



## *Building Capacity to Promote College- and Career-Readiness for English Language Learners*

### **Presenter Biographies**



**Mollie Avelino** is the Director of Secondary ESL for the Office of Bilingual Education /ESL for the Austin Independent School District (AISD). Mrs. Avelino earned an MA in Educational Administration from Tarleton State University with principal certification; and a B.S. in English and Education from State University of New York at Brockport. In her current position, she coordinates and monitors services for ELLs at AISD secondary campuses. Prior to coming to Austin, she was employed at Denton ISD as a high school administrator and as an ESL teacher. Among her past experiences, Mrs. Avelino has delivered professional development sessions on ESL strategies and sheltered instruction and has helped develop and implement ESL program models at the secondary level. Married and with two sons, Mollie enjoys the outdoors, traveling and passing time with good friends.



**Laura Ayala** has worked in the Student Assessment Division of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) since 1990, where she is currently the director of English language learner assessments for the statewide assessment program. She oversees the development of the state-administered Spanish language content area assessments, linguistically accommodated content area assessments in English and Spanish, and assessments of English language proficiency. The ongoing contact she has with educators, researchers, and policymakers and the in-depth analyses of ELL student performance data that are in integral part of her work continue to fuel her passion for finding ways to effectively address the learning and testing needs of this growing student population.

After an initial career as a middle school teacher of Spanish, French, and German, she moved to South America where she taught English to Spanish speakers between the ages of 6 and 35. Prior to joining the Texas Education Agency, she performed translations and was a senior content editor of French and Spanish textbooks for a major publishing company. She has a B.S. in education from Wright State University in Ohio.



**Dr. Meria Carstarphen** is Superintendent of the Austin Independent School District, an urban public school district with an annual budget of \$939 million, 12,000 employees, and 84,000 pre-K-12 students in 120 schools. Prior to this position, Dr. Carstarphen served as the superintendent of Saint Paul Public Schools in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and in accountability positions for public school systems in the District of Columbia, Kingsport, Tennessee, and Columbus, Ohio. Dr. Carstarphen's professional experience includes teaching Spanish and documentary photography at the middle school level, as well as elementary education in Seville, Spain, and Caracas, Venezuela.

She earned a doctorate in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy with a concentration in urban superintendency from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Dr. Carstarphen earned a bachelor of arts degree in political science and Spanish from Tulane University, and master of education degrees from Auburn University and Harvard University. She has also studied at the University of Seville, Spain, and University of Innsbruck, Austria. A public school graduate, Dr. Carstarphen hails from Selma, Alabama, where she began her teaching career. Dr. Carstarphen currently serves on the boards of the Council of Great City Schools, Educational Testing Service, Austin Partners in Education, AISD Public Education Foundation, Texas School Alliance, Texas Council of Urban School Districts, and the Children's Hospital/AISD Health Service Advisory Board; is a student mentor through Austin Partners in Education; and is an Ex-Officio member of the Austin Symphony Board of Directors. She also serves in advisory and committee roles for the Urban Superintendents Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

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**Susie Coultriss** serves as the Director for Bilingual and English as a Second Language Programs in the Division of Curriculum at the TEA. She is a bilingual educator and strong advocate of children, and has over 33 years of bilingual professional experience. Her commitment to improving teaching and learning is reflected in her life-long work with culturally and linguistically diverse students and adults alike. She has served as a bilingual and ESL teacher in transitional and dual language elementary classrooms in Laredo, the Rio Grande Valley, San Antonio and Round Rock (RRISD). She has been a Bilingual/ESOL teacher leader, an Assistant Director of Student Diversity and Learning Programs (Bilingual/ESL; Migrant/Prekindergarten) and, a Bilingual/ESOL Curriculum Integration Specialist in RRISD. She served in the capacity of Assistant Director for Bilingual and English as a Second Language Programs at the TEA since October 2005 where she provided statewide leadership for bilingual education and English as a second language (ESL) education Kindergarten – Grade 12.



**Celia Glick** is the Director of AISD's new Dual Language Program. Ms. Glick's appointment was approved by the Board of Trustees on January 25, 2010. Ms. Glick has been an Austin principal since 2005. Prior to joining AISD, she was a teacher and administrator in Lubbock ISD for 30 years, where she implemented a Two-Way Dual Language Enrichment program. She earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Texas Tech University in 1974, and a master's degree in 1984, also from Texas Tech, in education with an emphasis in bilingual education. She is an active member of numerous educational associations, including the Austin, Texas, and National Associations for Bilingual Education.



**Dennis Hill** is the Superintendent of the Llano Independent School District. Mr. Hill began a career in education 33 years ago. After teaching and coaching several years in Lampasas, Texas, he joined the Llano I.S.D. Staff in 1982, quickly assuming the role of Llano High School Principal. Mr. Hill was appointed Llano I.S.D. Assistant Superintendent in 2000, leaving behind an "Exemplary" high school campus. As he assumed the district role of Superintendent in 2004, he inherited several major challenges. Acting as a catalyst for change, he solidified the financial position of the district by moving it from a position of insolvency to having a sound financial base with over six million dollars in unrestricted fund balance in August of 2009. As Superintendent, Mr. Hill and the educational team have worked collaboratively to develop and implement goals designed to improve the academic performance of all students in the district. Under his leadership, the current district focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, has brought statewide recognition to Llano I.S.D.



**Melissa Hutchins** has served as the project manager for the Austin Independent School District (AISD), Quality Teaching for English Learners initiative, since January 2009. She has been an educator for over ten years in a variety of educational roles, including work at both the district and campus levels, and in a private educational consulting practice. Prior to her current position, she served as the Office of Bilingual Education/ESL, Assessment Coordinator, for two and a half years providing training to district teachers and administrators on various assessments for English Language Learners (ELLs). Before joining AISD, Melissa was an Associate Educational Consultant, where she provided educational consultation, evaluation and placement for families with adolescents struggling to perform in traditional academic settings. Melissa Hutchins began her career as an elementary teacher in Fairfax County Virginia, and also taught in Newton, Massachusetts, and Round Rock, Texas.

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**Ervin Knezek**, Ed. D, is Deputy Executive Director for Academic Services for the Education Service Center, Region XIII in Austin where he supports regional efforts in curriculum development, program management, assessment, and data analysis. Ervin Knezek has served as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, curriculum director, an elementary and middle school principal, and a classroom teacher. His research work has been centered on supervision as a component of instructional leadership of principals in relation to student performance. He is currently leading a statewide curriculum development project in Texas.



**Roberto Manzo** is the Program Manager of School Readiness and Partnerships at TEA. He has worked at the Texas Education Agency since 1999 where he has collaborated with many federal and state programs. In 2003 he joined the State Initiatives Division and he currently oversees the Limited English Proficient Student Success Initiatives. The initiative provides for intensive programs of instruction for students with limited English proficiency; and training materials and other training resources to assist teachers in developing the expertise required to enable students of limited English proficiency to meet state performance expectations.

**Janet O’Keeffe** is a Bilingual/ESL Education Specialist at ESC Region XIII, currently serving as team leader. She received her Master’s degree from Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches and was a classroom teacher for most of her career serving ELL students in the Del Rio CISD. Janet is also a Master Reading Teacher and Reading Specialists and was the district reading specialist and ELL coordinator for Schulenburg ISD prior to coming to Region XIII. In her current position, she manages the Title III Shared Services Arrangement with 34 local districts, is writing online professional development courses with Texas Initiatives through a grant from the Texas Education Agency, as well as addressing assessment, compliance, and accountability issues for ELLs.



**Evangelina Orozco** has served as Immigrant College Coordinator with the Office of Bilingual Education/ESL of the Austin ISD for five years. She provides a variety of services to increase college access for immigrant and ELL students, who are mostly first in their family to consider a higher education. She conducts community- and school-based outreach activities to create awareness and share information about preparing and applying for college. She also provides direct college admission and financial aid advising to students when conducting visits across the district’s high schools. Prior to this position, Vangie worked as Parent Outreach Specialist with Project ADVANCE, an Austin ISD college readiness program sponsored by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. Before coming to Austin ISD, Vangie worked at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) in Austin as a Program Specialist in various projects related to family and community involvement in education. Vangie holds a B.A. in Public and International Affairs from Princeton University. She also holds Masters Degrees in Public Affairs and Latin American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. She is happily married and the proud mother of two children.



**Deborah Palmer** is an Assistant Professor in Bilingual/Bicultural Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Texas at Austin. A former two-way immersion fourth/fifth grade teacher from California, she teaches courses in the foundations of bilingual education, teaching in bilingual settings, and second language acquisition. Her research interests include bilingual education policy and politics, two-way bilingual education, and teacher leadership in bilingual/ESL. She is the director of the *Proyecto Maestría Collaborative*, a National Professional Development Project that aims to build teacher leadership and capacity in bilingual/ESL education in the Austin Metroplex. She works with teachers to define and build equitable learning spaces in diverse bilingual/multilingual classrooms.



**Lizzette Reynolds** currently serves as the Deputy Commissioner for Statewide Policy and Programs at the Texas Education Agency (TEA). In that capacity, she is involved in assisting the Commissioner of Education in the areas of curriculum and standards, accountability, policy and research. Prior to coming to the TEA, Ms. Reynolds was the Secretary's Regional Representative under Secretary Margaret Spellings, serving as the Department liaison to various education stakeholders in the states of Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, New Mexico and Texas.

Previous roles include P-16 liaison for the UT System, Special Assistant at the U.S. Department of Education Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs, Deputy Legislative Director for then-Texas Governor George W. Bush and Legislative Director to State Senator Teel Bivins from Amarillo. Ms. Reynolds earned a Bachelor of Arts from Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. She is married to David Reynolds and has three children.



**Katherine Ryan** has been principal of Lanier High School for the last two years. Previous to that, she was a campus level administrator and held a central office administrative level position, less than five miles from the Mexican border. These experiences led Ms. Ryan to develop a special interest in working with students who are second language learners. Partnering with QTEL over the last three years, has allowed her to develop new insight into helping all students be successful. Ms. Ryan grew up in an army family. Being an army "brat" afforded her the opportunity to not only travel all over the world, but to experience both a variety of public and military schools. Ms. Ryan has always wanted to be a teacher since before she even entered school. She received her Bachelor of Science in Education with an emphasis in math and science from Columbus College, in Georgia. Marrying again into the army, she traveled and taught in seven places in the US and abroad. In the late 90's she earned a Masters Degree in Reading and soon after completed her certification process for Administration.



**Dr. Ramona Treviño** is the Chief Academic Officer for Austin Independent School District. She came to AISD after serving as the founding principal and CEO of the University of Texas Elementary School for seven years; leading this diverse elementary demonstration school to an Exemplary rating by the Texas Education Agency in 2007 and in 2009. She came to AISD with more than 27 years experience as an educator; including serving as principal of Zilker Elementary School in Austin ISD. Under her leadership, Zilker progressed in the Texas school rating system from Acceptable, to Recognized, to Exemplary in 2001 and 2002, and was designated as a Texas and National Blue Ribbon School. Dr. Treviño has worked as an administrator in the Austin Independent School District, as well as the Hays Consolidated School District, and also as a special education teacher in the Klein School District, the Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. She completed her B.S. in 1981 from Wheelock College in Boston, and her M.Ed. and Ph.D. from the Educational Administration Department at the University of Texas at Austin. She held a fellowship in the U.T. Division of Diversity and Community Engagement and coordinated the Urban Education Pilot Program at the University of Texas. She is a clinical professor in the U.T. College of Education's Principalship Program and also serves on the Board of Directors for the Education Service Center for Region 13.



**Leticia Vega** is currently the Principal at the International High School in Austin, Texas. The International High School has been designed to meet the growing number of secondary age newcomer immigrant students who are English Language Learners. Ms. Vega has served as principal for two years. Prior to being principal, she served as the school's assistant principal for two years. Her career began in the Rio Grande Valley where she taught English Language Arts for several years and then moved to San Antonio where she also taught English Language Arts.



**Aída Walqui** directs the Teacher Professional Development Program at WestEd, which is comprised of the Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) project, focused on the development of adolescents' academic uses of disciplinary English, and the Strategic Literacy Initiative. Under her leadership, QTEL has developed professional development processes and tools to promote the academic success of English Learners and their teachers. Funded by IES, this program is currently in its third year of a large-scale effectiveness study. Aida has also led the implementation of multi-year QTEL professional development efforts in New York City, Austin, and San Diego. Together with the QTEL team, she has just completed a study of English Learners in California middle schools which was funded by the Hewlett Foundation. She received her M.S. in Sociolinguistics from Georgetown University and her Ph.D. in Education, Language, Literacy, and Culture from Stanford University. She

### *Distinguished Keynote Speaker*



**Senator Leticia Van de Putte**, a pharmacist for more than 30 years, represents a large portion of San Antonio and Bexar County. A former five-term state representative, she is now serving her fifth term as a Texas State Senator for District 26.

Senator Van de Putte currently serves as Chair of the Veteran Affairs and Military Installations Committee, and also is a member of the Senate Committees on Education, State Affairs and Business and Commerce. She is also the Chair of the Senate Democratic Caucus. he is currently serves as the Chair of the Texas Senate Democratic Caucus.

Nationally, Senator Van de Putte served as the co-chair of the 2008 Democratic National Convention, joining the ranks of notable Texas women, Barbara Jordan and Ann Richards. She has been actively involved in the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL), serving as NCSL President from 2006 to 2007 and NHCSL President from 2003 to 2005.

Senator Van de Putte is the subject of a book published by Texas A & M University Press, titled *Latina Legislator: Leticia Van de Putte and the Road to Leadership*, by Dr. Sharon A. Navarro, a professor of political science at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Over the past two decades, she has received numerous awards for her work including; the *Edward R. Roybal Award* by the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, the *Legislator of the Year Award* by the Vietnam Veterans of America, and the *Community Advocate Award* by the Texas Association of Bilingual Educators.

Senator Van de Putte is a strong advocate for children, veterans, and quality public education. She has consistently sought education reforms that enhance the quality of bilingual education, increase equity in school funding, and ensure competitive pay for teachers. Multiple civic organizations and community groups have recognized Senator Van de Putte as one of the most effective, hardworking, and influential legislators in Texas.

Senator Van de Putte is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and was a Kellogg Fellow at Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government. She currently lives in San Antonio with her husband of 32 years, Pete, and has six great children: Nichole, Vanessa, Henry, Gregory, Isabella, and Paul. She is also the proud grandmother two adorable grandsons, Julian Claiborne and Jove Sebastian Stiles.