

State Council for Educator Effectiveness

Member Biographies

Amie Baca-Oehlert, President, Adams County District 12 Education Association

For as long as I can remember, I wanted to be a teacher. So with that goal in mind, I attended Clemson University and graduated in 1997 with a Bachelor's of Arts in Secondary Education-English. While in college, I worked at Camp Santa Maria in Bailey, CO, and after graduating I decided to move to the beautiful state of Colorado to pursue a teaching career. I received my first teaching job at Adams City High School teaching English, grades 9-12. While at Adams City, I served as the Varsity Cheerleading Coach as well as served on various committees. While I loved teaching, I quickly realized that students' social/emotional needs often impact their performance in the classroom and I therefore decided to pursue my Master's in School Counseling. I received my Master's in School Counseling from the University of Northern Colorado in the spring of 2003. That fall, I made the difficult decision to leave Adams City HS as a teacher and to move to Northglenn High School in District 12 as a school counselor. Both my experiences teaching and serving as a school counselor have had great impacts on my life and my life's path. Because of the passion that I have for my profession, I have also always been extremely active and involved in the Teacher's Association. I have served many roles in the Association from a building AR, Executive Team member, chief negotiator, and am currently serving as the President of the District 12 Educators' Association. I proudly serve the 1850 DTEA members in District 12 and am extremely grateful for the collaborative working relationship that we have with the district. I was appointed by Governor Ritter to serve as a member of the P-20 Council and appointed by Governor Ritter to serve as a member of the State Council for Educator Effectiveness, both of which have been an honor to serve on. I am proud that the state of Colorado values education and the voices of the professionals in shaping and making changes to improve the Education Profession.

Jo Ann Baxter, Ph.D., School Board President, Moffat County School District

After 32 years of teaching in Colorado and Nebraska, I retired in 2003. As an educator, I served in numerous political and educational leadership positions on the local and state levels. I participated in various training options that helped me to become a better member of a board, gave me skills in negotiating and budgeting, encouraged my involvement in the political process, and empowered me as a teacher and citizen. As a local teacher leader, I often found myself in situations that required skills in conflict resolution, many of them related to local personnel issues. After my retirement, I was urged to run for the Moffat County Board of Education by former colleagues and by many in the community. As a board member, I have worked with legislative leaders and our

administrative staff to improve funding for the lowest funded districts in the state. I am particularly proud of that effort. Another accomplishment in my tenure on the board was the passage of a bond initiative in 2007. I have served on the Colorado School Board Association's Legislative and Resolutions Committee for six years. I believe this position gave me an understanding and appreciation of school board issues.

I have been married to Brian for 47 years, have three sons, and four wonderful grandchildren. All of my sons and their spouses live in Colorado and all of my grandchildren will depend upon Colorado's public schools to give them the opportunities all children deserve. Two of my sons and two of my daughters-in-law are educators.

I know that quality educators are absolutely essential for the development of well-educated students. I also know that judging that quality is an extremely difficult, subjective and complex charge. I have eagerly participated in the work of the State Council for Educator Effectiveness and I am proud to have been part of its accomplishments. I look forward to the continued oversight of implementation of the pilot evaluation proposed by the Council.

Bill Bregar, School Board Member, Pueblo District 70

Mr. William (Bill) Bregar graduated from Southern Colorado State College (now Colorado State University-Pueblo) in 1971 with a B.A. degree in biology and from Western State College of Colorado in 1980 with an M.A. in secondary school administration. He was employed by Pueblo School District 70 for 31 years as an elementary, middle school and high school teacher for 16 years and as a middle school principal for 15 years. He retired in 2002.

In 2003 and again in 2007, Mr. Bregar was elected to the Pueblo District 70 Board of Education. In 2004, 2007 and again in 2010, Mr. Bregar was elected to the board of directors of the Colorado Association of School Boards. He currently serves on the CASB Executive Committee and has served as the CASB liaison to the Colorado Charter Schools Institute (CSI). He served as the president of CASB during 2009.

During his professional career as a teacher, principal and currently as a local school board member, Mr. Bregar has been a member of the Colorado Education Association (CEA), Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE) and the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB). He has served and continues to serve as a member of community boards and service organizations. He is currently serving as the vice-chair of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments and is a member of the Avondale-Vineland Lions Club and the Pueblo Elks Lodge.

Mr. Bregar has served as an adjunct professor of education in the Teacher Education Department at CSU-Pueblo since 2003. He is currently teaching the Foundations of Education course both on campus and online as well as supervising student teachers and teachers in residency.

Mr. Bregar has been married to Marlene since 1973. They have three grown sons.

Margaret Crespo, Principal, Heath Middle School (Greeley)

Ms. Margaret Crespo attended Montclair State University earning her BA in History with an Education minor. She earned her MA in counseling in 1997 and earned her Ed.D from Arizona State University in 2003. She started teaching in Jersey City for five years. Following that she became a high school counselor in Arizona for 1 year, Assistant Principal for 4 years and Principal for 4 years. She has worked in Colorado for 4 years in Greeley middle schools. She has recently been hired to be the Director for Thompson School District. She has a great passion for our youth and believes in the importance of education for the future.

Kerrie Dallman, President, Jefferson County Education Association

Kerrie Dallman earned her teacher license and a BA in Sociology from Metro State College of Denver. She taught social studies (American government) at Pomona High School (Arvada, Colorado) from 2001 to 2008. In the spring of 2008 she was elected president of the Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA) which represents all licensed, non-administrative employees in Jeffco Public Schools (JPS), Colorado's largest school district.

Dallman is a strong and vocal advocate for both teachers and public schools. She has served on the governing board of the Colorado Education Association and is an active participant in the Teacher Union Reform Network (TURN). Dallman's leadership was critical in securing a \$32.8 million federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant which was awarded to JPS in October of 2010. The grant will fund a five-year study to assess the impact of Jeffco's proposed "Strategic Compensation" plan (a targeted performance-based compensation system) on student achievement and on attracting, retaining, and rewarding high performing educators. She was one of only four teachers appointed by Governor Bill Ritter in 2010 to serve on the Council on Educator Effectiveness.

Tracy Dorland, Executive Director for Teacher Effectiveness, Denver Public Schools

Tracy Dorland is the Executive Director of Educator Effectiveness in the Denver Public Schools. In this role, she leads the development of a comprehensive definition of teacher and principal effectiveness and the creation and implementation of performance management systems that align to those definitions. Prior to this role, she served as an Instructional Superintendent for a network of Elementary Schools in DPS. She has also been a principal, assistant principal, instructional coach and teacher. Tracy has a BA in Psychology from the University of Colorado at Boulder and an MA in Administrative Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Colorado at Denver.

Shelby Gonzalez-Parker, Student, 2010 graduate of Justice High School/current student at Metro State College

Shelby's life was headed in a dangerous direction in middle school after the loss of her older brother. Fortunately a remarkable teacher, at an alternative school, connected with her and helped her change her life around. Seeking a school that fit her culture and her voracious desire to learn, she attended 4 different schools before graduating from one of Denver's newest charter schools as the first Valedictorian. Shelby has worked with the non-profit organization Project VOYCE for the past three years as a youth trainer and works every day to create more student voice in schools and school reform. She is a single mom and is attending Metro State College of Denver where her career goal is to be a teacher.

Towanna Henderson, Parent, Denver Public Schools

Towanna Henderson has devoted over 12 years mentoring and promoting academic excellence in urban youth through her work with the Asfaw Family Foundation International, Arches of Hope Bicycle Giveaway, Colorado Association of Black Professional Engineers and Scientists (CABPES), The African-American Leadership Institute, LifeBound and the Urban League Young Professionals. She was recently appointed to the State Council for Educator Effectiveness.

Ms. Henderson is currently actively involved in the community as a College Prep Advisor for various nonprofit organizations and writes a monthly education column in the Denver Urban Spectrum as a resource for parents and students. In addition, she is the Denver Public School Coordinator for The Arches of Hope Bicycle Giveaway. This annual event has awarded over 500 bicycles to deserving DPS students for their achievements and perseverance through difficult challenges. In her new role as a Parent/Family Liaison, Ms. Henderson will train parents on Collaborative Reading Strategies as part of the I-3 Innovation Grant.

Ms. Henderson also has a professional background in Marketing, Community Relations and Project Coordination. She started her career in marketing as The Community Marketing Initiative Coordinator for Norwest Banks focusing on marketing financial products and services to underserved populations and complying with the Community Reinvestment Act. She has also coordinated community marketing and public relations efforts for McDonalds, The National Stroke Association and Denver Community Schools. Ms. Henderson has a B.A. in Journalism and is a graduate of Wayne State University and Northwestern High School in Detroit.

Ms. Henderson is the proud mother of two children, Brendon and Tamia Henderson, and considers them a driving force in her life.

Nina Lopez, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Colorado Department of Education

Nina Lopez is Special Assistant to the Commissioner at the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). Lopez joined the CDE in May 2009 to oversee CDE's management of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) signed into law by President Obama in February 2009.

Currently, Nina is leading the State's work in implementing Senate Bill 10-191 as Director of Educator Effectiveness Initiatives for the Colorado Legacy Foundation (CLF) which she joined in May 2009. Nina also serves as the Commissioner's designated representative on the State Council for Educator Effectiveness. Her work also includes coordinating a strategic partnership with The New Teacher Project to recommend a re-alignment of the CDE to articulate and achieve state level goals related to educator effectiveness within the department's existing activities.

Prior to joining the CDE and CLF, Lopez served as vice president of strategy and operations for the Colorado Children's Campaign, providing overall organizational oversight as well as direct supervision of the policy team. She has worked in K-12 education policy since 2003, first as director of external affairs for the Colorado League of Charter Schools and then as policy director for the Donnell-Kay Foundation. Lopez also co-chaired the education committee for Gov. Ritter's transition team. Prior to 2003, she practiced corporate law for nine years. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Literature from Harvard-Radcliffe and a Juris Doctorate from Columbia Law School.

Lopez volunteers as vice chair of the board of directors for KIPP Colorado, which runs two Denver charter schools. She also has served as the school's board president. A native of New York City, Nina was raised in Puerto Rico and now lives in Boulder with her husband, Todd, and two children, Diego (5) and Katie (2).

Colin T. Mullaney, Executive Director, Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy

Colin Mullaney began his education career with Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy in 1995, teaching science and mathematics before going on to various administrative roles. Currently Mullaney is the principal for grades 5 through 12 and the executive director for the entire program, supervising the overall management of this K-12 school with 150 staff members and two campuses. Under his direction, CMCA's enrollment has doubled to over 1000 students currently. He was instrumental in creating the high school, The Vanguard School, which opened in 2006. The Vanguard School has been ranked the top-performing high school in Colorado for the past four years, based on CSAP and ACT testing. Mullaney holds a Master's degree in Public Administration and a Bachelor's degree in Biology. After his graduation from the University of Notre Dame, he was on active duty with the U.S. Army for three years. Since 1995, he has been in the Army Reserves, successfully balancing his military duties with his leadership roles at Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy.

Lorrie Shepard, Dean, School of Education, University of Colorado Boulder

Lorrie A. Shepard, Ph.D., is a University Distinguished Professor of Research and Evaluation Methodology and Dean of the School of Education at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her research focuses on psychometrics and the use and misuse of tests in educational settings. Technical topics include validity theory, standard setting, and statistical models for detecting test bias. Her studies evaluating test use have addressed the identification of learning disabilities, readiness screening for kindergarten, grade retention, teacher testing, effects of high-stakes accountability testing, and formative assessment in classrooms.

Dr. Shepard is past president of the American Educational Research Association and past president of the National Council on Measurement in Education. She received the Distinguished Career Award from the National Council on Measurement in Education, the award for Distinguished Contributions to Research in Education from the American Educational Research Association, and the 2005 Henry Chauncey Award for Distinguished Service to Assessment and Education Science from Educational Testing Service. Dr. Shepard was elected to the National Academy of Education in 1992 and is a past president of the NAEEd.

Brenda Smith, President, Douglas County Federation of Teachers

Brenda Smith is the President of the Douglas County Federation of Teachers/Classified Employees and the President of AFT Colorado. Prior to being elected to these positions, she was instrumental in starting the first Educational Research and Dissemination Professional Development Program in Douglas County School District and help create the first Pay for Performance Plan. Brenda has worked in Douglas County since 1993. She began her career as a fourth grade teacher at Bear Canyon Elementary.

Matt Smith, Vice-President for Engineering, United Launch Alliance

Matthew Smith is vice president of Engineering for United Launch Alliance (ULA) headquartered in Denver, Colo. In this role, Smith has company-level responsibility for engineering personnel, processes, tools, products, technical oversight and launch certification activities. Prior to joining ULA, Smith served as technical director and chief engineer for Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company, Atlas launch vehicle programs. Matt lead the development of a world class and continuously improving college intern program at ULA, which involves participants from dozens of universities at all class levels. This program collaborates with Ball Aerospace so that, each summer, the ULA interns design, build and launch several large model rockets and the Ball interns design, build and integrate payloads for those rockets. This coming summer the program will include eighteen high schools designed and built payloads as a method for encouraging more students to get engaged in and gain an interest for STEM fields in education and the workforce.

He is a founding board member for the STEM Charter School and Academy, in Douglas County Colorado and is an active leader and supporter of education advancement and reform. Matt previously served on the Systems Transformation Subcommittee (part of the Governor's P20 committee) and is currently the Chair for the State Council on Educator Effectiveness which is developing recommendations on the implementation of SB-191 for the State Board of Education.

Smith received his Bachelor of Science degree in applied mechanics and engineering science from the University of California San Diego.

He lives with his wife Nelly and six children in the foothills outside Sedalia, Colorado and enjoys neighborhood bible studies, hiking, fishing and wood working along with trying to keep up with the maintenance of a twenty-five acre mountain property.

Sandra Smyser, Superintendent, Eagle County Schools

Dr. Smyser is the Superintendent of Eagle County Schools, a district that is known for implementing innovative practices. This is her thirteenth year as a Superintendent in Colorado and California School Districts. Notably, Dr. Smyser earned her Ph.D. in Special Education from the University of California, Riverside. Her prior work experience includes wearing the various hats of Assistant Superintendent, Principal, and Bilingual Special-Education Teacher.

Aside from her professional work experience, Dr. Smyser currently serves as the Superintendent Representative on the State Council for Educator Effectiveness, a highly esteemed group that has been charged with guiding the implementation of Senate Bill 191, a radical change in teacher and principal evaluation and tenure for the State of Colorado. In addition, Dr. Smyser currently serves on the Boards of The Youth Foundation and the Colorado Legacy Foundation, and also plays an active role in the Education Committee of the Vail Valley Foundation.

Eagle County Schools is in its ninth year of implementing strategic performance compensation for employees, which has included completely abandoning the traditional teacher lock-step salary schedule. Also worth mentioning is that the District is in its third year of a Closing the Achievement Gap initiative, made possible by a strong partnership with the Colorado Department of Education. Eagle County Schools is proud to report that student achievement is steadily rising and the gap is gradually closing.

James Smyth, President, Mesa Valley Education Association

Jim has been in a teacher since graduating from Mesa State College in Grand Junction in May, 1993 with a bachelor's degree in elementary school Math. Since that time, he has earned degrees and taken classes from Mesa State, Adams State, and the University of Colorado, with an emphasis on earth science. He has always had a wonderful time working with school-aged children from previous employment in Vail working with ski school kids to coaching many different ages of kids in basketball and soccer.

Jim has been working with his Teacher's Association since he became a teacher and has been President of MVEA for two years and was recently elected to the position for two more years. Prior to becoming President, he was Association Representative for his school, worked in negotiations with District 51, and tries desperately to balance his work with family, which consists of his wonderfully supportive wife, Jennifer, three children and four grandchildren.