



Reaching Higher in Massachusetts: Sharing Innovative Ideas for Meeting the Diverse Needs of our Students

August 9th, 2022

Worcester State University

Ghosh Science and Technology Center

8 am – 3 pm

Sponsored by



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A Note from the RHM Leadership

We are thrilled to welcome you to the Reach Higher MA summer convening, bringing together a diverse coalition of over 100 of the region's educators to learn more about and to help implement the Reach Higher initiative across the Commonwealth. Our theme for today's program is ***Reaching Higher Massachusetts: Sharing Innovative Ideas to Meet the Diverse Needs of Our Students***. Given all that has transpired these last couple of years, we have not been able to gather in this way and we believe it is now more important than ever to move forward in new ways to help our students.

We have a full agenda that will provide you the opportunity to learn new things, meet new people and explore new opportunities. We have brought together some of the best and brightest thought leaders in the region to share new initiatives and thinking to inspire us to continue our work with energy and creativity. Your participation here today speaks volumes about your dedication and commitment to your students, their families and our communities. Thank you for giving your time and your willingness to make a difference for those whom we serve.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my multi-talented colleague Christine Scafidi, my Co-Chair of RHM and Convening Chair of this event. Christine shared her vision of this day with the RHM Leadership team many months ago, and worked tirelessly to make it happen despite the shortened time frame. In addition, I want to thank Ryan Forsythe, Joe DiCarlo and all of the Worcester State University staff for making this a reality. Finally, thank you to our generous sponsor, ASA. Without their support, this day would not have been possible. Today there should be numerous opportunities for learning, networking, and action. I hope you leave today's convening inspired to do at least one new thing to help your students to "Reach Higher" and pursue some sort of training or education after high school graduation. Let's also pledge to make at least one new friend, a colleague you can collaborate with in your future work to inspire all students to pursue, persist and achieve post-secondary success.

Sincerely,

Julie Shields-Rutyna

RHM Co-Chair and Director of College Planning, Education, and Training
at MEFA and the entire RHM Leadership Team

Meet the RHM Leadership Team

Ruth Carrigan, Whitman Hanson High School

Catherine Chiu, Boston Public Schools

Kevin Fudge, American Student Assistance

Nyal Fuentes, Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education

Apelila Joseph, MEFA

Christine Scafidi, GEAR UP, OSFA, MA DHE

Tim Poynton, UMASS Boston

Julie Shields-Rutyna, MEFA

V. Scott Solberg, Boston University

Taryn Tomkins, MassEdCo



Reaching Higher: Sharing Innovative Ideas for
Meeting the Diverse Needs of our Students
Worcester State University
Ghosh Science and Technology Center
August 9, 2022 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM

- 8:00 - 8:30 Registration and Continental Breakfast – *Ghosh Science and Technology Center Lobby*
- 8:30 – 9:00 Welcome and Introductory Greetings - *Ghosh Lecture Hall (Room 102)*
- *Christine Scafidi, Reach Higher Massachusetts Convening Chair*
 - *Angel Perez - CEO, National Association for College Admission Counseling*
 - *Barry M. Maloney, President, Worcester State University*
 - *Regina Robinson - MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*
- 9:00 – 9:45 Keynote Speaker – *Ghosh Lecture Hall (Room 102)*
- *Lawrence Alexander, Search Consultant, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Practice Carney, Sandoe and Associates*
- 9:45 – 9:55 Break
- 10:00 – 11:15 Panel - *Ghosh Lecture Hall (Room 102)*
Getting to Work on Creating Quality Work-Based Learning Opportunities
- *Co-presenters, Lisa Harney, Dropout Prevention & Recovery Specialist, Division of College, Career and Technical Education at DESE and V. Scott Solberg, Boston University Center for Future Readiness*
 - *Jennifer Gwatkin, Innovation Pathways Lead, at DESE*
 - *Angelica Rodriguez, Program Director, Sociedad Latina*
 - *Ajit Vakharia, President and CEO at Flare Education*
- 11:15 – 11:25 Break
- 11:30 – 12:30 Meeting the Diverse Needs of Our Students Breakout I:
1. Preparing and Celebrating Students through Their College Journey **Ghosh 103**
 2. Why School Mental Health? **Ghosh 107**
 3. Meeting the Moment: Ensuring Equitable & Innovative Educational Access for All **Ghosh 200**
 4. Navigating College Admissions Post-Covid - What HS Counselors Need to Know **Wellness 201**
 5. What's the Plan? Transitioning to College with an IEP **Wellness 204**
 6. Civic Engagement and Latinx Student Success **Wellness 212**
- 12:30 – 1:30 Lunch – Wellness Center, Dance Studio (Room 204)
- *Boxed Lunch pick up, eat on your own on campus*
- 1:45 – 2:45 Meeting the Diverse Needs of Our Students Breakout II:
7. The Promise (13th) Year: Lessons Learned and Questions Raised **Ghosh 103**
 8. Universal Strategies and Practices to Support Student Well Being **Ghosh 107**
 9. Leveraging MEFA's Post-Secondary Planning Tools to Meet the Needs of Students **Ghosh 200**
 10. Empowering Students through High School Workforce Development **Wellness 201**
 11. Activating the Entrepreneurial Mindset **Wellness 204**

12. LEADS: A Strategy to Promote Informed College Decision Making **Wellness 212**

3:00

WSU Tours Available

Breakout Sessions and Presenters:

Session 1: Preparing and Celebrating Students through Their College Journey

Presenter: Jacob Boillat, The College Board/Reach Higher

Moderator: Rachelle Lappinen, GEAR UP Advisor, MassEdCO

Session Description: Each year, more than one million students, one-third of whom are first-generation, apply to college through the Common App. In January 2019, the Common App united with Reach Higher, the college access and success campaign started by former First Lady Michelle Obama during her time at the White House. Together, we are working with students, schools, foundations, and other mission-aligned organizations to help all students access, afford, and attain higher education. In this session, we'll share how we are helping to increase student engagement in the college readiness process and our efforts to remove barriers in the application for first-generation, low income, veteran, adult learners, and other underrepresented students. Learn more about our initiatives and ways you can get involved in preparing and celebrating students across the nation. We'll discuss how you can start programs in your communities to expand opportunities for all students. Come with your questions and ideas!

Session 2: Why School Mental Health?

Presenter(s): John Crocker, Director of School Mental Health & Behavioral Services Methuen Public Schools

Moderator: Lisa Harney, *Dropout Prevention & Recovery Specialist, Division of College, Career and Technical Education at DESE*

Session Description: Attendees will learn about how school mental health systems are critical to fostering early identification of emerging mental health concerns, intervening on behalf of students in a proactive manner, and establishing a prevention oriented public health system. Strategies for implementing a comprehensive school mental health system (CSMHS) will be shared, and Methuen's CSMHS will be presented as an example of what schools can establish to support students' mental health.

Session 3: Meeting the Moment: Ensuring Equitable & Innovative Educational Access for All

Moderator: Robert Dais, Statewide Director, GEAR UP

Presenter(s): Brett Roer, High School Strategic Partnerships Lead, Outlier.org, Dr. Adrien Mims, CEO and Founder, The Calculus Project, Christopher Finn, Founder, Freedom Ink, Dr. Sarah Cherry Rice, Founder and Executive Director, Digital Ready

Session Description: Ensuring equitable educational practices are aligned to technological innovation, professional development, and successful non-profit & district partnerships is crucial to systemic change and for those most underrepresented on college campuses to achieve success. Join Dr. Adrian Mims, CEO & Founder of the Calculus Project, Christopher Finn, Founder of Freedom Ink Consulting, Dr. Sarah Cherry Rice, Executive Director and Founder of Digital Ready, and Brett Roer, High School Partnerships Lead at Outlier.org, as they share their experiences in educational leadership and how to leverage your power to amplify impact. The Calculus Project's mission is to increase the representation and success of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), and low-income students in advanced mathematics. Freedom Ink Consulting's mission is to support the growth, development, and increased equity of the educational organizations they partner with. Outlier.org's mission is to empower high school students to save time & money through online, best-in-class, dual-enrollment courses to accelerate students' path to a college degree. Digital Ready is a Boston-based organization with a mission to activate the creative potential of high school students, especially underrepresented young people - students

from low-income backgrounds and students of color - with the agency, social capital, and skills to build their own pathways to economic mobility and success in Boston's innovation economy.

Session 4: Navigating College Admissions Post-Covid - What HS Counselors Need to Know

Moderator: Ruth Carrigan, Director of School Counseling, Whitman Hanson HS

Presenter(s): Tahkeya Blake, Associate Director, Multicultural Outreach & Recruitment, Fitchburg State University; Amy Chung, Associate Director of Admission, Boston College, Joseph Dicarolo III, Dean of Enrollment & Director of Admissions at Worcester State University

Session Description: The last few years have resulted in many changes to the college admissions counseling landscape. Join a panel of college admissions professionals to learn about the latest trends and key takeaways. Topics may include test optional, essays that make an impact, counselor recommendations that make a difference, and more.

Session 5: What's the Plan? Transitioning to College with an IEP

Moderator: Matthew Perreault, GEAR UP Advisor, MassEdCO

Presenter(s): Jennifer Stach, Director, TRiO Program for Student Achievement at Middlesex Community College

Session Description: This session will focus on the experience of transitioning to college for students on an educational plan. We will examine some of the causal factors that can make this process more challenging for students with diagnosed disabilities, and discuss theoretical insights and practical solutions for both high school and college professionals supporting students and their families in this process.

Session 6: Civic Engagement and Latinx Student Success

Moderator: Adrianna Bodusky, GEAR UP Advisor, MassEdCO

Presenter(s): Claudia Oliveira De Paiva, Latino Education Institute, Worcester State University

Session Description: Explore how college youth engaged in health outreach efforts based at the Latino Education Institute make a difference in the civic life of our communities and develop the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to succeed in college.

Session 7: The Promise (13th) Year: Lessons Learned and Questions Raised

Moderator: Rachelle Lappinen, GEAR UP Advisor, MassEdCO

Presenter(s): Dr. Michelle Pierce, Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Lynn Public Schools; Jobita Mao, Admissions Counselor, Salem State University; Kate Copans, Early College Coordinator, Lynn Public Schools

Session Description: Salem State University and Lynn Public Schools are part of the Promise (13th) Year pilot program in Massachusetts, which offers students who have completed high school graduation requirements the opportunity to earn 30 college credits free of charge through Chapter 70 funding. Recruitment for the program, which targets racially/ethnically under-represented and first-generation students who have been part of the Early College program, began in late spring of 2021, the second year of the global pandemic. Lynn Classical and Lynn English high school seniors deferred their high school graduation for a year and enrolled in a full-time course load for academic year 2021-2022 at Salem State University. Representatives from Salem State dean's and admissions offices and Lynn's early college director and coordinator will share lessons learned and questions raised in the first year of the pilot. Topics include recruitment, admissions and deferral processes,

scheduling, advising/counseling, monitoring student progress, and more.

Session 8: Universal Strategies and Practices to Support Student Well Being

Moderator: Taryn Tomkins, Director, GEAR UP, MassEdCO

Presenter(s): John Crocker, Director of School Mental Health & Behavioral Services Methuen Public Schools

Session Description: Session attendees will learn about trauma-sensitive classroom practices, approaches to fostering social emotional competence, and cognitive behavioral techniques that can be used to foster mental well being. Practical resources will be shared to support implementation of these practices, and session attendees will be engaged in live practice of selected techniques.

Session 9: Leveraging MEFA's Post-Secondary Planning Tools to Meet the Needs of Students

Presenter(s): Apelila Joseph, Program Manager MEFA Pathway, Ajea Stupart, Program Manager MEFA Pathway

Session Description: In this session, participants will learn about MEFA's free resources that are available for educators and college access professionals to support the diverse needs of students. This session will explore MEFA Pathway, a free online post-secondary planning platform, and how it can be utilized to support planning for college and career bound students. Educators will learn about the various tools available within MEFA Pathway including an updated curriculum for grades 6-12, My Journal feature that supports student reflections, and our full site translation into 6 different languages. Participants will also learn about ongoing professional development opportunities through the MEFA Institute as well as resources available to help families with post-secondary planning. Above all, this session is great for educators and college access professionals alike supporting middle and high school students.

Session 10: Empowering Students through High School Workforce Development

Moderator: Sandy Tavares

Presenter(s): Ajit Vakharia, CEO, Flare Education

Session Description: High school workforce development services - professional training, one-on-one mentorship, community events, summer experiences, and internships/co-ops - are all proven mechanisms for long-term career advancement and generational wealth-building. Designing programs that incorporate all of these services into a comprehensive, student-focused experience is necessary and possible but requires both a learned expertise and a significant investment of time and capital.

Flare Education has developed a 36-month program that has already achieved critical success in the Greater Boston region. During the 2022-2023 school year and 2023 summer, Flare Education will serve 75+ students across 7 schools and partner with over 30 companies in its Cohort 2 program. Ajit Vakharia - President and CEO of Flare Education - will present key findings from the pilot program launched in October, 2021 and discuss how to scale student impact both from a depth (impact of services on individual students) and breadth (number of participating students and companies) perspective.

Session 11: Activating the Entrepreneurial Mindset

Moderator: Matthew Pereault, GEAR UP Advisor, MassEdCO

Presenter(s): Adanma Ude, Regional Director of the Network For teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE); Jennifer Green, Sr. Manager of Programs for the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE)

Session Description: Teachers and administrators explore the Entrepreneurial Mindset and how we activate

those soft or "power" skills in students. NFTE will also guide practitioners through options for incorporating entrepreneurship in their classrooms and out of school time programs.

Session 12: LEADS: A Strategy to Promote Informed College Decision Making

Moderator: Julie Shields-Rutyna, Director of College Planning, Education, and Training, MEFA

Presenter(s): Dr. Timothy Poynton, Associate Professor, UMASS Boston, Counselor Education

Session Description: This session will describe a strategy, LEADS (List, Explore Apply, Decide, Succeed), for helping students and families make informed college decisions. The LEADS strategy promotes attending to both objective facts and subjective feelings in the college choice process. Free tools to support informed decision making such as a spreadsheet we developed to organize information from sources like the College Navigator and College Scorecard will be demonstrated. <https://www.collegeunmazed.com/>

Our Welcome Speakers

Angel Pérez , CEO, National Association of College Admission Counseling, Dr. Angel B. Pérez is CEO of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). In this role, he represents more than 25,000 admission and counseling professionals worldwide committed to postsecondary access and success. He is the primary voice of the association to government, media, and global partners. Pérez is recognized as a national thought leader and is a sought-after speaker on issues of educational equity, access, and success in American education.

Throughout the course of his career, Dr. Pérez has worked to realize his belief that diversity and academic excellence go hand-in-hand, and that every young person who aspires to higher education should have the opportunity to achieve. His work echoes his own story. Growing up poor in Puerto Rico and the South Bronx, he was the first in his family to graduate from college, and went on to become a leader in higher education. Recognized nationally on issues of equity and access in American education, Dr. Pérez is a tireless champion for underrepresented communities and a creative advocate for reform. Named by a Forbes article in 2019 as the most influential voice in college admissions, he strives to build an educational ecosystem that better represents today's society.

Prior to joining NACAC in July of 2020, Dr. Pérez served in secondary and higher education leadership positions across America, most recently, as Vice President for Enrollment and Student Success at Trinity College in Connecticut where his work was described as transformative. Since his arrival at NACAC, he has steered the organization through significant change as it strives to evolve to meet the needs of today's college admission profession. His leadership approach has been featured in several outlets, including the American Society for Association Executives.

Barry M. Maloney, Worcester State University's 11th President, has served in this role since 2011. His straightforward charge—to put students first—means providing them an excellent education at an affordable price in a vibrant campus environment, one where students explore their intellectual passions and pursue their professional interests, while gaining transformative leadership experiences.

Under President Maloney, Worcester State University has significantly improved its graduation rate; doubled its

fundraising and tripled its endowment; overhauled the physical campus; balanced annual campus budgets; increased grant support; doubled the diversity of its student body; and expanded outside-the-classroom learning opportunities for students. Maloney's Five Points of Action toward a More Inclusive Campus Climate, initiated in 2016, has resulted in gains in faculty diversity and better systems for addressing bias. Due to sound fiscal management, the campus has kept tuition and mandatory fees to just over \$10,000 a year for commuting students.

Knowing that academic success correlates with deeper connections to the campus, Maloney ensured that construction of a new residence hall and Wellness Center moved forward. The 150,000-square-foot Sheehan Hall opened in 2014, adding 400 beds and bringing Worcester State undergraduate residential population to about 40%—roughly double what it was in 2000. When the \$52.6 million, 101,000-square-foot Wellness Center opened in September 2016, it completed a 10-year, \$200 million dollar investment in new and renovated facilities that have transformed the campus.

Under President Maloney's leadership, The Princeton Review has consistently named Worcester State University a "Best in the Northeast" and U.S. News & World Report has ranked WSU in its regional "top tier." Worcester State University has also launched new academic programs; was named to the President's Honor Roll for Community Service; and was noted as one of the nation's most "environmentally responsible" campuses.

In 2019, Massachusetts Commissioner of Higher Education Carlos Santiago named Maloney to the statewide Equity Advisory Committee and Worcester Mayor Joseph Petty appointed Maloney to chair the Worcester Advisory Committee for Diversifying the Teacher Workforce.

President Maloney serves on governing boards of the Worcester Business Development Corporation, the Worcester Regional Research Bureau, the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, St. Vincent Hospital, and the American Antiquarian Society and is a incorporator for the Greater Worcester Community Foundation.

He has served as chair of both HECCMA, the consortium of 11 Central Massachusetts colleges, and of the State University Council of Presidents. Prior to joining Worcester State University, Maloney served for nearly 20 years at Westfield State University in a variety of positions, including twice as interim president.

A native of Springfield, Massachusetts, Maloney graduated from the University of Maine at Orono with a bachelor's degree in political science and public management, and a master's degree in public administration. Maloney is also a 2007 graduate of the Institute for Educational Management at Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Maloney, his wife Laura, and their children have lived across the street from the University since 2011.

Dr. Regina Robinson, Ed.D. joined DESE in September 2021 as a deputy commissioner overseeing strategic initiatives (workforce diversification), educational options (Early College, Charter Schools, etc.), planning and research (policy and federal grants), and the P20W Hub. Regina is a collaborative and skilled leader with a passionate expertise in student success for over 20 years. Prior to joining DESE, Regina was Dean of Student Affairs at Cambridge College, where she provided comprehensive support services to help non-traditional learners complete their degree.

As a promoter of student effectiveness and support, Regina understands students' pathway from admittance to degree conferral, pre-K to career, and engages both higher education and preK-12 stakeholders on the critical components impacting student success. She has been a fierce advocate for K-12 students with disabilities in the Greater Boston area and in 2014 was appointed to serve on the Boston Public Schools' Superintendent Search

Committee and was later appointed to the Boston Public School Committee, where she served for one term.

Since 2008, Regina's vast service to organizations has ranged from board and community engagement with past and current organizations like the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium, Thrive in Five, Operation House Call, Scholar Athletes, the Higher Education Resource Center, Special Olympics Massachusetts, and the Federation for Children with Special Needs. She has also been a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) guest lecturer at 10 colleges and universities across the Commonwealth, which include HGSE, BU, UMASS Boston, HMS, and Brown, especially focused on topics of disability inclusion, advocacy, and parental engagement. Regina possesses the unique ability to visualize educational attainment through many lenses: as a former college administrator, instructor, and local district leader to current K-12 parent advocate and statewide policymaker. As the parent of 4 children, one who is a star with Down syndrome, Regina is personally invested in access to education and career success for all students, from all backgrounds, and with all abilities. A recent doctoral graduate in Higher Education Leadership from Regis College, Regina's research is focused on spotlighting gender, race and executive leadership in education.

Keynote

Lawrence Alexander, Search Consultant, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Practice, Carney, Sandoe & Associates: Lawrence serves as the practice leader for Carney, Sandoe & Associates' Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Practice. The practice is responsible for leading retained searches for school DEIB leaders and providing consultative support for boards, executive leadership, and faculty and staff. To date, Lawrence has conducted anti-bias training with more than 50 colleges and universities, more than 30 independent schools, and a host of corporate and community-based organizations. He provides guidance related to board governance, strategic planning, climate assessment, and inclusive hiring.

Lawrence started his career in higher education before spending a decade at independent schools working as a college counselor and as a Director of Equity and Inclusion.

He has worked for The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria, The Business of Sports School, Ross School (NY), and The White Mountain School (NH). Lawrence also serves on the editorial board for Insight Into Diversity magazine and is on the board of trustees for Indian Mountain School (CT).

Lawrence was born and raised in Jersey City, NJ. He has six children and now resides in South Dartmouth, MA. Lawrence received his bachelor's degree in finance from Kean University and his master's in counseling from Montclair State University.

Panel Presenters:

Dr. V. Scott Solberg is a professor in the Counseling Psychology & Applied Human Development Department at BU Wheelock College of Education & Human Development. He works internationally and nationally on the design, implementation, and evaluation of effective career development programs and services, especially for high-need youth populations, including youth with disabilities.

As part of the BU Center for Future Readiness (with Dr. Kimberly Howard), Dr. Solberg's research, professional development, and curriculum is shaping the career development implementation policies and practices in the United States and around the world. His work with the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy has resulted in his being considered a leading expert in the design, implementation, and evaluation of individualized learning plans (ILPs). His book *Making School Relevant with Individualized Learning Plans: Helping Students Create Their Own Career*

and Life Goals (Harvard Education Press) describes the culmination of his ILP research as well as his experiences in designing social emotional learning efforts with educators at South Division High School in Milwaukee, WI.

Education: PhD, Counseling Psychology (APA Approved), University of California – Santa Barbara, MA, Marriage and Family Counseling, University of California – Santa Barbara, BA, Experimental Psychology and Sociology, University of California – Santa Barbara, Associate of Arts, Social Sciences, West Valley Junior College

***Member of the Reach Higher Leadership Team**

Lisa Harney is a Dropout Prevention and Reengagement Specialist at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education working in the College, Career, and Technical Education unit. Lisa passionately believes in the potential of EVERY student to not just graduate high school but to be successful in college, career and active civic life. Her priority projects include alternative education, chronic absence, dropout prevention and re-engagement, and implementation of *My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP)* – a four-year individual planning tool for ALL students.

Prior to working at the Department Lisa was the director of an alternative high school for pregnant and parenting teens operated under the guidance of the South Shore Educational Collaborative. The success of the program was in the holistic design including on-site day care, postsecondary planning, mental health counseling services, and a rigorous academic program leading to a high school diploma.

Lisa holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Boston College, a Master of Science degree in Business Education from Suffolk University and a Master of Education degree from UMass/Boston.

Ajit Vakharia is the President and CEO of Flare Education, a nonprofit based out of Boston that is focused on high school workforce development. Flare education provides high school students in generationally poor communities with a 36-month, immersive work experience focused on career and industry exposure, durable human and technical skill development, and network-building. Students receive hundreds of hours of workforce training, mentorship, events, and summer work experiences over the course of the program and make up to \$6,500 each year. Flare Education will be working with 50+ students and 25+ companies during the 2022-23 school year.

Ajit is based out of Boston and will also be starting the second year of his MBA program at Harvard Business School this fall. He founded Flare Education in early 2021 with a mission to tackle generational poverty and currently employs 3 staff members.

Jennifer Gwatkin has been involved with Innovation Pathways since their inception in 2017 and has served as the state lead for the program since 2019. Her prior roles at DESE include Early College coordinator (2017-2019) and liaison to Massachusetts' two public K-12 virtual schools (2014-2017).

In life before state government, Jennifer worked for Northeastern University in a regulatory compliance role supporting campus and online program expansion, and, for many years, in postsecondary licensure and accreditation. Jennifer holds a Master of Public Administration from Syracuse University's Maxwell School and enjoys long hikes with her nine-pound miniature dachshund named Pollywog.

Angelica Rodriguez's passion for education flourished during her seven years working for a nonprofit organization, Community Actions Program Inter-City, Inc. She earned her undergraduate degree and her Master's of Education, with a track in Learning, Teaching, and Education Transformation from University of Massachusetts, Boston. In 2017-2019, Angelica taught Spanish for grades 6-8 in the Public Schools of Brookline. As Sociedad Latina's former STEM Pathways Manager and current Program Director, she oversees Sociedad Latina's programs including STEAM Team middle school programs that serves English Language Learners from Boston Public Schools. Angelica liaises with partners like Boston University to provide STEM opportunities for the young people Sociedad Latina serves.

Breakout Presenters:

Jacob Boillat (he/him) is the Manager of Community Outreach & Engagement at the Common App and Reach Higher. Jacob is a higher education professional with a passion to engage and empower students to be change makers in their communities. Jacob graduated from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) in 2018 with a degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a focus on Higher Education. He then achieved his MBA from Anna Maria College in 2021. After working in Residence Life and Student Activities for 4 years, he transitioned to the Common App and Reach Higher to help engage students and remove barriers in the college admissions process.

Dr. Sarah Cherry Rice is a creative systems thinker with a delicate balance of bold visioning and intelligent execution, Sarah has the ability to lead innovative projects from concept to pilot to launch so that all students can be prepared for the future. As a former teacher, district administrator, and social entrepreneur, she brings both fresh thinking and a nuanced understanding of urban public school districts. She has the ability to think across education silos, leading with a high sense of urgency while activating communities to drive innovation and change.

Sarah founded Digital Ready to blur the lines between high school, college, and industry. Digital Ready helps cities create "triple currency" pathways, where students earn college credits, work experience, and industry-recognized credentials and launched "Year 13" to build an early college pathway for students who need additional support and resources to reach their full potential. This Fall, Digital Ready, will open their first high school in Revere called CityLab, where students will activate the community as their lab for learning and spend more time in the world than in a classroom. Sarah is also the founder of Parachute Teachers, launched out of The Harvard Innovation Lab, which invites community members and industry experts into classrooms as part-time facilitators to generate real-world learning. Sarah previously worked at IDEO to launch a national initiative to help public school districts build cultures of creativity and innovation, where teachers and students feel empowered to create change. Sarah holds a doctorate from Harvard University in Education Leadership, a master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania in Urban Education and Policy, and two bachelor's degrees from the University of Georgia in Political Science and Journalism. She is a proud Boston Public School parent.

Katharine Copans joined the Early College team at Lynn Public Schools in 2020. Prior to that, she worked for the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's Office of Student Financial Assistance as Associate Director and as an Academic Advisor and instructor at Northeastern University. Kate has her undergraduate degree and MA from Boston College.

John Crocker has worked in public education for over a decade, primarily as the administrator for the Methuen Public Schools Counseling Department. He has overseen the planning and implementation of the "Mental Health Initiative," which has focused on the establishment of a comprehensive school mental health system (CSMHS) in partnership with the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH). John has worked with the NCSMH as a member of the National School Mental Health Task Force and as the Massachusetts team leader for the National Coalition for the State Advancement of School Mental Health (NCSA-SMH). In his role as the director of school mental health & behavioral services, he is charged with overseeing the district-wide implementation and evaluation of Methuen's CSMHS and positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). His work has focused on developing a district-wide system of universal mental health screening, advancing the use of psychosocial data to inform school mental health staff's therapeutic practice, and the development and evaluation of the CSMHS in Methuen. He has worked to scale up evidence-based therapeutic services across Methuen through the provision of district-wide professional development and the design and implementation of group- and individual-therapy programs.

Mr. Crocker founded the Massachusetts School Mental Health Consortium (MASMHC), a group of approximately one-hundred and sixty school districts across Massachusetts committed to advocating for and implementing quality and sustainable school mental health services and supports. Most recently, MASMHC co-led the Massachusetts Collaborative for Improvement and Innovation Network (CoIIN) for Comprehensive School Mental Health and Thriving Minds, a professional development series focused on building comprehensive school mental health systems. He received the National Center for School Mental Health's School Mental Health Champion Award in 2018 and was nominated the 2019 Massachusetts School Counselors Association (MASCA) Administrator of the Year, the 20-21 Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Counselor of the Year, and the 2021 Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) Michael J. Kane Wellness Award recipient.

Christopher Finn has over 26 years of experience in public and charter school education. He has served as a Teacher, Dean of Students, Headmaster of School Culture & Climate and School Principal of a K-8 School in Newark, NJ, all while earning two Master's Degrees in Urban and Multicultural Education and Educational Leadership. He joined Cambridge Education (CE) in 2015 and went to work supporting Principals, Instructional Coaches and Teachers in improving their practice. During his tenure at CE, he engaged in Leading School Quality Reviews, Executive Coaching and facilitating Professional Learning with clients across the United States on topics such as Implicit Bias, Anti-racism, Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning, Building Equity Teams and many more.

He was hired to develop Equity Teams in over 20 schools in the Bronx, NY and then went on to serve as the Lead Reviewer in facilitating district-wide Equity Audits in Texas and Massachusetts in 2021.

Chris and his wife Eileen started their own Education Consulting company, Freedom Ink, LLC in 2021. They currently have clients in NY, NJ, CT, MA, and KY. You can review their work and current offerings at:

Jennifer Green, Sr. Manager of Programs for the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE), has been overseeing NFTE's entrepreneurship education programming across New England for twelve years. Over her tenure with the organization, Jennifer has supported nearly 100 entrepreneurship educators across middle schools, high schools, and CBO partnerships. Over her time with NFTE, she has helped 10,000 young people tap into - and leverage - their own entrepreneurial mindset. Jennifer is passionate about igniting the entrepreneurial spirit in young people, having her own transformative experience while earning her MBA from Babson College, rated #1 in the world for entrepreneurship for over 20 years. Jennifer lives in Natick, MA with her wife and two young children. When not working, Jennifer enjoys camping, tennis, birding, and coaching her sons' Little League teams.

Jobita Mao (she/her/ella) Admissions Counselor, Salem State University, has been working in higher education since 2014 and has been with Salem State since Fall 2017. Her role at Salem State includes me serving as the admissions liaison to community based organizations and MA Charter schools. A proud product of Lynn Public Schools, she has been lucky to work with the Promise Year students since the start of the program.

Apelila Joseph joined MEFA in 2021 as the MEFA Pathway Program Manager. In her role, she works with educators, students, and families across Massachusetts in assisting with post-secondary planning and success. Prior to joining MEFA, Apelila worked as the Springfield Promise Administrator where she oversaw Springfield Public Schools College Financial Aid Advising Program and Naviance implementation. She received her BA in Environmental Science and Policy from Smith College and her MBA from Bay Path University. Apelila is a member of the Reach Higher Massachusetts leadership team.

***Member of the Reach Higher Leadership Team**

Claudia Oliveira De Paiva is an enthusiastic and motivated community leader. She is originally from Brazil and came to our community as an International student pursuing Higher Education in the United States. She is committed to civic engagement, and the wellbeing of the Worcester community as a whole. She is dedicated to ensure equitable, and accessible health, and education opportunities for all, especially to the underrepresented population, and she advocates towards all the Social Determinants of Health. Claudia is the founder, and team manager of the Latino Education Institute Health Ambassadors Team - Worcester State University. Claudia and her multi diverse, and multilingual team are all well equipped to provide multilingual resources to support our community as they were highly trained by the Worcester Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Public Health, UMass Memorial Healthcare, and UMass Chan Medical School, as well as Harvard University. Through the COVID Equity Task Force, Claudia has been collaborating with various doctors, physicians, and health specialists in the community, as well State and Local representatives. She has participated in a myriad of state conference and summits, planning and implementation boards meetings, and community projects such as the COVID Free Testing Sites, the COVID Equity Vaccination Clinics, the Food Security Task Force, the Mayor Mental Health Task Force, QCC HACE – Hispanics Achieving & Celebrating Excellence, and Worcester Brazilian Association. Claudia has extensive experience in community and international relations, including years of working on global missions (UN- United Nations) Claudia continues to demonstrate incredible leadership skills,

through political engagement, and community policy advocacy, earning recognition from the Worcester City Manager, Worcester Mayor, Worcester City Councilors, CDC-Center for Diseases Control & Prevention Officials, and Congressman McGovern- White House Representative.

Dr. Michelle Pierce is Associate Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences at Salem State University. She earned her B.A. from Wellesley College, an M.A.T. in Foreign Language Education from the University of Pittsburgh, and an Ed.D. in Literacy, Language and Cultural Studies from Boston University. A former public high school teacher, Dr. Pierce served as a faculty member in the Salem State School of Education for 15 years before moving into her administrative role in 2015. She was co-author of the Early College Designation proposals for the public schools of Salem and Lynn and has served as the coordinator of both programs since 2019.

Dr. Timothy Poynton Dr.Poynton's research interests are in the realm of issues affecting K-12 students and the school counselors who serve them. Current research includes an examination of the postsecondary transition of graduating high school seniors, focusing on how in-school experiences and attitudes relate to postsecondary outcomes with a focus on the transition from high school to college. Professor Poynton is also engaged in research examining instruments designed to measure the attitudes and beliefs of school counselors. Embedded in the above research projects are an interest in technology applications, particularly issues around the use of online surveys and methods for improving their efficacy and usability, and applications for school counselors to collect and analyze data.

***Member of the Reach Higher Leadership Team**

Brett Roer serves as Outlier.org's High School Strategic Partnerships Lead after 16 years of empowering high school students as an educator in Brooklyn, Queens, and The Bronx. At Outlier.org, Brett fosters partnerships with high school districts, charter networks, and college and career access programs to provide online, dual-enrollment Outlier.org courses to high school students.

Brett's mission has been to equip high school students with the foundational academic skills and the support needed to graduate from their best-fit colleges and feel both academically & financially supported along the way throughout his career.

In his most recent experience as a principal in The Bronx, Brett accelerated the graduation rate from one of the lowest in New York City (48%) to one of the highest in the district (87%) in only four years while dramatically increasing the college and career readiness rate.

Brett has inspired students and families as a high school principal, college & career advisor, and teacher and is fiercely passionate about providing students access to high-quality education without incurring student debt. Brett's proudest professional achievements have been ensuring students earn full scholarships to their dream colleges and universities.

Jennifer Stach is a lifelong higher education professional. She has worked in many areas of the field: residence life, admissions, academic success and advising, alumni relations, and has been an adjunct faculty at several institutions. She believes firmly in the power of higher education to change peoples' lives, and equally firmly in the notion that she has an obligation to honor each student's experience and to meet them where they are at.

She is a doctoral student in higher educational leadership at Bay Path University, with a tentative thesis focus on improving educational outcomes during the first year of college for students with an ADHD diagnosis. She is currently the director of the TRIO Program for Student Achievement at Middlesex Community College.

Ajea Stupart joined MEFA as an intern in 2016 as part of the College Planning team. Through her time as an intern, she developed a keen understanding of all of MEFA'S programs, products, and most importantly, overall mission. In the spring of 2017 she joined MEFA full time as the Social Media and Marketing Coordinator. In this role, Ajea works with all of MEFA's social media channels, scheduling and analyzing content and brainstorming creative ways to reach every customer on MEFA's platforms. She received a BS from Lasell College in Communication with a focus in Journalism & Media Writing, and is now pursuing an MS in Integrated Communication Marketing.

Adanma Ude, Regional Director of the Network For teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE), has dedicated her career to supporting young people and their path to success. Since the age of 14, Adanma has worked with Boston's youth to provide them with engaging programming and school-based enrichment services. While at NFTE, Adanma has overseen new partnership growth and facilitated new statewide programs while also advocating for youth entrepreneurship programming across various forums. Prior to joining NFTE, Adanma served as the Director of Partnerships for City Year, Boston where she led her team as they served over 50 schools across the city. As a mother to a beautiful 8 year old son, when not working, Adanma enjoys spending time with her family, cooking up delicious meals based off of her grandparents recipes and roots, and serving as a board member and advisor for various community and institutional boards.