Tuesday, November 16, 2021
UNLV Student Union
Ballroom + Online
8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

8:30 a.m.  Registration, breakfast and networking

9 - 9:20 a.m.  Welcome and introductions

9:20 - 10:30 a.m.  Morning Panel Discussion: Solving Education’s Wicked Problem (SU Ballroom)
  ● NV State Superintendent Jhone Ebert
  ● NSHE Chancellor Melody Rose
  ● CCSD Superintendent Jesus Jara
  ● Facilitated by Jon Ralston, Editor, Nevada Independent

10:30-10:45 a.m.  Break

10:45 - 11:45 a.m.  Breakout sessions
  ● “Teachers Don’t Really Encourage it”: A Critical Race Theory Analysis of High School Students’ of Color Perceptions of the Teaching Profession with Christine Clark and Norma Marrun - SU 207
  ● The Evolving Role of Labor Organizations in Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Schooling with Brenda Pearson (Clark County Education Association) and Bradley Marianno (UNLV College of Education) - SU 209
  ● Integrated Student Supports as an Evidence-Based Strategy for Equity & School Improvement with Tami Hance-Lehr, and Debbie Palacios from Communities in Schools - SU 211
  ● Focusing on the Whole Student: Connection Before Content with Teresa Byington - SU 213

Noon - 1 p.m.  Luncheon Keynote: Cultivating a Joyous and Just Education for All Ms. Juliana Urtubey, National Teacher of the Year (SU Ballroom)
1:15-2 p.m.  **Breakout sessions**

- *Educational Equity in the Wake of COVID: Where Do We Go from Here?* with Dr. Sonya Horsford - SU 207
- *Plot, Plan, Strategize, Mobilize: Effective Advocacy* with Yvette Williams - SU 209
- *Nevada Partners: Advocacy from Cradle to Career* with Ashanti Lewis - SU 211
- *Focus on the Future for Kids: Utilizing ARP Funds to Build a Kids-First Community Vision* with [name redacted] and Jana Wilcox Lavin - SU 213

2-2:15 p.m.  **Break**

2:15 - 3 p.m.  **Breakout sessions**

- *Diversifying STEM: Increasing Participation in Underrepresented Groups (URGs)* with Dr. Linda Johnson-McClinton SU 207
- *From the Therapy Room to the Classroom: Building a Trauma-Informed Culture in Schools* with panel from The Practice SU 211
- *Succeeding as a Black Educator* with Brione Minor-Mitchell - SU 213

3:30-4:25 p.m.  **Online Session**

- *Bring Joy and Justice to Inclusion Settings* with National Teacher of the Year Juliana Urtubey

4:30-5:15 p.m.  **Online Session:**

- *Taking Pride: Fostering Supportive Environments for LGBTQIA+ Students* with AJ Huth (The Center) and Phil Burns (UNLV Student Affairs)
Morning Plenary Discussion: Solving Education’s Wicked Problem

What do you get when interdependent issues like the economy, health care, housing, race, and education are so intertwined they seem impossible to solve? A wicked problem. Nevada Independent editor Jon Ralston will lead a panel discussion with Nevada education leaders to discuss how these factors are inextricably tied to student success and what we can do to develop comprehensive solutions for Nevada’s kids.

About the moderator and panelists:

Our moderator, Nevada Independent CEO Jon Ralston, has been covering politics in Nevada for more than 30 years in his own blog -- Ralston Reports), the Las Vegas Review-Journal, Las Vegas Sun, and Reno Gazette-Journal as well as several TV programs. In 2012, Politico named him one of the Top 50 "Políticos to Watch." In 2017, he launched the Nevada Independent, a nonpartisan, nonprofit news and opinion website. He frequently appears on MSNBC, FOX News, and PBS, and he has also appeared on NBC's long-running "Meet the Press."

State Superintendent of Public Instruction for Nevada Jhone M. Ebert took the reins as the chief state school officer for Nevada in 2019 where she has worked tirelessly on behalf of Nevada’s nearly 500,000 students and its 750 schools. Her previous roles include Senior Deputy Commissioner for P-20 Education Policy for New York State, ranking policy advisor to the state commissioner and Board of Regents, as well as Chief Innovation and Productivity Officer and Chief Technology Officer at the Clark County School District.

Clark County School District Superintendent Dr. Jesús F. Jara has been serving public school students for more than 20 years. Since his appointment in 2018 to lead more than 310,000 students in 368 school programs on 334 campuses, he worked with the Board of School Trustees on a revised strategic plan -- Focus: 2024 -- with more specific goals to accelerate student success.

Prior to her 2020 selection to lead the Nevada System of Higher Education as Chancellor, Dr. Melody Rose served as the President of Marylhurst University, Chancellor of the Oregon University System, Portland State University’s Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Instruction and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and chair of Portland State University’s Division of Political Science. In her 25-year career in higher education she has focused on improving student access and success to higher education.
Luncheon Keynote: Cultivating a Joyous and Just Education for All

In order to be equitably and racially inclusive, schools must present a Joyous and Just environment and education for students and families. The joyous brings a sense of belonging. The just ensures that we acknowledge and dismantle barriers. A joyous and just school is intentional, holistic and inclusive to build welcoming environments for all members of learning communities. Learn and share examples of how to transform your classroom and school to welcome everyone.

About the presenter:

Juliana Urtubey, a first-generation, bilingual immigrant, loved school. Drawn to teaching through a high school teacher leadership academy, she knew it would be important to be a bilingual teacher. Now the 2021 National Teacher of the Year, Juliana works to serve as a mirror for her school community, helping students to be proud of their identities and their families, and to acknowledge their strengths and contributions to the community. Juliana, currently in her 11th year in the classroom, teaches at Kermit R. Booker, Sr. Innovative Elementary School in Las Vegas.

Juliana is a National Board Certified Teacher and holds a bachelor’s degree in bilingual elementary education and a master’s degree in special bilingual education from the University of Arizona. She is a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Board of Directors member and Teacher Fellow, a Nevada Teach Plus Senior Policy Fellow, and an Understood Teacher Fellow and mentor. She is also a winner of the 2018 Rogers Foundation Heart of Education award.
In-person Breakout Session Descriptions

(in alphabetical order by title)

**AB371: Ensuring Safe and Respectful Learning Environments**

Learn about Nevada Assembly Bill 371 from its bill sponsor, Assemblywoman Brittney Miller, followed by a youth panel discussion composed of current high school students and recent graduates. The panel will discuss the anticipated impact full implementation will have on students and school climate.

*About the presenter:*

Nevada Assemblywoman Brittney Miller holds a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice, and master’s degrees in public administration and teaching. She is currently serving her third term representing Assembly District 5. She teaches middle school in CCSD and is the Vice-Chair of the Assembly’s Education Committee.

**Diversifying STEM: Increasing Participation in Underrepresented Groups (URGs)**

In order for educators to be capable of providing a high-quality education in STEM coursework, their pedagogy will need to evolve. Students' learning and application of knowledge will need to be connected to their vernacular, vocabulary and culture. Increasing the number of learning opportunities for URGs will create a reformatted structure in education that will enhance diversity in STEM.

*About the presenters:*

Dr. Linda Johnson-McClinton has 25 years of experience as an educator and owns and operates two minority/woman-owned companies in the State of Nevada -- LJM Educational Services LLC and Enriching Explorations in Engineering, Inc. In between running her companies, Dr. Johnson-McClinton spends time volunteering with various service groups. She serves as a mentor for the “Stay In School Mentoring Project” of the Clark County School District in Las Vegas, NV and volunteers with the Governor’s Office of STEM, Innovation and Technology (OSIT).

**Educational Equity in the Wake of COVID: Where Do We Go from Here?**

What can we learn from community members about rebuilding public PK-12 education to fulfill their aspirations for their children’s future? How can we as Nevadans work together with education leaders and policymakers to improve educational equity? Learn about the findings and implications of a recent study of Black parents, educators, community members, and youth conducted in Las Vegas and nationally.
**About the presenter:**

**Dr. Sonya Douglass Horsford** serves as a professor of education leadership at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she conducts research and teaches courses on the politics of race and inequality in education. She has published more than 20 articles in academic journals such as Educational Administration Quarterly, Education Policy, and Teachers College Record; edited three books on educational equity and leadership; and authored two award-winning books: Learning in a Burning House: Educational Inequality, Ideology, and (Dis)Integration and The Politics of Education Policy in an Era of Inequality: Toward Democratic Possibilities for Schooling with Janelle T. Scott and Gary L. Anderson.

**The Evolving Role of Labor Organizations in Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Schooling**

Join the discussion on the evolving role of teachers’ unions in public education before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the unions’ future role in fostering student success during pandemic recovery. The conversation will delve into the myriad of tensions around union policy advocacy before, during, and after the pandemic, including issues of educator retention, safety mandates, school culture and climate, and COVID-19 relief spending.

**About the presenters:**

**Brenda Pearson** is the director of strategic policy initiatives at the Clark County Education Association (CCEA) where she focuses on state and local policies and programs to improve educator quality, increase retention, and attract educators to the profession. She studies the implementation and impact of K-12 policy and reforms, including the retention of educators in economically disadvantaged schools and understanding the teaching lifecycle. Twitter: @DrBrendaPearson

**Bradley D. Marianno** is an assistant professor of educational policy and leadership and director of the Center for Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (CREA) at UNLV. His research focuses on the consequences of local and state education policy change for educational governance with a substantive focus on state and federal teacher labor policy, teachers’ unions, and collective bargaining. Twitter: @bradmarianno

**Focus on the Future for Kids: Utilizing ARP Funds to Build a Kids-First Community Vision**

The needs of Clark County School District (CCSD) students are more pressing than ever as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and reimagine school for our children. The Focus on the Future For Kids: Community Input Process gathered input and feedback from more than 15,000 community members by asking: What do we want to see in our schools, and how can we use American Rescue Plan (ARP) federal funds to jumpstart our long-term, shared vision for our kids? Our goal was to gather input from a diverse set of stakeholders to create a community vision for the education our kids deserve, and to
ensure public and private investments are directed where they are needed most. The process was led by a volunteer planning team including the Guinn Center, Opportunity 180, and The Public Education Foundation, with support from the Give Better Group.

About the presenters:

Kirsten Searer advocates for equity and access for all children through public education. She joined the Public Education Foundation because she believes strongly in the need to unite the community to ensure every public school student in Clark County can succeed. She previously served as Chief of Staff, as well as Chief Communications and Community Engagement Officer, for the Clark County School District, as well as a communication professional for several political and non-profit organizations.

@kirstensearer
@ThePEFtoday

Jana Wilcox Lavin is an advocate for ensuring every kid has access to a great school that puts them on a path to realize their hopes and dreams. During her time in Nevada, she has worked to improve outcomes for students through policy, practice and non-profit education leadership. She is currently the CEO of Opportunity 180 and the mom to a spunky three-year-old girl.

@janaleeann
@opportunity180

Focusing on the Whole Student: Connection Before Content

Human connections occur when individuals feel seen, heard, and valued. When students are able to establish personal connections within an educational setting, they are more likely to stay engaged in learning. Many students (and teachers) are struggling with anxiety and stress. Educational content is important, but so are meaningful connections with peers, families, and educators. In this session, we will explore strategies for building connections within a community of learners.

About the presenter:

Teresa Byington is a full professor of early childhood education at the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension who loves to train, coach and facilitate communities of practice and professional learning communities. She is a frequent presenter at state and national conferences and is the author of Lose the Lecture: Engaging Approaches to Early Childhood Professional Learning.
From the Therapy Room to the Classroom: Building a Trauma-Informed Culture in Schools

Nearly two thirds of children in the U.S. experience trauma prior to age 18 and COVID-19 has escalated these numbers. Trauma, whether isolated or repetitive, disrupts the safety and security required by the learning brain. The good news is that there are evidence-based interventions that can be implemented today in every school. At this session, we'll introduce the audience to principles that can create a trauma-informed school culture that promotes healing, learning, and growing.

About the presenters:

The PRACTICE is a community mental health training clinic with a mission to provide accessible, high-quality mental and behavioral healthcare today while preparing the next-generation workforce to serve tomorrow. The clinic is a member of a nationwide multi-site partnership aimed at disseminating knowledge and skills regarding early intervention, mental health promotion, and prevention of long-term consequences of trauma. UNLV PRACTICE’s Executive Director (Dr. Michelle Paul), Assistant Director of PK-12 Outreach (Dr. John Nixon), Postdoctoral Fellows (Dr. Sarah Ramos and Dr. Diana Urena) and graduate mental health counseling student representative (Scarlett Iglesias-Hoyos) will form a panel to engage the audience in a discussion that elevates the power of healing in community and school spaces.

Integrated Student Supports as an Evidence-Based Strategy for Equity & School Improvement with Tami Hance Lehr, and Debbie Palacios from Communities in Schools

Communities In Schools of Nevada operates in 81 high-needs schools in the Clark, Elko, Humboldt, and Washoe County school districts with robust student outcomes, including a 90% graduation rate in 2019-20. Learn about the organization’s model of integrated student supports and how it is an essential component to a comprehensive school improvement strategy.

About the presenters:

Tami Hance-Lehr brings 30 years of leadership, strategic planning, crisis management, relationship building, and communication skills to her roles as the chief executive officer and state director of Communities In Schools of Nevada, the nation’s leading and most effective dropout prevention and intervention organization. She believes every child has unlimited potential and needs access to equal opportunities to succeed.

Debbie Palacios is the daughter of Peruvian immigrants, who began her career in the Clark County School District in 2005 where she has held positions as a teacher, English Language Learner Specialist, Learning Strategist, Title I Facilitator, and Coordinator, and Director of Family and Community Engagement Services (FACES). As the new executive director of Communities in Schools of Southern Nevada, she continues to work to increase access for all students and improve outcomes for our kids. Debbie has a passion for resource coordination, data, grant writing, community outreach, and
technology – all aimed at advocating for children, empowering and supporting families, and increasing student achievement.

**Nevada Partners: Advocacy from Cradle to Career**

Nevada Partners is the lead agency for the West Las Vegas Promise Neighborhood, a bold, place-based, collective impact initiative working to reduce structural inequities that exist along the fault lines of race in key life domains such as health, education, employment, housing, and social justice. Learn more about the organization’s efforts to comprehensively address community needs.

*About the presenters:*

Ashanti Lewis is the director of the West Las Vegas Promise Neighborhood (WLVPN) where she plans and oversees Nevada Partners’ critical initiatives and programs, including the WLVPN pillar project, as well as stakeholder cultivation and engagement.

**Plot, Plan, Strategize, Mobilize: Effective Advocacy**

Join community leader Yvette Williams for a brief overview about advocacy strategies and tips that result in effective public policy that drives success of your education agenda and goals. Understand who has the power to implement the change you want to see and the process, define the right questions to ask, identify obstacles, and build support.

*About the presenter:*

Yvette Willimas is a social justice advocate and actively engaged in issues of education justice in Nevada, and is Chair and Founder of the Clark County Black Caucus. She has been instrumental in systemic public policy change locally, statewide, and nationally and brings a unique perspective centered in equity, equality, and justice. She serves on several public policy boards and committees, and has appeared on many local and national media platforms, and has been honored with many awards, including the Presidential Lifetime Volunteer Service Award.

**Succeeding as a Black Educator**

The educator pipeline for Black men and women has always been slim compared to White educators. However, the effects on Black children have been monumental. In this workshop, I will tell you a story of resilience and give practical steps in overcoming barriers as people of color so often face.

*About the Presenter:*

Brione Minor-Mitchell, Born in Las Vegas, Nevada. Graduated from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas with a Bachelors of Science in Special Education, 2004, Masters of Science in Early Childhood, 2005, Masters of Arts in Urban Leadership, 2015, and is completing a Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Brione has been an educator for 20 years in Clark County and currently serves as Principal at Cunningham Elementary School.
“Teachers Don’t Really Encourage it:” A Critical Race Theory Analysis of High School Students’ of Color Perceptions of the Teaching Profession

Seeking to enhance efforts to diversify the teaching profession, this session focuses on research centering the educational experiences of high school students of color. The research uses a Critical Race Theory framework to examine the relationship between these students’ school experiences and their perceptions of the teaching profession. Discussion of study findings will focus on students’ perception of the teaching profession as a boring, undervalued, and white profession—specifically, one in which conversations about pursuing college and exploring a career in teaching are absent from the classroom or presented as only the purview of white students. Race conscious recommendations to encourage and support students of color to pursue college and to explore a teaching career will be presented.

About the presenters:

In addition to being a professor and director of UNLV’s Center for Multicultural Education, Christine Clark is a community worker, activist, teacher/educator, and participatory action-informed researcher. She works with families and youth in community, educational, and health-/healing-focused spaces. She teaches adults in the area of critical multicultural education (broadly defined) in formal and informal educational settings.

Norma A. Marrun is an assistant professor and assistant director of the Center for Multicultural Education. Her research interests include Latina/o education, diversity and equity in the K-16 educational pipeline, immigration policies, and culturally responsive pedagogy, with an emphasis on college access and completion. She draws on interdisciplinary perspectives to examine how Latina/o students and their families challenge and resist insidious forms of oppression within their homes, community, and schools.
Online Session Descriptions

Bring Joy and Justice to Inclusion Settings
Students with learning and thinking needs have a right to an inclusive environment that builds from their strength. Engage in dialogue with colleagues about strategies that help educators:
  ● Get to know who their students are
  ● Meet students where they are in terms of academics and social and emotional development, and
  ● Design individualized support that help student gain confidence

About the presenter:

Juliana Urtubey, a first-generation, bilingual immigrant, loved school. Drawn to teaching through a high school teacher leadership academy, she knew it would be important to be a bilingual teacher. Now the 2021 National Teacher of the Year, Juliana works to serve as a mirror for her school community, helping students to be proud of their identities and their families, and to acknowledge their strengths and contributions to the community. Juliana, currently in her 11th year in the classroom, teaches at Kermit R. Booker, Sr. Innovative Elementary School in Las Vegas.

Juliana is a National Board Certified Teacher and holds a bachelor’s degree in bilingual elementary education and a master’s degree in special bilingual education from the University of Arizona. She is a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Board of Directors member and Teacher Fellow, a Nevada Teach Plus Senior Policy Fellow, and an Understood Teacher Fellow and mentor. She is also a winner of the 2018 Rogers Foundation Heart of Education award.
Taking Pride: Fostering Supportive Environments for LGBTQIA+ Students

According to a 2019 GLSEN report, Nevada schools need more resources for LGBTQIA+ students, a more inclusive curriculum, and a shift to more inclusive policies. How can teachers, administrators, and policymakers ensure campuses are safe spaces for all students regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression? Join this important discussion and learn how you can help.

About the panelists:

AJ Huth manages the Youth and Family Services Program at The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada. She facilitates QVolution, a program that prepares LGBTQIA+ youth for the world and prepares the world for them. AJ also co-facilitates Pivot, which provides a safe space for community education and support for families.

Phil Burns is the executive director of the Office of Student Conduct at UNLV, where he is in his 27th year. He received his bachelor’s degree in education and master’s degrees in higher education and student affairs from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Over his time in higher education, Phil has served on many strategic diversity task forces and committees both at UNLV and for his national professional association, the Association for Student Conduct Administration. He has also served as the advisor for the UNLV LGBT student organizations and as a representative for Q:UNLV - UNLV’s LGBT Faculty & Staff Alliance.