



A REPORTER'S GUIDE TO RETHINKING THE AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL

DECEMBER 4-5, 2017

**HIGH TECH HIGH
SAN DIEGO**



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WELCOME

Dear Colleague:

Welcome to San Diego! We're delighted that you could join us for this EWA seminar, "A Reporter's Guide to Rethinking the American High School."

Momentum is building around efforts to rethink high school — to make it more engaging, relevant, and academically challenging for young people. Scattered across the country are examples of public schools, both district-run and charter, that are looking to buck the norms of the typical high school. They are rethinking how, when, where, and at what pace students learn.

But the road to educational innovation is littered with potholes and early exit ramps. How can reporters make sense of the many emerging approaches that aim to upend traditional models? What questions should they ask to help cut through the buzzwords and flashy videos?

Over the next two days, we will consider these and other important questions. We've assembled a stellar mix of educators, analysts, students, and fellow journalists to share their insights and experiences.

We're pleased to hold this event at High Tech High, a widely recognized charter school network that's made a name for itself through its innovative practices. Fittingly, we'll get in the spirit with a hands-on exercise on designing schools.

In the end, we hope that what you learn informs and inspires your work for months and even years to come.

Sincerely,



Caroline Hendrie
Executive Director
Education Writers Association

EWA thanks High Tech High for hosting this seminar. This event is made possible by major funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, as well as a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. EWA retains sole editorial control over all programming.

SCHEDULE

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2017

REGISTRATION AND LUNCH

12:00 – 12:30 p.m.

WELCOME AND ICE BREAKER

12:30 – 1:00 p.m.

- **Caroline Hendrie**, Education Writers Association

ANATOMY OF HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

What's wrong with high schools today? What are the barriers to change? Panelists discuss the current wave of high school redesign — the common threads, the goals, and the challenges. Is this work enhancing educational equity? How can reporters assess whether bold claims to transform education are more than just rhetoric?

- **Harvey Chism**, South Bronx Community Charter High School
- **Craig Jerald**, Break the Curve
- **Rebecca Wolfe**, Jobs for the Future
- **Caroline Hendrie**, Education Writers Association (moderator)

HOW I DID THE STORY

2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

Journalists who have produced enterprising coverage on efforts to rethink high school, including through personalized and competency-based learning, share insights from their work. They also offer practical tips to bring stories to life while maintaining an open mind and a healthy dose of skepticism.

- **Benjamin Herold**, Education Week
- **Laura Isensee**, Houston Public Media
- **Stacy Teicher Khadaroo**, Christian Science Monitor
- **Erik Robelen**, Education Writers Association (moderator)

DRAFTING A NEW BLUEPRINT FOR LEARNING

3:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Around the U.S., new public high schools are cropping up that aim to upend the conventional learning experience. Educators and school designers discuss their work, including how they developed the original blueprints and how they have refined those plans over time.

- **Shawn Cornally**, Iowa BIG High School
- **Christine Fowler-Mack**, Cleveland Metropolitan School District
- **Matthew Pilarski**, Springpoint
- **Lisa Simms**, Denver School of Innovation and Sustainable Design
- **Patrick O'Donnell**, The Plain Dealer (moderator)

ROUNDTABLE TALKS AND EXHIBITS OF STUDENT LEARNING

4:05 – 4:50 p.m.

In this interactive session, journalists in small groups get a taste of what learning looks like at several innovative high schools, and have the chance for more in-depth conversations with educators and students.

STUDENTS TAKE CENTER STAGE

5:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Students from several high schools recognized for innovative practices share on-the-ground experiences and impressions. What is a typical day like? What's different from their last school? Do students need a hall pass to leave the classroom?

- **Jailene Diaz**, South Bronx Community Charter High School
- **Amida Nigera**, Denver School of Innovation and Sustainable Design
- **Odalís Ramirez**, Vista High School
- **Ethan Traugh**, Iowa BIG High School
- **Jenny Brundin**, Colorado Public Radio (moderator)

RECEPTION

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Fireside Terrace, Courtyard Marriott San Diego Airport

SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2017

BREAKFAST

8:00 – 8:30 a.m.

INTRODUCTION TO HIGH TECH HIGH AND PRIMER FOR STUDENT-LED TOURS

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Learn more about the High Tech High network of 13 charter schools. Intentionally serving students from diverse backgrounds, the network's cornerstones are educational equity, personalization, "authentic" student work, and teacher-student collaboration in designing the learning experience.

- **Larry Rosenstock**, High Tech High
- **Randy Scherer**, High Tech High
- **Caroline Hendrie**, Education Writers Association (moderator)

STUDENT-LED TOURS OF HIGH TECH HIGH

9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Reporters in small groups join student-led tours that aim to offer "walking exhibitions" of student learning.

DEBRIEF ON SITE VISITS

11:10 – 11:30 a.m.

Journalists reflect on the school visits, ask questions, and share ideas for how the experience might inform their coverage.

- **Randy Scherer**, High Tech High

STUDYING INNOVATION: THE STRUGGLE TO MOVE FROM VISION TO REALITY

11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Education researchers discuss key findings from studies on personalized learning and redesigned high schools. What does the research reveal about the academic outcomes? What are the challenges of turning innovative ideas into action? How should schools that embrace new approaches to teaching and learning be judged?

- **Barbara Means**, Digital Promise
- **Elizabeth Steiner**, The RAND Corporation
- **Beth Hawkins**, The 74 (moderator)



LUNCH

12:15 – 1:00 p.m.

A CONVERSATION WITH RUSSLYNN ALI OF THE XQ INSTITUTE

1:00 – 1:45 p.m.

The CEO of the XQ Institute discusses her organization’s work to “reimagine public high school,” including the XQ Super Schools Project. This initiative has provided millions of dollars in grants to fuel efforts that aim to transform the high school experience across the country.

- **Liz Willen**, The Hechinger Report (interviewer)

TURNING THE TABLES: DESIGN A NEW HIGH SCHOOL

2:00 – 4:20 p.m.

During this hands-on exercise — facilitated by experts at High Tech High — journalists in small teams go through the process of designing a new high school. Along the way, they navigate the complex issues school designers must grapple with, from the big picture to daily practicalities.

BRAINSTORMING SESSION: COVERING INNOVATION IN HIGH SCHOOL

4:30 – 5:00 p.m.

You’ve heard from educators, students, analysts and fellow journalists. You’ve seen what learning can look like in places that are rethinking the conventional high school. Now what? Reporters huddle together and share ideas to take back to their newsrooms.

BIOGRAPHIES

Russlynn Ali is the managing director of education at the Emerson Collective and the chief executive officer of the XQ Institute. Previously, she served for nearly four years as the assistant secretary for civil rights at the U.S. Department of Education under President Barack Obama. Before that, Ali was a vice president at The Education Trust and was the founding executive director for The Education Trust West. Ali's professional background also includes experience as a teacher, attorney, liaison for the president of the Children's Defense Fund, assistant director of policy and research at the Broad Foundation, and chief of staff to the president of the Los Angeles Unified School District's Board of Education.

Harvey Chism is the executive director and co-founder of South Bronx Community Charter High School, which uses a competency-based model designed to improve the college- and career-readiness rates of New York City students. Previously, he was the senior director of school design for the New York City Department of Education. In this capacity, he supported the implementation of three new high schools designed to serve disadvantaged students in target neighborhoods. He worked with school leaders, their faculty, and other colleagues to share resources, maintain alignment to common strategic visions, and promote partnership efforts. Before that, Chism served as the vice president of educational innovations at the Philadelphia Youth Network. As a member of the network's senior leadership team, he oversaw the education programs portfolio. Chism, a former teacher, earned a master's degree in education policy from the University of Pennsylvania and a bachelor's degree in education and sociology from Swarthmore College.

Shawn Cornally is a co-founder and STEM educator at Iowa BIG high school in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Iowa BIG has been nationally recognized for its innovative practices in the use of time, space, and community-generated curriculum. Before working at Iowa BIG, Cornally taught science and math in the Solon (Iowa) Community School District for about six years. He also taught a physical science pedagogy course at the University of Iowa. Cornally earned a master's degree in science education and a bachelor's degree in physics from the University of Iowa.

Christine Fowler-Mack is the chief portfolio officer for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, which serves more than 40,000 students in over 100 schools. The district has worked to develop a diverse portfolio of charter and district-operated schools of choice across the city. Before joining the Cleveland school district, Fowler-Mack served the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District as its interim superintendent and assistant superintendent. Fowler-Mack's awards include: the Summit County Leadership Academy's "Emerging Leader Award," Akron Public Schools' Citywide "Coach of the Year," the Heights Association of Black School Educators' Award, and the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Schools'



Educational Leadership Award. She is listed in *Who's Who Among Educators & Women in Leadership*. Fowler-Mack earned a bachelor's degree and master's degree from the University of Akron and a superintendent's license from Ashland University.

Benjamin Herold is a reporter covering educational technology for Education Week, where he has worked since 2013. Previously, he covered the Philadelphia school district for WHYY public radio and the Philadelphia Public School Notebook. Herold, who has won national awards for his education coverage, earned a master's degree in urban education from Temple University. He previously worked as a policy researcher, an independent documentary filmmaker, and a training specialist for rape-crisis and domestic-violence-prevention organizations.

Laura Isensee covers education for Houston Public Media. Previously, she was a staff reporter at The Miami Herald and contributed to South Florida's NPR affiliate. Her work has also appeared in The Dallas Morning News, Reuters and Clarín in Argentina. Isensee has won awards for her work in print and radio, including best specialty/beat reporting from the Texas AP Broadcasters Association in 2014. She is also a recipient of an EWA Reporting Fellowship. A native Houstonian, Isensee graduated from the University of Texas at Austin. She earned her master's in journalism from Columbia University.

Craig Jerald is the president of the education consulting firm, Break the Curve. He partners with national organizations seeking to improve school performance and student outcomes in the U.S. His clients have included the National Governors Association, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National School Boards Association, the Center for American Progress, and the Education Trust, among others. Jerald has authored or co-authored many reports and publications, most recently an issue brief for the Center for American Progress titled "High Schools of the Future: How States Can Accelerate High School Redesign." Jerald also has served in multiple leadership positions at national organizations, most recently as the vice president for policy at the College Board, the organization that oversees the SAT and Advanced Placement programs. Jerald also has been a principal partner at the Education Trust and a senior editor at Education Week, where he founded the organization's research department. He began his career as a middle school teacher in California's Long Beach Unified School District.

Stacy Teicher Khadaroo is an education reporter for the Christian Science Monitor. She writes primarily for the Monitor's EqualEd section and also covers

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youth issues, civil rights, justice, and gender. She is also an EWA Reporting Fellow. Khadaroo has had a long career at the Monitor, starting out in the op-ed department, then moving into editing national news and education, writing about workplace and financial issues, and then moving to the education beat. She earned a bachelor's degree in women's studies from Smith College, and a master's degree from the University of Missouri School of Journalism.

Barbara Means is the executive director of the Learning Sciences Research arm of Digital Promise. Before joining Digital Promise this year, Means founded the Center for Technology in Learning research group at SRI International and served as its co-director for many years. Her research examines the effectiveness of innovative education approaches supported by digital technology. Means' recent work includes evaluating the implementation and impacts of newly developed adaptive learning software. She is also studying the long-term effects that attending inclusive STEM-focused schools have on students of color. A fellow of the American Educational Research Association, Means has served on many study committees of the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, including the one currently producing a companion volume to the classic "How People Learn." She has advised the U.S. Department of Education on national education technology plans and written or edited more than a half dozen books related to learning and technology. Means earned her undergraduate degree in psychology from Stanford University and her doctorate in educational psychology from the University of California, Berkeley.

Matthew Pilarski is the director of instruction and school design at Springpoint. He is an experienced educator, most recently working with TNTP (formerly called The New Teacher Project). There, he helped lead efforts to recruit, select, and train school leaders for districts, specifically heading up a program in the San Francisco school district. Through San Francisco PLUS, Pilarski led a team to coach school leaders on developing and retaining teachers, strengthening schools' instructional culture, and understanding how to use data to improve student outcomes. Pilarski also worked closely with district officials to build internal capacity to develop sustainable leadership pathways. Prior to that, Pilarski worked as an instructional support leader with Chicago Public Schools. Pilarski also worked as both a teacher and a school leader for eleven years in the South Bronx in New York City. He started his career in education as a New York City Teaching Fellow, teaching seventh grade English. Pilarski holds a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Michigan, a master's degree in secondary English education from New York University, and a master's degree in school leadership from Columbia University's Teachers College.



Larry Rosenstock is the CEO and founding principal of High Tech High, a network of 13 public charter schools in California. He also is the president of the High Tech High Graduate School of Education, as well as a core faculty member. Previously, Rosenstock taught carpentry in urban high schools in Boston and Cambridge and was the principal of the Rindge School of Technical Arts, and of the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. He served as an attorney at the Harvard Center for Law and Education, a lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and a visiting professor at the University of California, Berkeley. Rosenstock directed the federal New Urban High School Project, and was the president of the Price Charitable Fund. He is a winner of the Ford Foundation Innovations in State and Local Government Award, an Ashoka Fellow, and a recipient of the McGraw Prize in Education.

Randy Scherer directs the California Career Pathways Project-Based Learning Leadership Academy at High Tech High. The leadership academy is a new professional development program developed in conjunction with the California Department of Education. For ten years, Scherer taught humanities at High Tech High Media Arts — a high school in which he was a founding member of the faculty. Prior to joining High Tech High, Scherer was the production manager for three national magazines in New York City. Throughout his teaching career, Scherer has remained active in print media and has published four nonfiction books. At High Tech High, Scherer was a founding member and editor of “UnBoxed: The Journal of Adult Learning in Schools.” He has developed and presented workshops centered on project-based learning and school reform for educators and policymakers in the U.S. and abroad. Scherer earned a bachelor’s degree in political science and English from Binghamton University, his teaching credential from the University of San Diego and a master’s of education in teacher leadership from the High Tech High Graduate School of Education.

Lisa Simms is the principal of the Denver School of Innovation and Sustainable Design, a public high school she helped to design in the Denver school district. Simms previously served as the school’s assistant principal and as the dean of curriculum and instruction. She has worked in education her entire career, including as a classroom teacher for 11 years at the middle and high school levels, as well as an instructional coach for three years. Simms has taught in a variety of settings, including working in regular and alternative DPS schools. She was a founding member of the Mapleton Expeditionary School of the Arts, and also lived and taught in Mexico. Simms earned a bachelor’s degree in English from Colorado State University, a master’s degree in education from Regis University, and is currently pursuing her administrative license from the University of Colorado Denver.

BIOGRAPHIES

Elizabeth D. Steiner is a senior policy analyst at RAND Corporation. Steiner’s research is focused on ways to improve public education in the U.S., reduce racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps, and improve equity of educational and life outcomes. Her work also addresses implementation of public policy – how systems of rules and incentives intended to encourage behavior toward a desired outcome function in practice, and how policies could be improved to promote desired outcomes. These interests intersect in her work at RAND, which is focused on studying implementation of education reforms and policies. Other current research topics include implementation of large-scale education reforms, school leader training programs, and educator evaluation systems. Steiner holds a master’s degree in public policy and management from the Heinz College at Carnegie Mellon University.

Rebecca E. Wolfe directs Jobs for the Future’s Students at the Center initiative, which adapts current research on key components of student-centered approaches to learning and deeper learning outcomes. The ultimate goal is for all students – with a special focus on underserved youth – to have concrete opportunities to acquire the skills, knowledge and dispositions needed for success in college, the workforce and civic life. Wolfe’s recent publications include “Early College Can Boost College Success Rates for Low-Income, First-Generation Students” (Kappan 2016) and “Educator Competencies for Personalized, Student-Centered Teaching” (Jobs for the Future 2015). Previously, Wolfe was the education director at the Fairfield County Community Foundation. She has also worked as a middle school site coordinator for GEAR UP, a teacher in several college-readiness initiatives for low-income youth, and a community liaison in the Boston district attorney’s office for the first Youth Opportunity Area grant. Wolfe holds a bachelor’s degree in sociology with a focus in urban education from Harvard University and a doctorate in education policy and administration from Stanford University.

A multi-level atrium with people sitting on balconies and a central seating area. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light. The balconies are enclosed with metal railings, and people are seen sitting on wooden chairs and sofas. The central area has a wooden floor and some furniture. The overall atmosphere is modern and comfortable.

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