Early Learning Fellows Kickoff Meeting: Building State Leadership

Magnolia Hotel Omaha • 1615 Howard Street, Omaha, NE 68102

Speaker Biographies

Melanie Berry obtained her doctoral degree in clinical psychology at the PGSP-Stanford Psy.D. Consortium. She has extensive clinical experience with high-risk children and families. Berry is currently a postdoctoral research associate at Fisher Stress Neurobiology and Prevention (SNAP) laboratory at the University of Oregon and the Oregon Social Learning Center. Research in the SNAP lab focuses on the impact of early adversity on the brain, the development of targeted interventions to improve outcomes for high-risk children, and translating the results of research into policy relevant communication. At the SNAP lab, Berry is a core member of the team that has developed the Filming Interaction to Nurture Development (FIND) program, an innovative video coaching program for parents and other caregivers of high-risk children. As a FIND consultant, she provides training and consultation to FIND teams across the country. Connected to her work with FIND, she is also involved with Frontiers of Innovation at the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, an initiative to promote positive outcomes for vulnerable children.

Mark Evans is the Omaha Public Schools (OPS) superintendent and has been since December 2012. Prior to serving as superintendent at OPS, Evans served as superintendent of Andover, KS public school system.

Representative Greg Hughes (R) Greg Hughes represents Draper in District 51 and currently serves as Speaker of the House. He and his wife, Krista, are the parents of three children. He grew up in Pittsburgh, moved to Utah to work on a political campaign and ended up staying, attending Utah Valley State College and BYU. He is a small business owner in the real estate development and property management sector. During his time in the Legislature, Speaker Hughes has supported state spending limitations, a flatter state tax, truth in bonding legislation and other tax and spending reforms. He has worked extensively on issues that would help attract business and increase job availability for the citizens of Utah through tax reforms and incentives. Hughes has worked on a number of bills to show his support for our military and veterans. Outside of his legislative service, Hughes is active in the community and has served in positions on the boards of Summit Academy Charter School, United Way of Salt Lake and Lone Peak Hospital.

Christine Johnson-Staub is a senior policy analyst for child care and early education at the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). Over her 20 years in the field, Johnson-Staub has developed expertise in many areas of child care and early education policy, including child care subsidy programs and policy, early childhood financing, system building and technical assistance. Most recently, her work has focused on implementation of the CCDBG Act of 2014. Before joining CLASP, Johnson-Staub consulted with public and private agencies across the country on policy and system development related to child care and early education. She also spent time providing management and policy support to a large child care agency, and
directing a regional family support coalition. Johnson-Staub has worked with state and federal legislative offices as well as a variety of public, private, and non-profit agencies. She earned a master’s degree in public policy from The George Washington University, and a bachelor’s degree from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Michelle McCready serves as the chief of policy at Child Care Aware of America (CCAoA), and provides vision, leadership, and management of policy and evaluation division, including federal policy, state initiatives, and family engagement. She partners with board members, executives, staff, national and local coalition partners and community. In addition to her leadership in developing a policy agenda that promotes Child Care Aware of America’s mission and vision. She ensures that all resources related to public policy, research, family and media are kept current and also develops our signature research reports on state child care data and the cost of care. She previously had leadership roles on several presidential and congressional campaign efforts. Most notable, she supported various efforts for the promotion of awareness and education for the Affordable Care Act, implementing CCAoA’s organizing capacity building projects (organization, legislative, and electoral). She has considerable experience working on early learning and child care policies, including CCDBG, TANF, NCLB/SEEA, IDEA and IDEA Part C, CACFP, the Administration’s Early Learning Initiative, Labor-HHS appropriations, Head Start/Early Head Start, QRIS, state advocacy, the Affordable Care Act, SSBG, and SNAP. Michelle received her Bachelors in Social Welfare and Policy at University of Wisconsin – Madison and her master’s in Public Policy at George Mason University.

Karen Schulman is a senior policy analyst at the National Women’s Law Center (NWLC), which she joined in January 2004. At NWLC, she conducts research, provides budgetary and policy analysis, and writes on child care and early education issues. She is the author of an annual report on state child care assistance policies, including the latest update, Building Blocks: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2015. She has also co-authored several other NWLC reports, including Set Up To Fail: When Low-Wage Work Jeopardizes Parents’ and Children’s Success, A Center Piece of the Child Care Puzzle: Providing State Prekindergarten in Child Care Centers; and A Count for Quality: Child Care Center Directors on Rating and Improvement Systems. She also co-authored a joint NWLC and CLASP report, Implementing the Child Care and Development Block Grant Reauthorization: A Guide for States. Prior to joining NWLC, she worked at the Children’s Defense Fund for six years, where she researched and wrote several studies on early care and education, including Seeds of Success, a major prekindergarten study, and A Fragile Foundation, a comprehensive study of state child care subsidy systems. She has a master’s degree in public policy from Duke University and a bachelor’s degree from Williams College.

Katharine B. Stevens leads the American Enterprise Institute’s (AEI) early-childhood program, focusing on the research, policy, and politics of early-childhood care and education. She also studies the role of early learning in expanding opportunity for low-income Americans and the implementation challenges of rapidly growing early-childhood education initiatives, especially issues of teacher quality. Stevens has 20 years of both on-the-ground and research experience in urban education reform. Before joining AEI, she founded and led Teachers for Tomorrow, one of the first urban teacher-residency programs in the United States, which recruited and trained teachers for New York City’s lowest-performing schools. She began her career in public education as a preschool teacher in New Haven, Connecticut, and St. Louis, Missouri. Her analyses and commentary have been published in Education Week, The Huffington Post, Los Angeles Times, New York Daily News, New York Post, US News & World Report, and The Wall Street Journal. Stevens has a Ph.D. in education policy from Columbia University, a M.Ed. from Teachers College, an MBA from Columbia Business School, and a B.A. in US history from the University of Chicago.

Jim Sutfin stepped into the role of superintendent for Millard Public Schools in fall of 2014. Currently he serves as the leader of a district of 35 schools with more than 23,000 students and more than 2,800 teachers and staff members. Previously he served as the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources for the district. Along with his time in the central office, he has also filled the roles of principal, assistant principal, science department head and science teacher. He began his teaching career in Bellevue in 1989 and has been with
Millard since 1995. His wife, Julie, is also a career educator. As a graduate of Millard South and as a parent of two children in the district, Sutfin has the unique opportunity of seeing Millard from many different perspectives.

**Joe Waters** is the executive vice president of the Institute for Child Success (ICS), a non-profit, non-partisan, independent research and policy organization dedicated to the success of all young children. He oversees and provides overall direction for all strategic, research, public policy, and communications initiatives. He also leads the Institute's efforts in searching for new opportunities, catalyzing innovation, building leadership capacities, developing partnerships, and crafting and executing initiatives in support of all areas of the Institute's work. Waters is a Greenville, S. C. native and graduate of the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Furman University in 2005 and his Master of Divinity degree from Duke University in 2009. Joe has been active in South Carolina through United Way initiatives and through his service on the Board of Directors of the Felician Center, an outreach center and after-school program serving rural Williamsburg and lower Florence Counties. He also serves on the Board of AIR Serenbe, the acclaimed artist residency at Serenbe in Chattahooche Hills, Ga. Waters has also participated in the Aspen Institute’s Socrates Program for emerging leaders and the Clinton Global Initiative America.