the only no-cost summer camp for Transgender and gender expansive youth. He has been passionate about teaching and learning, social-justice focused research, and combating marginalization via psychotherapy since receiving his master's degree in counseling from San Diego State University with specializations in Community Counseling, School Counseling, and Marriage & Family Therapy. Dr. Camarena also received Masters and Doctorate degrees in Human Sexuality, with clinical concentrations, from Widener University.

**LGBTQ PLUS RACE, ETHNICITY, CULTURE,
CLASS: AN INTERSECTIONAL
CONVERSATION WITH DR. LAN NGUYEN**

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:

- 1. MARCH 15, 9:15-10:45AM**
- 2. MARCH 15, 11-12:30PM**

LOCATION: BREAKWATER BALLROOM

Community Experiences



March 14th, 2025, 7:15pm:

We Are the Collective: An Activist Panel, Part 1 facilitated by Dr. Mark Kabban

March 14th, 2025, 7:15pm:

Empowered Beyond Boundaries: Activating, Aligning, and Embodying the Equity Leader Within You with Coax Marie

March 15th, 2025, 7:15pm:

We Are the Collective: An Activist Panel, Part 2 facilitated by Dr. Mark Kabban

March 15th, 2025, 4pm:

The Influencer Shift: Affirming Your Full Leadership Identity with Coax Marie

Biography

Born in Guadalajara, Mexico, and raised in North San Diego County, Center Street and Pozole (now known as Crown Heights and East Side), Beatriz is a Black Indigenous Latina, daughter of immigrant farm workers, a first-generation college graduate, and a formerly undocumented immigrant.

Her lived experiences with housing and food insecurity fueled her lifelong commitment to equity, racial and social justice, and community-driven solutions.

With over 30 years of leadership across early childhood education, K-12, community colleges, and the nonprofit sector, she has worked at the intersections of education, workforce development, and social services to bridge resources and expand opportunities for historically marginalized communities. She has served as a leader developing programs that strengthen college and career pathways, increase family and community engagement, and provide holistic support services.

She is the president of the Alliance for Regional Solutions, co-founder of its Racial Justice Committee, and an active member of the North San Diego County NAACP and the North County African American Women's Association. She also serves as board president for Operation HOPE—North County, a shelter for families with children and single women, becoming the first woman of color to hold this leadership role. Her personal experience with housing and food insecurity empowered her to lead at the shelter and launch food distribution programs on college campuses. A writer for "North County Informador", where she uses her platform to highlight issues affecting Black and Latino communities. As a sociologist and professor, she brings a critical lens to systemic inequities, community cultural wealth, and institutional transformation. Her bilingual skills allow her to teach Mental Health among Black Communities and Mental Health among Black LGBTQIA communities to Spanish speaking faith based Latino audiences. She is a sought-after speaker and facilitator, leveraging storytelling and lived experiences to inspire systemic change and inspire individuals to activate their own greatness!



Bea Palmer

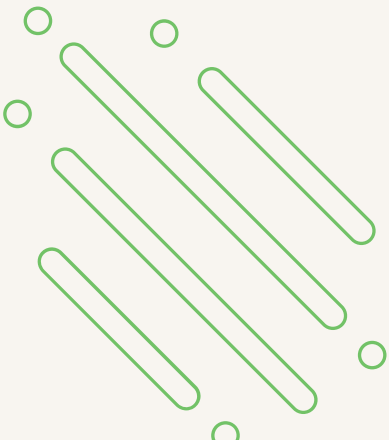
Panelist

COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES
KAMARCH 14TH, 2025, 7:15PM:
WE ARE THE COLLECTIVE: AN
ACTIVIST PANEL, PART 1
FACILITATED BY DR. MARK KABBAN
BBAN



Andrea Gaspar

Panelist



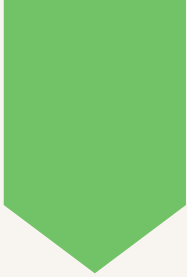
Biography

Andrea is a queer Mexican Nuu Davi born in San Diego and raised in Tijuana, Kumeyaay Territory. She is earning her PhD in Ethnic Studies from the University of California San Diego. She is currently a Community Organizer at 'ataaxum Pomkwaan.

Her community work focuses on the development of life-affirming institutions and community spaces centering the healing and autonomy of Indigenous, Black, migrant, queer and trans peoples. She has 18 years of community and coalition organizing experience on youth, education, racial, economic, environmental and housing justice.

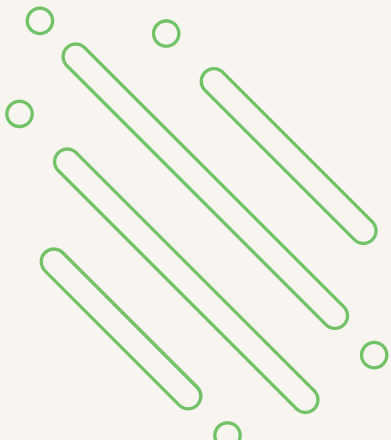
Pronouns She/They

COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES
KAMARCH 14TH, 2025, 7:15PM:
WE ARE THE COLLECTIVE: AN
ACTIVIST PANEL, PART 1
FACILITATED BY DR. MARK KABBAN
BBAN



Singqi Chapman

Panelist



Biography

Singqi is a sophomore at Pomona College and is proudly known by their administration as one of many "masked agitators", "disruptors of normal operations" and overall principled nuisance to their school's Zionist operations. Singqi identifies with the New African identity as well as an abolitionist and mutual aid organizer and is dedicated to the lifelong anti-imperialist, anticapitalist, and decolonial struggle.

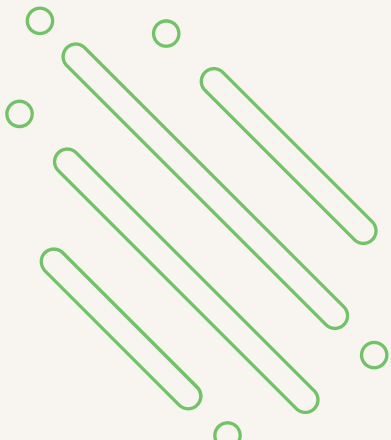
Singqi is inspired by the steadfast resistance to fascism, imperialism, colonization, etc. in Palestine, Sudan, Congo, Turtle Island, and throughout the third world and is invigorated by the work we must do here in the belly of the beast to join the fight for liberation. from the University of Southern California.

**COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES
MARCH 15TH, 2025, 7:15PM:
WE ARE THE COLLECTIVE: AN
ACTIVIST PANEL, PART 2
FACILITATED BY DR. MARK
KABBAN**



Jenny Oehler

Panelist



Biography

Jenny Oehler has dedicated 28 years to public education, teaching middle and high school students in social science and English. A passionate advocate for equity and inclusion, she has spent her career navigating the complexities of being a social justice warrior in challenging spaces.

her work, she empowers students and educators to critically engage with systemic issues, fostering meaningful conversations that drive change. At Equity in Action, she brings her wealth of experience, insights, and strategies for pushing forward in the fight for justice, even in the face of resistance.

**COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES
MARCH 15TH, 2025, 7:15PM:
WE ARE THE COLLECTIVE: AN
ACTIVIST PANEL, PART 2
FACILITATED BY DR. MARK
KABBAN**

Biography

With over 15 million streams and a career that began on Broadway stages and world tours, including a performance at Madison Square Garden with Mariah Carey, Coax Marie has mastered the art of storytelling through sound. Yet, despite global acclaim as an actress, she felt an undeniable pull toward a deeper calling—to create her own lane and revolutionize the way music transforms lives.

That journey began with heartbreak. In the midst of personal struggle, Coax turned to affirmation music as a way to heal herself. What started as a personal breakthrough soon became a movement. Her music, infused with intention and empowerment, spread rapidly, reaching audiences worldwide and proving that sound is one of the most powerful tools for transformation.

Through her work, Coax has helped people rewrite their stories—guiding them to overcome generational trauma, launch thriving businesses, complete award-winning projects, publish world-changing books, and even manifest love and marriage. Her voice is not just something to hear; it is something to experience, a portal to alignment and expansion.

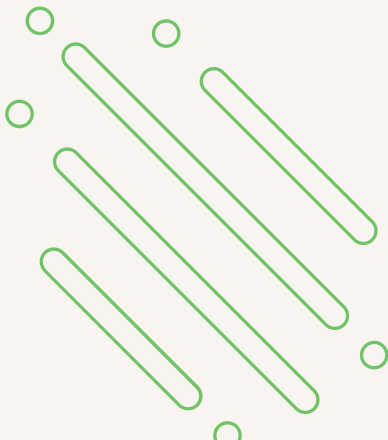
A sought-after speaker, performer, and mentor, Coax Marie has hosted countless workshops and concerts centered around affirmations and transformative music, creating immersive spaces where audiences don't just listen—they awaken.

Beyond performance, she has created over 400 affirmation songs for both herself and her clients, using sound as a transformational tool for healing, manifestation, and empowerment. She has dedicated over 1,000 hours coaching high-level creatives, helping them unlock their fullest potential.

Coax Marie is more than an artist; she is a sonic architect, weaving soundscapes that activate the highest version of self in everyone she reaches. Her work continues to reshape the industry, proving that music isn't just entertainment—it's a tool for evolution.



Coax Marie



MARCH 14TH, 2025,
7:15PM:
EMPOWERED BEYOND
BOUNDARIES:
ACTIVATING, ALIGNING,
AND EMBODYING THE
EQUITY LEADER WITHIN
YOU WITH COAX MARIE

March 15th, 2025, 4pm:
The Influencer Shift:
Affirming Your Full
Leadership Identity with
Coax Mariee

Meet our Coaches

Effective leadership directly influences the success of both educators and students, making strong leadership development essential for creating thriving school communities. At LAEP, the leadership coaching program is designed to help school leaders refine their vision, enhance their decision-making skills, and build strong, supportive teams. Through personalized coaching, leaders gain insight into their leadership styles, tackle challenges with confidence, and develop innovative solutions to drive school-wide improvement. Interested in learning more about how to receive coaching? Please contact: jnavarro@laep.org



**MARITZA
LOZANO**



**KARLA
ROSETTE**



**LIZA XET
SMITH**



**ANTONIA ISSA
LAHERA**



**RANDY
GARCIA**



JOSE MONTES



**AUSTIN
WILLIAMS**



**ALESSANDRA
CASCARANO**



RISING TO THE MOMENT: MY ACTION PLAN

MY AFFIRMATION:

MY CURRENT EQUITY GOAL:

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As we come together for Equity in Action: Rising to the Moment, we would like to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude to everyone who has been part of this meaningful journey. The work we are doing would not be possible without the leadership, commitment, and collaborative spirit of those who share our vision for a more just and inclusive education system.

To Our Leaders

Thank you to the school and district leaders who have made a bold commitment to prioritize equity within your communities. Your vision, courage, and relentless pursuit of justice are the driving forces behind the progress we are seeing in our schools. Your leadership is paving the way for a more equitable future for all students.

To Our Panelists

We are deeply grateful to the panelists who have joined us to share their expertise, lived experiences, and insights. Your contributions are not only shaping the conversation, but also inspiring action that will continue to reverberate across the educational landscape.

To All Participants

To the educational leaders, advocates, and changemakers who have joined us in this work—thank you. Your engagement, your passion, and your willingness to be vulnerable in these conversations are what will turn our collective aspirations into tangible change. Together, we are rising to the moment and pushing the boundaries of what is possible for our students.

To Our Staff and Organizers

A special thank you to the dedicated staff and organizers who have worked tirelessly to make this conference a reality. Your commitment, attention to detail, and passion for this work have been integral to bringing us all together to learn, reflect, and grow.

As we leave this space, may we carry forward the knowledge, the connections, and the renewed commitment to continue advancing equity in our schools and districts. Thank you for your partnership and for standing together as leaders who are determined to make a lasting impact.

