

# CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

**DROPOUT PREVENTION**

through the

**ARTS**

in

**ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION**

**A roundtable co-hosted by:**



**Los Angeles County  
Office of Education**

Leading Educators ▪ Supporting Students ▪ Serving Communities

the H E *a* R T project

*creatively linking teens, artists & communities*

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# INTRODUCTION

For over 19 years, The HeArt Project has brought high-quality arts programming to alternative education classrooms in both large and small districts across Los Angeles County. This work has shown that teaching creativity to students who have been unsuccessful in traditional high schools is an effective strategy to engage them in their education and keep them on track to graduate with a plan for the future.

The HeArt Project has partnered with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) for 9 of those years. In July 2010 this partnership expanded to establish the Hollywood Media Arts Academy (HMAA), the first arts-focused alternative education school in Los Angeles County. HMAA students receive two hours of arts instruction (taught by The HeArt Project staff) every day in addition to classes in other academic subjects (taught by LACOE staff) for a full high school curriculum.

We have seen how the system of alternative education can work. Small learning environments create safe spaces for students and low student-teacher ratios enable authentic and genuine relationships. We've also seen how bringing professional artists to the classroom can creatively engage students.

The HeArt Project and LACOE seek to leverage our successful work to more successfully retain alternative education students and lead them to graduation with a plan for their futures. Despite the huge potential we see in this system, we also have come up against numerous obstacles that we cannot face alone. Achieving our goal will require the collective support of a cross-sector of stakeholders with whom we can partner more systemically to achieve shared goals.

This past March, Cynthia Campoy Brophy (Founder & Executive Director of The HeArt Project) and Sophia Waugh (former LACOE Board Member and current HeArt Project board member) flew to Washington, DC to attend the Building a Grad Nation Summit, where Vice President Joe Biden, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, and America's Promise Alliance Chair, Alma Powell, commemorated the launch of the America's Promise Alliance 10 year Grad Nation campaign. Grad Nation is a national movement to transform awareness of the dropout crisis into sustained, results-driven action. It's a call to action for concerned citizens, businesses, community leaders, policy makers, educators and the nation. It has adopted President Obama's goal of a 90% national graduation rate by 2020 and works in four key areas: raising awareness, driving advocacy, supporting community, and building alliance.

Cynthia and Sophia were moved by the national momentum to address the dropout crisis, and soon after The HeArt Project became an official partner of America's Promise Alliance. They were also inspired by the recommendation to convene Dropout Prevention Summits (from 2008-2010, as part of its Dropout Prevention Campaign, America's Promise Alliance convened 105 highly successful summits—one in all 50 states and 55 cities with the largest dropout rates). These summits brought together leaders from diverse sectors to “understand the dropout crisis in their local region, rally the community to end the crisis, and build strong partnerships for lasting change.” Cynthia and Sophia noticed that the arts were absent from this greater dropout prevention dialogue and saw an opportunity to organize a roundtable highlighting the arts in alternative education as an effective strategy for addressing the dropout crisis.

# INTRODUCTION

Together, Cynthia Campoy Brophy and former LACOE Superintendent, Jon Gundry, planned a roundtable, entitled “Creative Engagement: Dropout Prevention through the Arts in Alternative Education.” Upon Jon Gundry’s departure from LACOE, Dr. Ron Randolph (Special Assistant to the Superintendent at LACOE) became the primary co-host and co-strategist. On July 28th, 2011, we convened a select group of twenty-five influential leaders from the fields of research, advocacy, education, arts, business, nonprofit, local politics, and data collection to discuss the role of creativity in engaging students in their education and their futures. This initial gathering served as the exciting beginning of a collective commitment to combat the high school dropout crisis by integrating creative engagement in all aspects of alternative education classrooms.

We presented our Hollywood Media Arts Academy as a laboratory in which to implement new practices with the potential to replicate successes in other HeArt Project sites and throughout the rest of alternative education.

Until now we have attacked the education crisis in silos. Our hope is that we begin to collaborate in creating system-wide structures that provide the supports necessary to creatively engage our students most at risk of dropping out. We hope that the roundtable and what has followed it will serve as the foundation for such collaboration.

Cynthia Campoy Brophy  
Founder & Executive Director  
The HeArt Project

Dr. Ron Randolph  
Special Assistant to the Superintendent  
Los Angeles County Office of Education



RON RANDOLPH



CYNTHIA CAMPOY BROPHY; SOPHIA WAUGH

**“The dropout rate is a tragedy, a loss of human potential. We are better when we work together than when we work in isolation. My hope is that we can find some way collectively to bring to bear our expertise and find an alternative to what we are doing right now in pockets.”**

Ron Randolph - LACOE

**“It is exciting to not have everybody here on the same page. So often we come to these meetings and preach to the choir. We want to emerge as a room of collaborators and come out as either advisors or practitioners in this collaborative effort.”**

Cynthia Campoy Brophy  
- The HeArt Project

## DROPOUT EPICENTERS

Twenty-five individual school systems account for one in every five nongraduates nationwide for the class of 2011.

PROJECTED NONGRADUATES	DISTRICT
39,669	NEW YORK CITY
35,568	LOS ANGELES
16,114	CLARK COUNTY, NEV.
11,310	MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLA.
10,469	CHICAGO
9,304	PHILADELPHIA
8,039	DETROIT
7,852	HOUSTON
7,477	BROWARD COUNTY, FLA.
6,990	DALLAS
5,867	HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLA.
5,550	DUVAL COUNTY, FLA.
5,523	HAWAII (STATEWIDE DISTRICT)
5,396	ORANGE COUNTY, FLA.
5,366	GWINNETT COUNTY, GA.
5,044	SAN DIEGO
5,000	PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLA.
4,880	DEKALB COUNTY, GA.
4,787	CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG, N.C.
4,315	MILWAUKEE
4,313	KERN UNION, CALIF.
4,260	PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD.
4,209	PHOENIX UNION, CALIF.
4,109	MEMPHIS, TENN.
3,963	ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.

## THE PROBLEM IS SEVERE

Each year, roughly one-fourth of our nation's public high school students fail to graduate on time. The California Dropout Research Project (CDRP), founded out of the University of California Santa Barbara by Dr. Russell Rumberger, has found rates almost twice as high in the City of Los Angeles, which sees nearly one dropout for every graduate. As the figures on this page demonstrate, the dropout crisis in both California and Los Angeles is among the most severe in the nation.

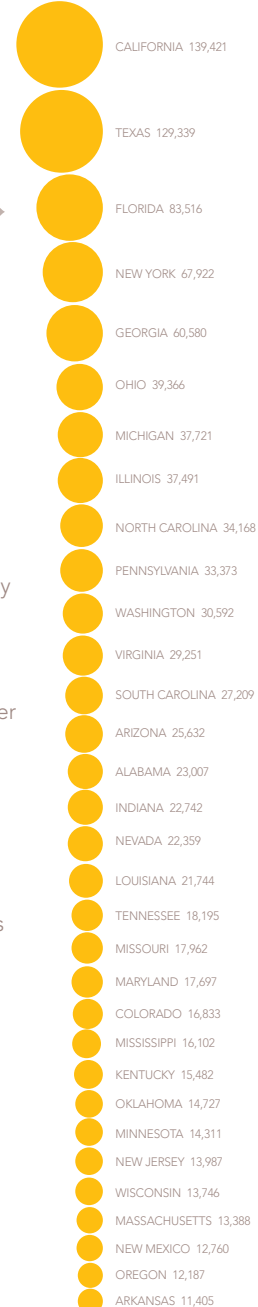
**1.2 MILLION STUDENTS DROP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL EACH YEAR IN THE UNITED STATES**

**GRADUATION RATES HAVE REMAINED LARGELY UNCHANGED OVER THE LAST 30 YEARS.**

1.2 MILLION STUDENTS FAIL TO GRADUATE

Nation:  
**1,154,132**  
Nongraduates

Projected Number of Nongraduates for Nation and States, Class of 2011



The EPE Research Center projected the number of graduates and nongraduates for the class of 2011 by multiplying the 2007-08 graduation rate by the number of 9th graders enrolled that year. The areas of the circles are proportional to the number of students failing to graduate.

Nationally, 1.2 million members of this year's graduating class will not earn diplomas. This represents 143,500 fewer dropouts than the previous year. A member of the class of 2011 will leave school every 27 seconds.

SOURCE: Diplomas Count 2011: Beyond High School, Before Baccalaureate

## DROPOUT CRISIS

### THE COST OF INACTION IS GREAT

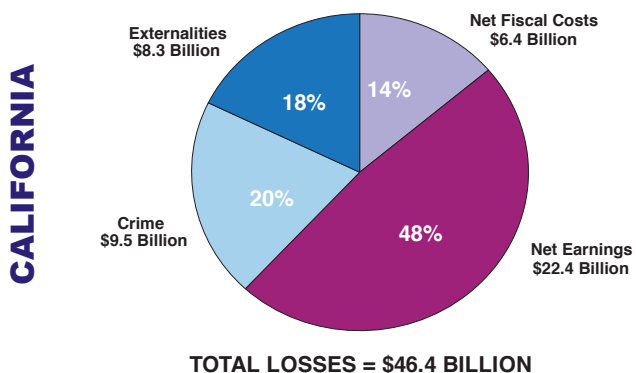
President Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan have labeled the dropout epidemic an **ECONOMIC, CIVIL RIGHTS, and NATIONAL SECURITY** issue.

**ECONOMICALLY**, the country suffers in the loss of a tax base from the higher incomes earned by graduates, as well as the high costs of social supports and incarceration, both of which are more likely for those without a high school diploma. The Silent Epidemic (a study conducted for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that interviewed self-identified dropouts across the country aged 16-25) found that “four out of every ten young adults (ages 16-24) lacking a high school diploma received some type of government assistance in 2001, and a dropout is more than eight times as likely to be in jail or prison as a person with at least a high school diploma.” The cost of not addressing the issue now is more dire financial consequences later.

The dropout crisis is an issue of **CIVIL RIGHTS** because it disproportionately affects African-Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans. Nationally, only one in every two students from these populations graduates from high school.

The dropout crisis adversely affects **NATIONAL SECURITY** because “seventy-five percent of young Americans, between the ages of 17 to 24, are unable to enlist in the military today because they have failed to graduate from high school, have a criminal record or are physically unfit.”

Figure 3: Economic Losses from One Cohort of Dropouts in California



*Note: All figures represent lifetime consequences for one cohort of dropouts at age 20 in 2005.*

SOURCE: Solving California's Dropout Crisis, CDRP

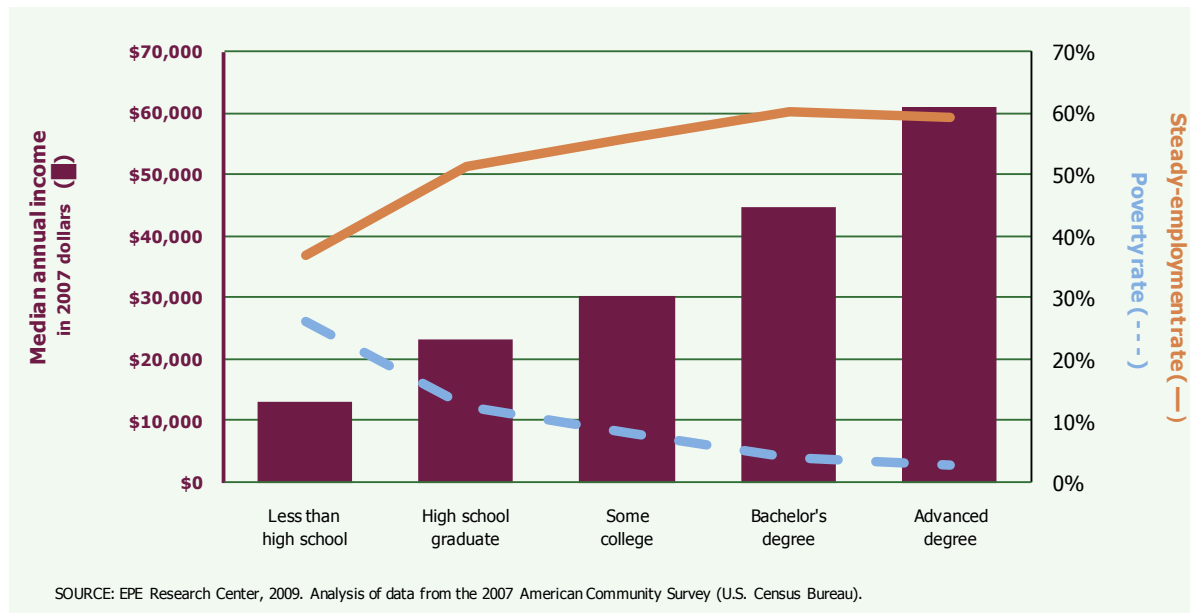
LOS ANGELES

**CDRP cites the economic losses from one year's dropouts in the City of Los Angeles as \$2.1 billion. Simply reducing the number of dropouts by half would generate \$1 billion in economic benefits to the City of Los Angeles.**

## DROPOUT CRISIS

Not finishing high school also has severe economic consequences for the individual. This figure indicates increased poverty levels and decreased steady employment for those without a high school diploma. Median annual income for those with a high school diploma is double that of those without one. Dropouts, on average, earn \$9,200 less per year than high school graduates, and about \$1 million less over a lifetime than college graduates.

### SIGNIFICANT GAP IN EARNING POTENTIAL



**“I believe [creativity] is a vital asset to teach that has been extracted from school, we are trying to put it back, the dropout rate is important to employers. I’m here to hear what people say and get contact information so we can make partnerships.”**  
Gretchen Lewotsky - FOX

## DROPOUT CRISIS

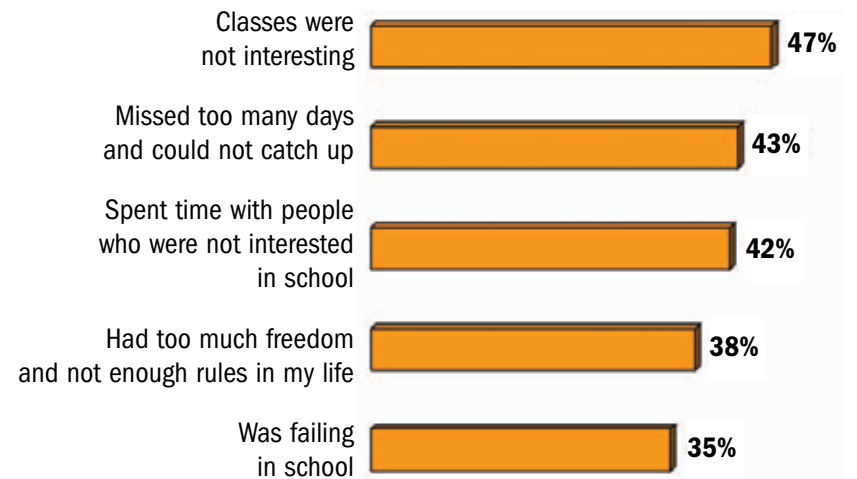
### THE CAUSES ARE COMPLEX

While students leave school for a variety of reasons (the difficulties of living in poverty among them), CDRP’s research finds that among student factors, **THE MOST IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF DROPOUT IS DISENGAGEMENT.**

In *The Silent Epidemic* stated that nearly half (47%) of students cited a major reason for dropping out of high school as “classes were not that interesting”. Nearly seven in ten respondents said they were not motivated or inspired to work hard. These young people reported being so disengaged from high school that they missed too many days to catch up. Almost as many (42 %) spent time with people who were not interested in school. Students with high GPAs, who said they were motivated to work hard, also selected these as the top reasons for dropout. This study finds that 88% of dropouts surveyed had passing grades. The students dropping out of our schools are not only students who have been unsuccessful - even our highest achieving students are affected by disengagement.

As educators, we have the ability to change the elements students list in these charts. We can provide opportunities for real world learning, make classes more interesting, and provide more individualized instruction. By successfully doing so, research tells us we can significantly lower the severe dropout rate.

### Top Five Reasons Dropouts Identify as Major Factors For Leaving School



SOURCE: *The Silent Epidemic*

## DROPOUT CRISIS

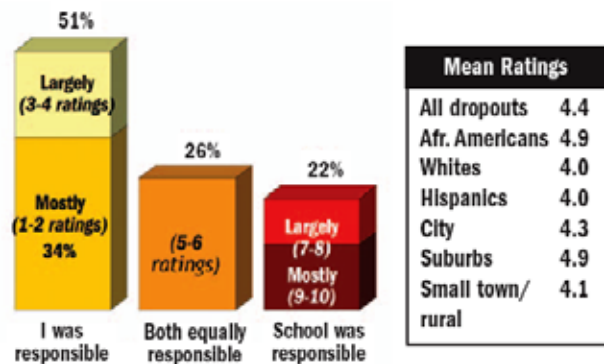
While societal factors contribute to many of the reasons that make it difficult for students to complete high school, as shown on the following page, research shows that **STUDENTS TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR CHOICE TO DROP OUT**. The Silent Epidemic report finds that 70% of students surveyed were confident they could have graduated if they put in the necessary effort.

Just as there are a variety of reasons that students drop out of high school, there is no one simple solution to the dropout crisis. However, the chart below demonstrates that students believe there are things schools can do to help them finish. 80% of students wanted better teachers and said there should be more opportunities for **REAL-WORLD LEARNING**. Three-fourths of students wanted **SMALLER CLASS SIZES** with more **INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION**. Seven in ten students said schools could **MAKE SCHOOL INTERESTING**.

### Young People Accept Responsibility For Not Graduating

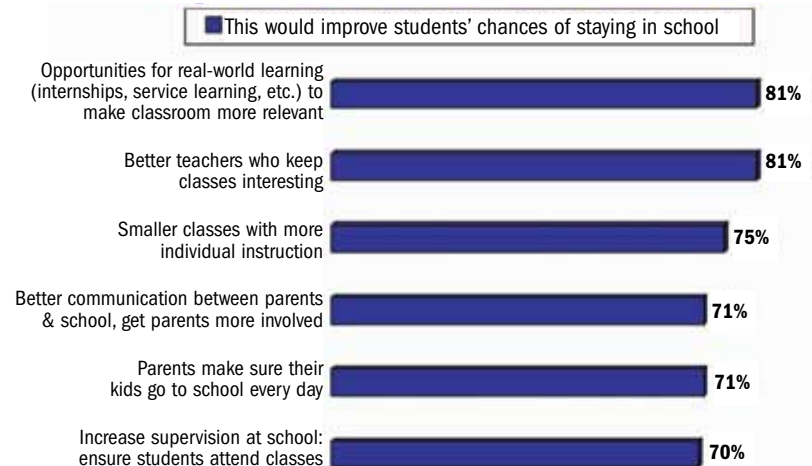
Who was responsible for your leaving school: mostly the school, mostly you, or both?\*

\* Ratings on ten-point scale: 10 = I did everything I could to stay in school/the school failed me; 1 = I alone was responsible/school did everything it could to keep me there



SOURCE: The Silent Epidemic

### What Dropouts Believe Would Improve Students' Chances



**“There are assumptions about why people drop out, but it’s really about a lack of engagement at the school site from early on....Not everyone believes in all kids. Collectively how do we begin to change mindset of people who interact with kids of color and poor kids.”**

Yolie Flores - Communities 4 Teaching Excellence

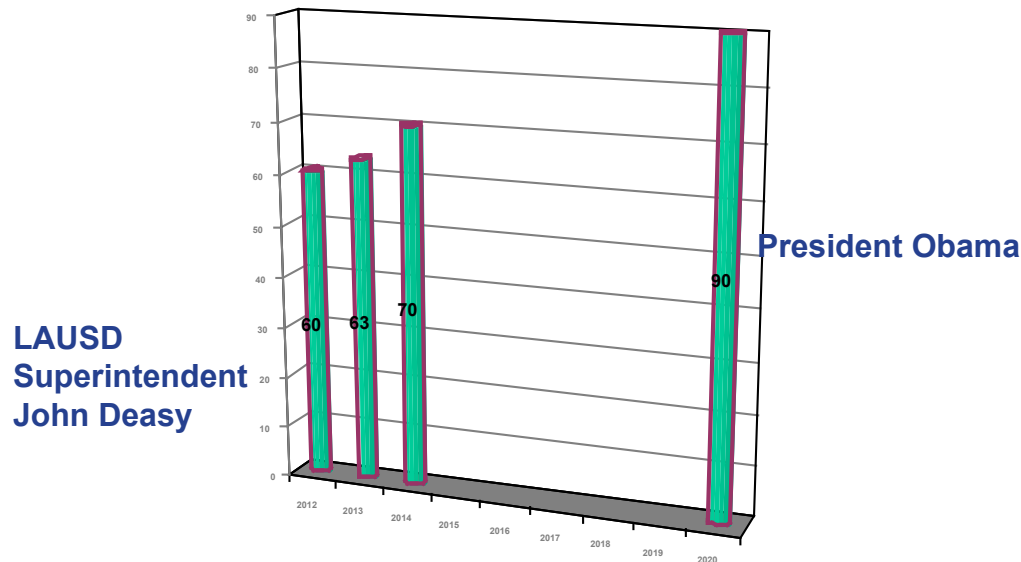
## DROPOUT CRISIS

### CURRENT APPROACHES ARE INADEQUATE

As previously mentioned, the current national graduation rate is about 75%. President Obama has set a goal of a 90% graduation rate by 2020, challenging the nation to significantly increase the number of students who graduate with high school diplomas in the next 9 years.

LAUSD Superintendent John Deasy has also set steep graduation goals, challenging Los Angeles to raise its current graduation rate of approximately 55% to 70% in the next three years.

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE GOALS



**“The opportunity to save and reinvest youth back in the system should not be for some but for all.”**  
Dr. John Deasy - LAUSD

### -----KEY TAKEAWAY-----

**LACK OF ENGAGEMENT IS A KEY REASON WHY STUDENTS DROP OUT OF SCHOOL  
AS EDUCATORS, WE HAVE THE ABILITY & RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE LEARNING MORE ENGAGING**

## OVERVIEW

The target group of students for this roundtable are those who have not been successful in traditional public schools and have either chosen or been required to enroll at Community Day Schools or Continuation schools. These schools can be located in bungalows at the back of a comprehensive high school campus or scattered throughout the city in storefronts and other community buildings. While these schools used to fall under the label “alternative education,” the term “educational options” is now generally used (by California State, LACOE, and LAUSD) to refer to the multiple types of schools that serve students who require an alternative to the traditional school structure. For the purposes of the roundtable and this report, we use the term “alternative education” to refer to both the Community Day Schools and Continuation Schools in which we work.

Students can be referred to alternative education sites by counselors at their comprehensive high schools, probation officers, or education consultants with the Department of Children and Family Services. They are often referred for falling severely behind in high school credits (usually from chronically low attendance). Students are also referred if they have been expelled from their district schools. Unless the district has a plan for serving students who need an alternative education, the county is mandated to provide schools for them. Thus the Los Angeles County Office of Education, as “an educator of last resort,” operates Community Day schools (as well as Halls and Camps for those students who are under 18 and are awaiting trial or serving sentences, respectively) to which all 80 school districts in Los Angeles County may officially ‘release’ their students. While LAUSD has many of its own continuation and community day schools, most of the seventy-nine other school districts in the county have one or no alternative sites.

### CONTINUATION SCHOOL

- 16-18 YEAR OLD STUDENTS
- 15 HRS/WK OR 3 HRS/DAY
- OPERATED BY DISTRICTS
- # of SCHOOLS IN CALIFORNIA: 500
- # of LAUSD SCHOOLS: 40

### COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL

- K-12 STUDENTS
- EXTENDED INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (6 HRS)
- OPERATED BY DISTRICTS OR COUNTY OFFICES
  - FIRST IMPLEMENTED IN 1996
  - # of SCHOOLS IN CALIFORNIA: 350
    - # of LACOE SCHOOLS: 22
    - # of LAUSD SCHOOLS: 10

## ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

### DATA COLLECTION

Accurate data collection is a central issue in the national dropout crisis dialogue. Nationwide, it is difficult to obtain consistent data on graduation and dropout rates, as different formulas are used for calculating these numbers. Data collection is a key area of focus for America's Promise Alliance, and organizations such as the California Dropout Research Project have gone to great lengths to collect appropriate data. California has been highlighted by Grad Nation as a place that needs improvement in data collection.

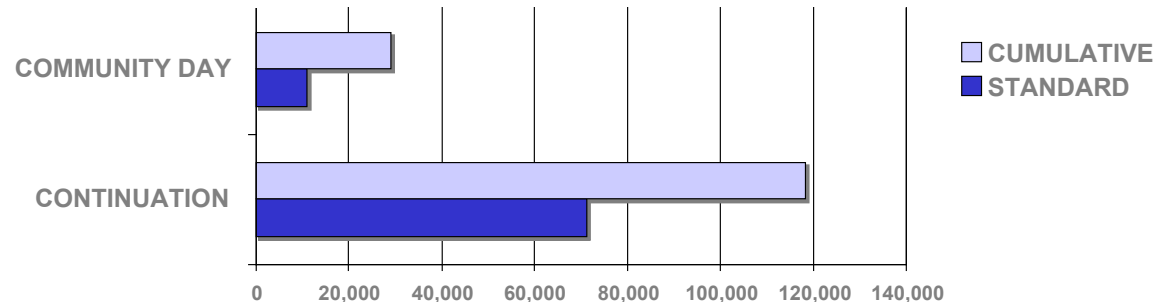
The collection of data within Alternative Education is also a central issue. Alternative Education has not been highlighted as an effective dropout strategy in the past, partly because the data collected do not tell a promising story.

Currently, student attendance data are taken on one specific day in October, when the state of California asks for the attendance at each school. Given the transient nature of alternative education and the amount of students who come in and out of its schools, these data do not accurately depict the amount of students served. In actuality, alternative education schools cumulatively see about three times the amount of students listed per year.

Official data shows low student enrollment rates, which thus shows low retention and graduation rates. When calculated using the cumulative enrollment rates, these retention and graduation rates are significantly higher. As the figure below shows, alternative education schools serve two to three times more students than official numbers show.

**While approximately 30,000 students drop out of high school every year in Los Angeles, only about half that amount end up enrolling in alternative education schools. This is an under-utilized system.**

**CUMULATIVE vs. STANDARD ENROLLMENT IN CALIFORNIA**



**-----Key Takeaway-----**

**ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION IS A KEY ELEMENT OF DROPOUT PREVENTION AND AN EXISTING SYSTEM WORTHY OF INCREASED SUPPORT**



As previously mentioned, a leading cause of high school dropout is disengagement. In its 19 years of work, The HeArt Project has found the arts to be an effective way to creatively engage students in their education. We asked Sir Ken Robinson, an internationally renowned leader in the development of education, creativity, and innovation, to speak to the roundtable briefly about the role of creativity in education. Sir Robinson defined creativity as the process of having original ideas that have value and began with three central assertions.

## **#1 EVERYONE IS FUNDAMENTALLY CREATIVE**

- creativity is not rare or for special people
- the human mind is inherently creative and imaginative
- every student has massive capacity

## **#2 CREATIVITY IS NOT ONLY IN ART**

- creativity exists in all subjects
- the arts provide multiple benefits in addition to creativity

## **#3 YOU CAN TEACH PEOPLE TO BE CREATIVE**

- creativity is a practical process that is the result of skill, contemplation, and critical judgment - all of which we can facilitate

Acknowledging these three assumptions, it's up to us as educators to engage students creatively to keep them in school and on track to graduate.

SIR KEN ROBINSON

**“I’m struck by the bifurcation of STEM and the arts... we power STEM with STEAM....”**

Dr. John Deasy, LAUSD

**Liz Dwyer, the education editor for GOOD Magazine, attended the roundtable and wrote the following article about Ken Robinson’s commentary:**

**<http://www.good.is/post/why-alternative-education-needs-to-go-mainstream/>**

## CREATIVITY AS ENGAGER

### STANDARDIZATION vs. INDIVIDUALIZATION

Sir Robinson argues that while creativity is a set of competencies we should teach students, it is also one we should bring to the re-invention of education. He proposes moving from an industrial metaphor to an agricultural one. The industrial process of education is rooted in large-scale standardization, where individuality is barely recognized. An agricultural process would be a more personal one rooted in individualization and customization that creates the conditions to make students want to learn (i.e. engage them). Similarly, in agricultural systems, farmers know they can't *make* something grow, but they can create conditions where crops are more likely to flourish. Creating these conditions in education requires attending to the particulars of each student and school. In keeping with this metaphor, we should also realize that practices cannot be scaled across mass systems, but rather must be 'cross-pollinated' and adapted for each specific case.

### ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Finally, Sir Robinson noted that the defining elements of 'alternative education' should actually be the components of a 'proper education'. We call it 'alternative' because the mainstream (or industrialized) system is almost its exact opposite. It is impersonal, irrelevant, non-rigorous, not site specific, and conducted in large groups with little additional supports. Students who drop out of education and end up in alternative sites are re-engaged in education through personalization (teachers who look them in their eye and work with them to identify their talents and abilities). Sir Robinson claims that if we made this the mainstream set of principles for education, we would not be discussing a dropout rate.

Instead, individualization is not something we celebrate, but something students have to fail their way into. We see alternative education as a remedial program for students who have been alienated by the traditional system, thus few get access to it.

**“[This roundtable gives me the] opportunity to connect arts education with my work at UC, which is dominated by STEM. I would like to move the discourse into arts as well as STEM.”**

Dante Noto - University of California, Office of the President

Both the arts and alternative education align with this agricultural model of individualization and customization, and should be used as key strategy for dropout prevention.

#### -----Key Takeaway-----

**ARTS ARE A KEY ENGAGER AND NEED TO BE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF A RE-INVIGORATED SYSTEM OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION.**

# SUMMARY

The key points of the issue presented to roundtable participants are the following:

- **THE DROPOUT CRISIS IS SEVERE**
- **LACK OF ENGAGEMENT IS A KEY REASON STUDENTS DROPOUT**
- **ARTS IS A KEY ENGAGER**
- **ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION IS AN IDEAL SETTING FOR DROPOUT PREVENTION**

CDRP has spent the last 30 years researching the dropout crisis and much of this research has provided the framework for this roundtable. While CDRP has focused on the dropout crisis at large, we see that the recommendations it makes for school sites are precisely what the arts and alternative education have the potential to do extremely well. The following page outlines these correlations.



**“There is a cookie cutter approach in the comprehensive system, but alternative education is the customization of a product to better meet a student’s needs. Our students are well within the realm of normal, but need different settings to be successful. I want to create those settings for kids.”**

Gerald Riley - LACOE

## SUMMARY

### The Arts/HeArt Project provides:

- Open-ended themes require students to personalize their learning, articulate their point of view, and reflect on their work and their selves

- Social: teaching artists provide a non-traditional adult-student relationship and become professional role models

- Academic: encourages engagement and enhances instruction in all content areas

- Teaches 21st Century Skills such as: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity

- Links to cultural institutions
- Connections to creative careers
- Access to professional role models

Recommendations for school sites from:



**CREATE A PERSONALIZED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS**

**PROVIDE ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS**

**PROVIDE RIGOROUS & MEANINGFUL INSTRUCTION**

**CREATE CONNECTIONS TO THE REAL WORLD**

### Alternative Education provides:

- Student-driven
- Individualized instruction
- Site-specific unique personality
- Teacher autonomy

- Opportunity to make up credits
- Support for pregnant and parenting students
- A place of re-entry for students from the criminal justice system

- Low student-teacher ration (25:1)
- Small learning communities (majority under 100 students)

- Real-world learning for credit
- Community-based partnerships

To prepare for the July 28th roundtable, The HeArt Project hosted pre-meetings with teachers and students and conducted site-visits to two innovative project-based learning high-schools operated by LACOE. We wanted to hear from the most important educational stakeholders about how to more effectively engage students in their education. We asked the students and teachers to tell us about the current HeArt Project/LACOE programming, asking them: what we do well, what we can do better, and what are our biggest obstacles. While some of the pre-meeting conversations were based on HeArt Project-specific programming (referring to our Workshop Coordinators and Teaching Artists), they embody larger issues about the role of creativity in alternative education and dropout prevention. During our two site visits we observed what the schools did well, how they do this, and what obstacles they face. The thoughts and concerns raised at these meetings informed our planning of the roundtable and were brought to the roundtable discussions.

Our students offered some of the following insights:

**“It doesn’t feel like a class or something you’re getting credit for...getting credits feels like a bonus.”**

**“Artists’ personalities make you want to be around them, they are open to answer questions and know a lot ...they are ‘over the top thoughtful.’”**

**“[Art] stimulates your creative juices, [and] makes you think more about your own perspective, not what someone else says, it’s not boring.”**

## PRE-MEETINGS

### TEACHERS

On July 7th, we hosted a teacher meeting with artists and classroom teachers who have worked with The HeArt Project for a number of years. Participants included: two LACOE teachers from the Hollywood Media Arts Academy; two LAUSD and HeArt Project classroom teachers; a teaching artist who has worked with The HeArt Project since its inception. Overall, teachers validated the important role art plays as a key engager. They were interested in how to enhance its effectiveness by integrating thematic, project-based instruction into their own academic classes. However, teachers expressed the need for support in doing so, as they have no prior training in this kind of instruction and the curricula provided to them does not facilitate project-based learning. Teachers conveyed clearly that this support could come best by way of peer-to-peer mentoring, rather than traditional professional development sessions with an 'expert'.

### WHAT WE DO WELL

- Use **PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS**
- Provide extensive lesson plan **SUPPORT** for teaching artists
- Work as a **TEAM** (teaching artist and workshop coordinator)

### WHAT WE CAN DO BETTER

- Facilitate stronger **COMMUNICATION** between classroom teachers and teaching artists
- Provide teachers with usable **RESOURCES** to incorporate HeArt Project workshop themes in other content areas
- Organize ways for classroom teachers to **SHARE** best practices with each other

### OUR BIGGEST OBSTACLES

- Lack of teacher **TIME**
- Classroom teachers that don't **BUY-IN** to or participate in thematic, project-based instruction in other subject areas
- Lack of **MONEY** to compensate teachers for their extra time

### -----Key Takeaway-----

**ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION TEACHERS ARE HIGHLY INTERESTED IN PROJECT-BASED LEARNING AND SEEK ONGOING, RELEVANT, PEER-TO-PEER PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT TO IMPLEMENT IT**

## PRE-MEETINGS

### STUDENTS

On July 13th, we hosted a student meeting with: two students from the Hollywood Media Arts Academy; a HeArt Project alumna who completed multiple levels of HeArt Project programming and spent the summer as our Getty Intern; and two students currently enrolled in our Level 3 summer scholarship program. While teachers were excited at the prospect of incorporating more thematic, project-based instruction, students displayed more sobering beliefs (clearly informed by their education thus far) that saw the arts as fundamentally distinct from academic subjects. They referred to the arts as fun play that “sugarcoats” learning and academic classes as a necessity they had to complete so they could attend their art classes. One student believed “You can’t combine arts and academics, just as you can’t mix business with pleasure.” We see it as our responsibility (and biggest challenge) to change the experience of these students, so they come to see how learning across all content areas can be engaging.

### WHAT WE DO WELL

- Offer the **ONLY ART CLASS** in most alternative schools
- Facilitate strong **RELATIONSHIPS** between teaching artists and workshop coordinators
- **BROADEN PERSPECTIVE** on what art consists of and what kinds of creative jobs are available

### WHAT WE CAN DO BETTER

- Facilitate **COLLABORATION** between classroom teachers/principals and artists/workshop coordinators
- Create a respectful, positive **CULTURE**
- Validate **OUT-OF-CLASSROOM LEARNING** by providing credits and scheduling compatibility

### BIGGEST CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTING PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

- Teacher **TIME** and cooperation to incorporate thematic project-based learning
- **CREDITS** issued to specific content areas do not recognize interdisciplinary learning
- Lack of teacher **EXPERTISE** and/or content knowledge

### -----Key Takeaway-----

**THERE IS A NEED FOR STUDENTS TO BE CREATIVELY ENGAGED ACROSS ALL DISCIPLINES**

### PROJECT-BASED LEARNING SITE VISITS

On July 19th, Cynthia Campoy Brophy, Sophia Waugh, and Allegra Towns visited “Road to Success Academy” (RTSA), a project-based learning school at Camps Scott and Scudder in Santa Clarita, CA. Scott and Scudder are two camps for incarcerated girls under the age of 18 who have been convicted and are serving their sentences. LACOE provides the education programming for the incarcerated girls, in a partnership with the county probation office. In October, 2010, after several years of planning, Camp Scott and Scudder became a pilot school that implements thematic, interdisciplinary, project-based learning. Led by principal Diana Velazquez, who has extensive curricular knowledge, it takes best practices from other project-based learning schools such as Big Picture Learning and Maya Angelou. Given our interest in effective project-based learning, our shared governance of the Los Angeles County Office of Education, and a similarity in student population (many of the students in alternative education have been recently incarcerated at these camps), this site was extremely relevant to the LACOE/HeArt Project partnership.

Following the roundtable, on September 28th, Cynthia Campoy Brophy, Sophia Waugh, Allegra Towns, and Margit Edwards visited International Polytechnic High School, commonly known as “iPoly”. iPoly is a school opened through a LACOE partnership with Cal Poly Pomona and is located on the university campus. It was founded to implement project-based learning with an international focus. Principal Elsa Martinez, who has led the school since 1998, has recently begun offering Project-Based Learning trainings for other teachers and school leaders. The staff at Road to Success Academy attended this training before establishing their own Project-Based Learning School.

#### -----Key Takeaway-----

- **PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IS EFFECTIVE IN RE-ENGAGING TEACHERS AND STUDENTS FROM CHALLENGING POPULATIONS**
- **IT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED WITHIN EXISTING EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURES**

## PRE-MEETINGS

### WHAT THE SCHOOLS DO WELL

- Establish a **POSITIVE, COLLABORATIVE CULTURE**
  - Changed uniforms to a lighter lavender color (RTSA)
  - Invested probation officers in classroom teaching and learning and developing a culture of support (RTSA)
- **ENGAGE TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**
  - Twenty/thirty-year veteran teachers felt re-energized and had improved their instructional practice
  - Students clearly articulated their interest in the themes they were studying
- Enable **STUDENT OWNERSHIP** over and pride in space
  - Students named the school and designed its logo (RTSA)
  - Murals on the walls of the school were designed and painted by the students (RTSA)

### WHAT THIS REQUIRES

- **EXPERTISE**: A committed school leader with deep curricular and instructional knowledge; a Project-Based Learning coach; and a character education expert and consistent circle time
- **COLLABORATION**: Teachers paid to meet for 2 hrs every week and one Saturday per month
- Experienced teachers with considerable **AUTONOMY** provided time to develop curricula together (iPoly)

### BIGGEST CHALLENGES

- Losing key personnel due to **REDUCTION IN FORCE** policies
- **FUNDING**
- Student **RETENTION** – no control over the length of time students stay (RTSA)

## **Creative Engagement: Dropout Prevention through the Arts in Alternative Education**

July 28th, 2011

*Hollywood Media Arts Academy*

*An action-oriented dialogue, marking the beginning of a cross-sector collaboration to systemically combat the dropout crisis by creatively engaging youth in alternative education.*

Referencing the frameworks offered by CDRP and America's Promise Alliance and informed by our pre-meetings, the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and The HeArt Project convened a diverse yet complementary group of influential thinkers and decision-makers at both the local and state levels to answer the over-arching question:

How can we collaborate to more effectively provide creative pathways that increase the number of youth graduating from alternative education schools with plans for their futures?

Participants came for a variety of reasons, from commitments to:

- dropout prevention (particularly as a key concern to employers)
- the concept of arts as a key engager in the larger education reform dialogue
- changing STEM (Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics) to STEAM (including Arts)
- alternative education as a viable system for dropout prevention
- investing more in kids of color and poor kids
- parents as participants

Overall, participants attended the roundtable with a desire to break down silos and partner with leaders from both small and large organizations doing similar work in an effort to collectively accomplish systemic reform and for a desire to advocate and get people to stand behind the kind of system we need to support.

\*\*\*See Appendix for a list of participant bios\*\*\*

# THE ROUNDTABLE

## OBJECTIVES



GEORGE SIMPSON; SOPHIA WAUGH

**“I believe in the transformational aspect of the arts.”**  
George Simpson - Los Angeles County High School for the Arts

**“I believe in the idea of partnering very deeply and appreciate the large system and small program people in the same room. It can be hard (for small programs) to figure out the entry points for innovation and how to align themselves with big systems. I want to find those kernels and figure out how to grow something and talk to each other going forward.”**  
Elisa Callow - Consultant

**“I’m here to bring additional terrific ideas to parents about how the arts contribute to getting their child to a four-year education.”**  
Sophia Waugh -  
National Parent Teacher  
Association



PETER RIVERA; ELISA CALLOW

**“In a lot of the structures we create we are so rigid in the basic facts (math and literacy) that we fail to capture ways we can really engage the kids....I don’t think any of the professional development addresses how we engage kids more effectively.”**  
Peter Rivera - California  
Community Foundation

## OBJECTIVES

**“I’m here to find partners who can demonstrate what we can do collectively. It’s a system problem not a program problem. We can cut it in half through systemic coordinated efforts. I hope to meet more people and find out about what’s going on to convince the [University of California] president that they should make a commitment to addressing the dropout crisis.”**

Russell Rumberger - Office of the President,  
University of California



DAN SACKHEIM; RUSSELL RUMBERGER



MARK SLAVKIN; SONIA SOTO

**“The common grammar schooling so deeply embedded in our American DNA of schools is so typical, people lack another model.”**

Mark Slavkin - Music Center

**“Not everyone may want to go to college, but it should be an option for everyone. There is a lack of expectations for a lot of children, which I feel very passionately about because I saw it first-hand.”**

Sonia Soto - The HeArt Project Alumna

# THE ROUNDTABLE

## OBJECTIVES



CATHY CORELLA; GEORGE SIMPSON; DIXON SLINGERLAND; YOLIE FLORES; DR. JOHN DEASY

**“ Promise Neighborhood won’t work if we don’t break down silos... I’m here to bring back great ideas and brainstorm for the PN initiative.”**  
Dixon Slingerland - Youth Policy Institute

**“ The number one thing you have to have for a successful program is relationships.”**  
Cathy Corella - LACOE

**“ I welcome and seek new partners to be able to build a system within the City of Los Angeles.”**  
Robert Sainz - Community Development Department



ROBERT SAINZ

## INQUIRY BREAKOUT GROUPS

During the strategic thinking in preparation for the roundtable (informed by the pre-meetings with key stakeholders), we devised three general areas of inquiry within our over-arching question: **ENGAGING** students in learning at the school site, changing the **CULTURE** of alternative education, and putting students on a **PATHWAY** to creative careers (1 in 6 jobs in Los Angeles is in the creative industries) and higher education.

**ENGAGED LEARNING:** What are the obstacles to more effectively collaborating at school sites to provide creatively engaging instruction in all content areas?

**INSPIRED CULTURE:** What are the obstacles to creating a culture of engagement, graduation, and future plan within the current alternative education structure?

**CREATIVE PATHWAYS:** What are the obstacles to collaborating with the outside world to provide viable pathways to creative post-graduation opportunities?

We assigned each participant to one of the three groups, based on their own particular areas of insight and expertise. At the same time each group comprised of a varied mix of leaders from both small and large organizations.

While reform agendas can concentrate on solutions to entrenched systemic problems without first taking the necessary time to deeply examine the obstacles, we asked participants in each inquiry breakout group to focus their conversation on closely identifying the exact challenges that prevent us from achieving our goals.

**QUESTION:** What are the obstacles to more effectively collaborating at school sites to provide creatively engaging instruction in all content areas?

**PARTICIPANTS:** Sir Ken Robinson, Mark Slavkin - Music Center, Ayanna Hudson - Arts for All, Ron Randolph - LACOE, Cathy Corella - LACOE, George Simpson - Los Angeles County High School for the Arts Keren Taylor - WriteGirl, Matty Sterenchock - Herb Alpert Foundation, Allegra Towns - Harvard Graduate School of Education Fellow

## **ISOLATION & SILOS**

The group saw the primary obstacle as the teacher isolation (and therefore lack of collaboration and communication) so prevalent in alternative education schools. Participants discussed the particular bifurcation that can occur between arts teachers and teachers of core content areas. Without facilitating communication channels, this can build into resentment among the groups of teachers who see students engaged in arts classes but not in other classes. The group spoke of the importance of school and district leaders **PRIORITIZING TEACHER COLLABORATION** and providing the time and space for it.

## **LACK OF A COMMON ALTERNATE VISION**

For teachers to share best practices without working towards a fundamentally new vision, our existing educational model, would simply be reinforced. Many school leaders and teachers have been trained in the 'industrial' model of education and have inherited customs they believe to be fixed, but don't have to be. In some sense there is a fear of the unknown. The point was made that school principals have much more freedom than they think they do and thus have the authority to implement an alternate vision if they had one. In our standardized education system, few administrators create a **CULTURE THAT EXPECTS AND ENCOURAGES TEACHERS TO BE INNOVATIVE** and gives them license to teach and learn a different way.

## **LACK OF EXPERTISE**

The final obstacle discussed in this group was the **LACK OF EXPERTISE TO IMPLEMENT PROJECT-BASED INSTRUCTION**. Even if we collaborated around a common vision that we had license to pursue, we still work with educators in this system who have been trained to educate in the standardized industrial model and do not have the skill set to educate in an alternate way. This lack of expertise includes teachers and moves all the way up to district leaders.

# THE ROUNDTABLE

## ENGAGED LEARNING



RON RANDOLPH; KEREN TAYLOR; GEORGE SIMPSON



KEN ROBINSON; AYANNA HUDSON

“ [This roundtable] opens the door to communication with people in the system who are sometimes out of our reach.”  
Keren Taylor - WriteGirl



ALLEGRA TOWNS

“ The time frame in this is important. This is not something that is going to be fixed in a year or two. You have to have a proper sense of the frame. It could be turned around in ten years. There is a pipeline [of talent] that needs to be established.”  
Sir Ken Robinson

**QUESTION:** What are the obstacles to creating a culture of engagement, graduation, and future plan within the current alternative education structure?

**PARTICIPANTS:** Darline Robles - USC Rossier School of Education, Russell Rumberger - University of California, Office of the President & California Dropout Research Project, Gerry Riley - LACOE, Yolie Flores - Communities 4 Teaching Excellence, Dan Sackheim - California Department of Education, Sophia Waugh - National Parent Teacher Association, Cynthia Campoy Brophy - The HeArt Project, Peter Rivera - California Community Foundation, Sonia Soto - The HeArt Project Alumna

## **PERCEPTION**

This group discussed the public's view of alternative education as a major obstacle. There is a general feeling that alternative education is a place of last resort for students who are seen as failures. Defining alternative education in this manner negatively influences the students themselves and the structures that support them. There is a need to see this population of students **NOT SOLELY AS "AT-RISK" BUT AS "AT-RISK/AT-PROMISE"**, realizing both the challenging circumstances from which they come and the great potential they have to overcome these circumstances. Additionally, this group discussed the need to re-frame conceptions about the cost of alternative education by seeing the value of investing in students now, as opposed to paying the societal costs they will accrue in the future if they don't graduate from high school.

## **LACK OF SUPPORT**

A second obstacle was a lack of support at both the micro and macro levels. There is no alternative education network at the regional level. Districts and counties need to support each other, rather than working at odds in enrolling alternative education students. Alternative education structures need to develop **STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS** with organizations willing to work within the alternative education structure. The final obstacle, at the school site level is that of limited support structures for teachers and principals who need personalized and relevant professional development.

## **PIPELINE**

Rather than used solely as a last resort, this group discussed the need for alternative education to be repositioned as small learning environments to **CATCH STUDENTS EARLIER** before they fail out of school.

## INSPIRED CULTURE



DAN SACKHEIM; RUSSELL RUMBERGER; PETER RIVERA, SONIA SOTO



DARLINE ROBLES; BETH FARB; ANGIE CHICHIL; ELISA CALLOW

“In alternative education we start where others feel they can’t go. Every kid is at risk and at promise of succeeding.”

Dan Sackheim - California Department of Education

“I hope to have an action plan that looks at partners as individuals who can step up and say what they can contribute. There seems to be a lack of understanding of what we can do and what we are willing to leverage. At the end of the day it is individuals coming together and looking at how we can make it work.”

Darline Robles - University of Southern California

# CREATIVE PATHWAYS

# THE ROUNDTABLE

**QUESTION:** What are the obstacles to collaborating with the world outside the classroom to provide viable pathways to creative post-graduation opportunities?

**PARTICIPANTS:** Gretchen Lewotsky - Fox Entertainment Group, Robert Sainz - City of LA Community Development Department, Janice Pober - Sony Pictures Entertainment, Vivian Rescalvo - LA County Board of Supervisors, 3rd District, Dante Noto - University of California Office of the President, Ron Rosen - The HeArt Project Board, Margit Edwards - The HeArt Project, Elisa Callow - Consultant

## **LACK OF AWARENESS**

The first obstacle this group discussed was a need for students to be **AWARE OF AND EXPOSED TO OPPORTUNITIES** available in the creative industries. Narrow definitions of the arts and a ‘culture of fame’ mis-educating students about the art world contribute to this lack of awareness. There is also a lack of awareness about the myriad jobs in the creative industries that are often behind the scenes and a realistic understanding of the path to obtaining these jobs. Lack of family awareness about the opportunities available to their children studying the arts was also mentioned as an obstacle.

## **LACK OF RELEVANT TRAINING**

Another obstacle discussed by this group was the lack of training in professional “soft” skills as well as in creative skills. Students do not have access to **ADULT MENTORS** who can expose them to job sites, provide them access to networking, and demonstrate the skills required for a professional environment.

## **FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS**

While one obstacle is the lack of exposure students have to opportunities in creative industries, a bigger obstacle is that many cannot afford to participate in these opportunities once they are made aware of them. **UNPAID INTERNSHIPS**, which are so often the entry-point for access into creative professions, were cited as a major obstacle. Economic downturn was also mentioned, given some federally-funded programs that subsidize internships have recently lost their funding. At the same time, executives from these corporations noted the difficulty in paying high school students who bring no previous work experience.

## **SILOS**

The final obstacle mentioned was corporate silos and **LACK OF FUND COLLABORATION**. Given that each corporation has its own agenda, it can be difficult for funders to understand entry points and effectively communicate their collective needs to educators.

# THE ROUNDTABLE

## CREATIVE PATHWAYS



VIVIAN RESCALVO; RON ROSEN; DANTE NOTO

**“We know the elements that go into a successful program. If we imagine this kind of group ever being together to advocate something we support.... [it would be to] get behind the kind of system we need to bring success to the dropout problem.”**

Ron Rosen - The HeArt Project Board

**“First of all it’s education about what the arts incorporates...and then the path to get there... Part of a program should be creating a path or vision, [showing students] this is the reality of that pathway and this is what you have to do.”**

Vivian Rescalvo - LA County 3rd District

**“This group is like how I curate a year, it brings disparate people in the room together to think about and engage with their community in a focused way.”**

Margit Edwards - The HeArt Project

**“If we leave here without breaking down silos that exist our time would have been wasted.”**

Janice Pober - Sony Entertainment



MATTY STERENCHOCK; JANICE POBER; GRETCHEN LEWOTSKY; MARGIT EDWARDS

## SYNTHESIS OF OBSTACLES

The three breakout groups reconvened and shared their discussions and the obstacles were grouped into the following four general areas.

### **PUBLIC NARRATIVE** that advocates for:

- The students we serve (low-income) as at-risk/at-promise
- Alternative education as a positive place for dropout prevention
- A broad definition of the arts
- The value of investing in education
- The purpose of education as producing creative, engaged, critical thinkers
- Prioritizing collaboration among educators

### **ACCESS TO EXPERTISE** through:

- Individualized ongoing, implementable professional development for teachers
- Creating a pipeline of principals/leaders who can create a culture of collaboration, innovation, and success
- Career mentors and counselors for students

### **COLLABORATION** among:

- Teachers through peer-to-peer Professional Learning Communities
- Funders and with organizations they fund
- Academic subjects

### **FINANCIAL**

- Alternative education is a deficit model
- Support for alternative education, arts programs, and student internships

**“We need to be supported at the highest level of administration or we won’t see the type of change happen that we want to. We need to support creating a culture of innovation, see this as the expectation and give people permission to do it.”**

Ayanna Hudson - Arts for All

**“Currently, the education system is actively trying to put [students] back into places that they failed out of.”**

Matty Sterenchock - Herb Alpert Foundation

- **Generated collective buy-in that creative engagement in alternative education is a dropout prevention strategy worthy of increased support**
- **Created potential for formal and informal partnerships that allow us to work collaboratively towards systemic change in combating the high school dropout crisis**
- **Identified shared goals and existing resources, partnerships, and obstacles**

Additional take-aways from participants at the roundtable were:

- Key leaders saw each other supporting arts education
- Mixture of small and large organizations in the room allowed system-level experts to dialogue with practitioners
- Participants were engaged and thinking collectively despite each having different agendas for being there
- Provided a neutral space to bring people with shared interests and discuss a specific issue
- An impressive and diverse group of individuals in one room to discuss shared goals
- Participants were intrigued but cautious as to how to define the next action steps

During the four-hour roundtable, we focused more on collectively investing in a shared goal than about defining concrete action steps. In fact, participants overall were reluctant to immediately move forward with goal-setting and concrete actions. As facilitators of the roundtable, we processed the thoughts presented and conducted follow-up conversations with each roundtable participant. From these conversations, we gathered thoughts about recommendations for next steps and possible resources each participant had to share. Given the diversity of sectors represented by our participants, we expect that different people will take on different aspects of this work. We see a need to work from both top down (systemically) and bottom up (from the classroom) and hope that the work we do on the ground will inform mandates for greater support on policy level. Here we have listed some of the participants' suggested next steps.

## **POLICY ADVOCACY LEVEL**

- A Task force or advisory team focused on broader issues, such as:
  - Advocating for state policy implemented that supports innovative, personalized instruction
  - Highlighting alternative education as a viable system in K-12 initiatives for education reform
  - Re-branding alternative education as a positive dropout prevention option
- An op-ed series through which roundtable participants can speak about these issues to a broad audience

**“We are not going to wait for top down change but we can’t do it one at a time and we need to work it from both angles so it becomes the norm and not the exception to see kids deeply engaged all over the place.”**

Mark Slavkin - Music Center

## **PROGRAMMATIC LEVEL**

- Project-Based Learning implemented in alternative education sites
- Professional Learning Communities that allow common planning time and the sharing of best practices
- Creative careers mentorship/internship program for students
- Creative Professionals lecture series to increase public awareness of alternative education and provide student mentors

# PROJECT-BASED LEARNING PROPOSAL

Given their long-standing partnership and established relationships in community day schools throughout Los Angeles County, the Los Angeles County Office of Education and The HeArt Project are in a unique position to take specific actions on the programmatic level. As a result of the discussions and collaborative cross-sector thinking brought forth at the roundtable, the HeArt Project and LACOE propose to plan and implement more creatively engaging instruction throughout alternative education. Using Road to Success Academy and iPoly (two successful project-based learning schools operated by LACOE) as models they seek to initiate an interdisciplinary, thematic, project-based learning methodology. The HeArt Project sees the rich themes it has developed in partnership with cultural institutions across Los Angeles as a valuable resource and the potential driver of the essential questions in project-based learning units throughout all content areas.

While LACOE has the resources to provide expertise on the methodology of project-based learning, The HeArt Project has resources that will provide the rich themes and content to guide this learning. Throughout the last twenty years, The HeArt Project has seen how its theme-based art projects and access to creative communities can engage students and effectively cultivate 21st Century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. This year, The HeArt Project is partnered with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), the Autry National Center, and the UCLA Department of World Arts and Cultures to bring the themes of their current exhibitions (California Design: Living in A Modern Way; Art Along the Hyphen: the Mexican-American Generation; and Through Positive Eyes, respectively) to students across Los Angeles. In their arts workshops, students will explore the themes of modern design, hyphenated identities, and the transformation of societal stigmas.

Currently this thematic, project-based pedagogy is explored in HeArt Project classrooms for only two hours per week, but the HeArt Project sees the opportunity to make the thematic, project-based work it already does interdisciplinary. By sharing its themes and working more collaboratively with classroom teachers to integrate both content and pedagogy throughout all content areas we can mutually enhance the impact of our instructional work with students, creating the environment for alternative education students to become more engaged in their learning across all areas.

While Project-Based Learning is a general term applied differently in different contexts, The HeArt Project and LACOE see it as a methodology in which students deeply investigate rich, real-world themes through hands-on projects. As learning becomes contextualized and relevant, students master concepts and skills through practical and creative application, rather than rote memorization and demonstrate their knowledge through public presentations, rather than tests. Project-based learning is student-driven and the teacher's role becomes that of a coach rather than a direct instructor. Through this

**PROJECT-BASED LEARNING PROPOSAL**

pedagogy, students are challenged to take risks, make their own connections, and take responsibility for their own learning. The real-world nature of the issues students explore make project-based learning inherently interdisciplinary, so students discover the inter-connectedness of people, systems, and information.

Many schools, districts, and educational organizations are showing interest in Project-Based Learning, but few have discussed how it can be implemented in the unique setting of alternative education. On one hand, alternative education lends itself to recognizing interdisciplinary instruction. Due to each student's differing credit requirements, teachers often teach multiple subjects in the same room at the same time. On the other hand, the teacher collaboration that makes project-based learning effective is difficult in alternative education sites that have only one or two teachers and limited physical presence of instructional leaders.

This year, LACOE is partnering with the Buck Institute for Education and the staff at iPoly to provide project-based learning workshops, some of which will be specific to educators in alternative education. This school year, The HeArt Project is piloting micro-level activity shares with classroom teachers who have volunteered to tap into project-based learning. The HeArt Project and LACOE are beginning to explore how to create a Professional Learning Community of alternative education teachers who can collaboratively plan a project and share best practices. Throughout the next few months they will examine how thematic, interdisciplinary, project-based learning can best be implemented in the alternative education setting.

We believe that including alternative education youth in the broader dialogue presented by Los Angeles area cultural museums, performance spaces, and galleries through creatively engaging interdisciplinary instruction is an effective way to address the disengagement that contributes to the dropout crisis. We have a commitment to working within the existing system to re-energize, support, enhance existing programs, and strengthen them by integrating rich content.

There is interest in such a proposal from all stakeholders, from students to teachers, to principals, to senior administrators to the educational departments of local cultural institutions. From their many years of work together, The HeArt Project and LACOE have a solid foundation from which to move this initiative forward. While it is beginning with The HeArt Project/LACOE partnership, it has the potential to influence teaching and learning throughout the alternative education system.

## ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

- Community Day School Network  
<http://www.cdsnetwork.org/conf-resources.html>

## ARTS

- Ken Robinson  
<http://sirkenrobinson.com/skr/>
- Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America's Future Through Creative Schools. President's Committee on Arts and Humanities. May 2011.  
<http://www.pcah.gov/reinvesting-arts-education-winning-americas-future-through-creative-schools>
- Engaging Adolescents: Building Youth Participation in the Arts. Ellen Hirzy. National Guild for Community Arts Education. 2011.
- Interplay: Inspiring Wonder, Discovery, and Learning through Interdisciplinary Museum-Community Partnerships. Lauren Stevenson, Elisa Callow, and Emiko Ono. With a foreword by Richard J. Deasy. Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Foundation, 2009.

## DROPOUT CRISIS

### AMERICA'S PROMISE ALLIANCE, GRAD NATION

<http://www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Grad-Nation.aspx>

- Cities in Crisis 2009. Closing the Graduation Gap: Educational and Economic Conditions in America's Largest Cities. Christopher B. Swanson. Editorial Projects in Education Research Center. April 2009  
<http://www.americaspromise.org/our-work/Dropout-Prevention/Cities-in-Crisis.aspx>
- Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic. Robert Balfanz, John M. Bridgeland, Laura A. Moore, Joanna Hornig Fox. A report by Civic Enterprises, Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University, and America's Promise Alliance. November 2010.

**RESOURCES**

- Grad Nation Guidebook: A Guidebook to Help Communities Tackle the Dropout Crisis. Robert Balfanz & John Bridgeland. February 2009.  
<http://www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Dropout-Prevention/Grad-Nation-Guidebook.aspx>
- The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts. John Bridgeland, John J. Dilulio Jr., & Karen Burke Morison. A report by Civic Enterprises in association with Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. March 2006.  
<http://www.americaspromise.org/Resources/Partner-Resources/t/The-Silent-Epidemic-Report.aspx>
- Other Dropout Prevention Resources:  
<http://www.americaspromise.org/resources/partner-resources.aspx?topic=/Dropout%20Prevention&page=1>

**CALIFORNIA DROPOUT RESEARCH PROJECT**<http://cdrp.ucsb.edu/>

- Research Reports and Policy Briefs  
[http://cdrp.ucsb.edu/pubs\\_reports.htm](http://cdrp.ucsb.edu/pubs_reports.htm)

**EDUCATION WEEK'S "DIPLOMAS COUNT"**<http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2010/06/10/index.html>

- Diplomas Count 2011: Beyond High School, Before Baccalaureate
- Diplomas Count 2010:

**OTHER**

- The Lifetime Employment, Earnings, and Poverty Consequences of Dropping Out of High School in the Los Angeles Metro Area. Prepared by: Alison H. Dickson, Neeta P. Fogg, Paul E. Harrington, Ishwar Khatiwada. Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University. October, 2009.  
[usmayors.org/workforce/documents/2010-6-29DropoutsPathtoPoverty.pdf](http://usmayors.org/workforce/documents/2010-6-29DropoutsPathtoPoverty.pdf)

## RESOURCES

- Zero Dropouts for California: Information, Analysis, Recommendations, and Compendium of Resources on the Dropout Issue and Educational Practices in California. California Department of Education, Educational Options Office. November 2007.

## PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

- Buck Institute for Education  
<http://www.bie.org/>
- International Polytechnic High School (iPoly)  
[http://www.ipolyhighschool.org/pages/International\\_Polytechnic\\_High](http://www.ipolyhighschool.org/pages/International_Polytechnic_High)
- Scott Scudder Pilot School: Board Report. September, 2010.  
Available from the Los Angeles County Office of Education

**PARTICIPANT BIOS****Elisa Callow - Consultant**

After twenty years experience in Executive leadership positions in the nonprofit sector and philanthropy, Elisa Callow works with organizations in the not-for-profit sector on strategic issues. Additionally, Ms. Callow works for the Center for Cultural Innovation, Bank Street College in New York, and the Durfee Foundation's Springboard Fund program. Ms. Callow worked at the Ahmanson Foundation and then at the James Irvine Foundation. As founding director of the Armory Center for the Arts, Ms. Callow developed a number of groundbreaking partnerships with schools, city departments, grassroots community organizations, and established arts institutions. She has also worked with the Natural History Museum's Education Division on community partnership efforts known as the Education and Arts Roundtable. She was involved in the LA County Arts Commission's cross-sector dialogue entitled Imaginative Commons.

**Cynthia Campoy Brophy - Founder & Executive Director, The HeArt Project**

Prior to founding The HeArt Project in 1992, Cynthia Campoy Brophy was a publicist for MOCA. Ms. Campoy Brophy is a graduate of the Coro Southern CA Arts Leadership Fellows program and the Stanford Graduate School of Business Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders in the Arts. She served on the LA County Arts Education Program Advisory Group that developed Arts for All and currently serves on the board of Arts for LA.

**Cathleen Corella - Regional Director, Los Angeles County Office of Education**

Cathleen Corella has worked at LACOE for 21 years. She was one of the founding teachers of the alternative education division. Ms. Corella has been an innovator with curriculum and instruction and during her years as principal, the students in her alternative education programs outperformed students in some of the local school districts

**John Deasy - Superintendent, Los Angeles Unified School District**

Prior to joining the Los Angeles Unified School District in August 2010, Dr. Deasy served as Deputy Director of Education for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Prior to joining the foundation, he served as superintendent of the Prince George's County, Maryland, Public Schools, where he significantly narrowed the achievement gap and launched a pay-for-performance plan that was approved by the Board of Education and developed jointly with labor. Previously, he served as superintendent of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District in California and of the Coventry Public Schools in Rhode Island. He has been a Broad Fellow, an Annenberg Fellow, a State Superintendent of the Year, a presenter at numerous state and national conferences, and a consultant to school districts undertaking high school reform and district-wide improvement strategies. He has spoken and written extensively on education and serves on numerous boards.

**Margit Edwards - Program Director, The HeArt Project**

Margit Edwards is a choreographer, dancer and teacher who joined The HeArt Project as a workshop coordinator in 2006, taking over as Program Director in 2008. Prior to The HeArt Project, Edwards taught at Cal State L.A., Santa Monica College, and UCLA. She was Program Director at the L.A. Center for Education Research's Hollywood Stars After School Program and is currently a board member for Viver Brasil Dance Company.

## PARTICIPANT BIOS

### **Yolie Flores - Chief Executive Officer, Communities for Teaching Excellence**

Yolie Flores has recently left her position as a member of the LAUSD Board of Education, where she served for the past four years. She now serves as CEO of Communities for Teaching Excellence, a new national nonprofit focused on creating community and parent engagement around education reform issues. Ms. Flores began her career as a social worker at the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. She later became the director of child care planning and policy for the City of Los Angeles. After serving as a policy consultant to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ms. Flores served as CEO of the Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council (CPC), the largest children's partnership network in the United States.

### **Ayanna Hudson-Director of Arts Education, Arts for All**

Ayanna Hudson joined the staff of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission as the Director of Arts Education in September 2001. Prior to assuming this position, Ms. Hudson served as an arts program manager for the Fulton County Arts Council and designed and managed the Art-at-Work program, for teens referred by Fulton County Juvenile Court. She has presented on arts education at numerous local and national conferences and is a member of Arts for LA, Grantmakers in the Arts, and Americans for the Arts (AFTA), where she was elected by her peers to serve on the first Arts Education Council of AFTA. Ms. Hudson was selected for the 2010 inaugural class of the Community Arts Education Leadership Institute through the National Guild for Community Arts Education, as well as the 2003 inaugural class of Ambassador's Within, a program of the California Community Foundation.

### **Gretchen Lewotsky - Vice President, Government Affairs, Fox Entertainment Group**

Over the last twenty years, Gretchen Lewotsky has held a variety of positions at Fox, with a wide range of responsibilities from finance to government relations. Ms. Lewotsky represents Fox throughout the community on Boards or in an advisory capacity with organizations dealing with youth and education and the arts. She has supported The HeArt Project for many years.

### **Dante Noto - Director of Resource Development, Education Partnerships; University of California, Office of the President**

Dante Noto currently supports the Vice Provost in positioning the department to cultivate and solicit major gifts and grants. He also serves on the Policy Board of the UC Institute for Research in the Arts. Prior to his position in Education Partnerships, Mr. Noto spent 13 years as Director of Arts, Humanities and Social Science Research for the UC Office of the President. Mr. Noto has also served as executive director of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), where he administered programs to increase the number of students from underrepresented groups entering the public service.

### **Janice Pober - Senior Vice President, Corporate Social Responsibility; Sony Pictures Entertainment**

Janice Pober administers the studio's strategic philanthropic efforts and community outreach activities. She serves as trustee of the California State Summer School for the Arts, vice chair of Workplace Hollywood, and is on the boards of Camino Nuevo Charter School and the Los Angeles County Public Library Foundation. Ms. Pober also serves on the executive committee for the Los Angeles County Blueprint for Arts Education. The collaboration she has initiated with Culver City Unified School District is an exemplary corporate/government partnership.

## PARTICIPANT BIOS

### **Ron Randolph - Special Assistant to the Superintendent; Los Angeles County Office of Education**

Dr. Ronald Randolph served as Superintendent of the Lowell Joint School District for 33 years and retired from that position in 2004. He returned to Lowell as Interim Superintendent during the 2005-2006 school year. Since then, Dr. Randolph has worked in the capacity of Special Assistant to the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools.

### **Vivan Rescalvo - Education Deputy; Los Angeles County, 3rd District**

Vivian Rescalvo oversees the Los Angeles County Board of Education and Countywide education policy issues. Ms. Rescalvo is also currently a Board Member for the Arts High Foundation. She previously served as Planning Deputy on Yaroslavsky's City Council staff from 1989-93, and as Deputy for Children and Family Services and Public Social Services on his County Supervisor staff from 1993-2000. From 2001-March 2005, she worked in the Government Practice division of the law firm of Manatt, Phelps and Phillips before rejoining Yaroslavsky's County staff.

### **Gerald Riley - Assistant Superintendent, Educational Programs; Los Angeles County Office of Education**

Gerald Riley brings more than 25 years of experience in education as a school counselor and administrator to his position with the largest educational service agency in the country. Mr. Riley also provides educational leadership statewide through the Student Programs and Services Steering Committee of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association. Prior to his position at LACOE, Mr. Riley served as Director of Educational Options for the Del Norte County Office of Education for almost eight years. Mr. Riley retired in the summer of 2011.

### **Peter Rivera - Program Officer, Education; California Community Foundation**

Peter Rivera manages the education program of CCF, which seeks to expand early childhood opportunities, teacher professional development opportunities and increase parent engagement. Before joining CCF in 2010, Mr. Rivera was a program manager in the San Diego Unified School District, and previously worked at the Hechinger Institute for Education and the Media at Teachers College, Columbia University.

### **Sir Ken Robinson**

Sir Ken Robinson is an internationally-renowned expert and has been knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for his outstanding achievements as a writer, speaker and leader in creativity, the arts and education. His visionary consultancy skills have been employed by governments, major corporations and cultural organizations worldwide. Most recently he served as senior advisor to the J. Paul Getty Trust in Los Angeles. Until 2001, he was Professor of Education at Warwick University in the U.K. and is now Professor Emeritus. In 1998, Sir Robinson was appointed by the British government to chair the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, the largest ever inquiry into the importance of creativity in education and the economy. From 1985-1989 he was director of The Arts in Schools Project, a major UK initiative to improve the teaching of the arts. He was the principal author of "The Arts in Schools: Principles, Practice and Provision", a standard text in the UK and around the world. He has also written *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* and *Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative*. A popular speaker at TED conferences, Robinson has given two presentations on the role of creativity in education, viewed by millions.

## PARTICIPANT BIOS

### **Darline Robles - Professor of Clinical Education; USC Rossier School of Education**

Currently, Dr. Robles is responsible for the development of a new USC hybrid master's degree program in school leadership, to be delivered both online and on-campus. From 2002-2010, Dr. Robles served as Superintendent of Los Angeles County Office of Education. She was the first woman and Latina to serve in the post. Prior to this position, Dr. Robles served as Superintendent of Schools for Salt Lake City School District from 1995 to 2002, as Superintendent of Schools for Montebello Unified School District. But, as Robles points out, she actually started her 30-year education career as a teacher intern with LACOE. In October 2009, she was named one of the nation's top 100 influential Hispanic Americans by Hispanic Business magazine. She currently serves on the President's Advisory Committee on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

### **Ronald D. Rosen - Los Angeles County Arts Commissioner & Board Member; The HeArt Project**

Ronald Rosen, past President and Member of the Board of Directors of The HeArt Project, is a practicing lawyer in Beverly Hills specializing in trusts, probate, and family law. Ron recently served as the President of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission 2010-2011, and is a former member of the Los Angeles County Board of Education. Currently, Ron serves as Secretary of the Annenberg Performing Arts Center, which is responsible for renovating and operating the Historic Beverly Hills Post Office as a cultural and performing arts center.

### **Russell Rumberger - Director; California Dropout Research Project**

Vice Provost, Educational Partnerships; University of California, Office of the President

Russell Rumberger has been conducting research on school dropouts for the past 25 years. In 2006, he founded the California Dropout Research Project, which conducts research and has developed a policy agenda to address the problem of school dropouts in California. Since its inception, two pieces of legislation addressing the dropout crisis have been signed into law based on CDRP recommendations. He has been a member of multiple task forces and panels for the U.S. Department of Education, as well as a member of multiple National Research Council (NRC) committees, including the Committee on Increasing High School Students' Engagement and Motivation to Learn. Dr. Rumberger has also served as a dropout consultant to governors and state legislatures. He has just completed a book on high school dropouts that Harvard University Press will publish in 2011.

### **Dan Sackheim - Education Program Consultant, Educational Options; California Department of Education**

Dan Sackheim is responsible for monitoring and supporting the establishment and operation of community day schools and opportunity education. Mr. Sackheim serves on a number of advisory boards and statewide workgroups including the California Collaborative for Youth Development, Improving Transition Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities, Real Game California, CDE NCLB Professional Development Workgroup, and the Community Day School Network. He has presented at numerous state and national conferences.

## PARTICIPANT BIOS

### **Robert Sainz - Assistant General Manager, Operations; City of Los Angeles, Community Development Department**

Over the last six years in his position, Robert Sainz has reinvented the Workforce Development System, establishing the FamilySource System, and the founding of the Los Angeles Youth Opportunity Movement. Mr. Sainz has nearly 20 years of public service experience in local government. He was previously the Executive Director of the Los Angeles Youth Opportunity Movement for the City of Los Angeles. He has also worked as the Assistant Executive Director of the City of LA Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families. Mr. Sainz began his public service career in the Los Angeles County Probation Department.. He is a Board Trustee and past president of US Conference of Mayor's Workforce Development Council. He has received numerous awards and recognition for his work including the Durfee Foundation's Stanton Fellowship.

### **Mark Slavkin - Vice President, Education; Music Center at the Performing Arts Center of LA County**

At the Music Center Education Division, Mark Slavkin directs a wide range of programs and services that help advance arts education in schools and communities across Los Angeles County. Mark currently serves on the Executive Committee for "Arts for All: the LA County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education." As an elected member of the LA Unified School District Board of Education from 1989 to 1997, he forged partnerships with the Music Center and other community arts agencies. Previously, Mr. Slavkin served as Director of Public Engagement, Advocacy and Communications for the Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project (LAAMP) and as Los Angeles Program Officer for the Getty Education Institute for the Arts. He has also worked in the State Legislature and in LA County government on a variety of health and human service policy issues.

### **Dixon Slingerland - Executive Director; Youth Policy Institute**

Since 1996, Dixon Slingerland has directed the Youth Policy Institute (YPI), a nonprofit agency providing education, technology, and training services to lift Los Angeles families out of poverty. Key YPI programs include the LA Promise Neighborhood, the Full-Service Community Schools programs, the Hollywood FamilySource Center, after-school programs at 56 school sites, job training for 800 clients in health careers, a federal GEAR UP college preparation program, AmeriCorps, Family Technology Project, summer youth employment, tutoring, and many others. Mr. Slingerland served on President Obama's National Finance (NFC) and Education Policy Committees during the 2008 Presidential campaign. He is now a member of the NFC for the Democratic National Committee. He was an Honored Guest at the 2008 Democratic National Convention Election Night and the 2009 Presidential Inauguration.

### **George Simpson - Principal; Los Angeles County High School for the Arts**

George Simpson brings more than a decade of leadership in arts education to the principalship of the award-winning Los Angeles County High School for the Arts (LACHSA). Prior to joining LACHSA in 2008, he served as director of the Roland Hayes School of Music, a public high school with a focus on music. From 1999 to 2006, Mr. Simpson was a founding faculty member of the Boston Arts Academy (BAA), Boston's first and only high school for the visual and performing arts. In 2000, Simpson's work at BAA led to the inception of the Berklee College of Music Preparatory School, a year-round intensive music education program designed to prepare talented under-served students to pursue higher education. He served as founding director there for eight years and created the PULSE music curriculum, an online initiative to connect Berklee to arts organizations nationwide. In 2010, Mr. Simpson was honored as Principal-of-the-Year by Southern California's Administrators' Association.

## PARTICIPANT BIOS

### **Sonia Soto - HeArt Project Alumna**

Sonia Soto participated in HeArt Project workshops for four years. She received her B.A. in Political Science from UCLA College of Letters and Science in 2006. Ms. Soto is passionate about education reform and in September will begin a masters program at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, as part of the Higher Education and Organizational Change Division.

### **Matty Sterenchock - Program Officer; Herb Alpert Foundation**

Matty Sterenchock's portfolio includes fifteen community arts organizations throughout Los Angeles county, as well as the Foundation's Lawndale Initiative (a collaboration with P. S. Arts and the Lawndale Elementary School District) and the Harmony Project Regional Youth Orchestra. He serves on the board of LA Voice, where he is Chair of the Fundraising Committee; is an advisory board member for the Emerging Arts Leaders/LA; and is an advisory committee member for Six Points Fellowship, which will soon announce its first Los Angeles cohort.

### **Keren Taylor - Executive Director; WriteGirl**

Passionate about inspiring others to cultivate their creative ideas, Keren Taylor has conducted more than 150 songwriting, poetry and "Art & Words" workshops in New York and Los Angeles for both children and adults. In launching a new nonprofit organization, she has found the perfect vehicle for more than ten years of experience in arts education, media and public relations, sales, marketing, event planning and freelance writing and editing.

### **Allegra Towns - Harvard Graduate School of Education Fellow & Education Pioneers Fellow**

Allegra Towns is a fellow at The HeArt Project this summer, working to convene this roundtable and write a paper summarizing the ideas it generates. Ms. Towns recently received an Ed.M. in Arts in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Previously, she has been an elementary school classroom teacher at the Harlem Children's Zone and in inner-city Miami, Florida as a Teach for America corps member. She has also worked on issues of arts in education in Cape Town, South Africa.

### **Sophia Waugh - Member, Board of Directors; National Parent Teacher Association**

#### **Board Member; The HeArt Project**

Sophia Waugh brings her knowledge, leadership skills, collaboration, and partnership building from nearly 15 years as a member and president four times of the Board of Education for the Los Angeles County Office of Education. Ms. Waugh was elected to the National PTA Board of Directors in June 2011. She previously served a two-year term on the National PTA Field Service Committee. Waugh continues to serve on the California State PTA since becoming a member in 1989 as a District PTA President. She serves on its board of managers as a member of the Education Commission bringing her wealth of knowledge and partnership building. She has also served on the California School Boards Association Board of Directors, California County Boards of Education as its president, and serves currently on non-profit boards.