

TeachNY Advisory Council

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PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

Michael Allen, Co-founder and Partner, Teacher Preparation Analytics

Dr. Michael Allen has served in a number of different positions over the last 15 years in the field of education policy and research and is recognized nationally for his expertise on teacher quality and teacher preparation. He is a founding co-partner of the consulting practice Teacher Preparation Analytics, which has recently completed a report on Building an Evidence-Based System of Teacher Preparation. And he works with a number of states on efforts to improve teacher preparation reporting and accountability systems. He also coordinates the Appalachia Higher Education Consortium, a REL Appalachia research alliance focusing on teacher preparation. As a senior consultant to the Science and Mathematics Teaching Imperative of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), he directed a two-year NSF-funded study that produced a report and resource guide to help state policymakers and university officials better assess the state-level need and supply pipeline for science and math teachers. And prior to that, he served as a senior program officer at the National Research Council and was the inaugural director of the Committee on Teacher Preparation Programs, which ultimately produced the 2010 report *Preparing Teachers: Building Evidence for Sound Policy*.

Michael's education research and policy career began at the Education Commission of the States, where he served as a senior policy analyst and director of the teacher quality program over his seven-year tenure. While at ECS, Michael wrote many policy and research-related publications, including two major reports entitled *Eight Questions on Teacher Preparation: What Does the Research Say?* and *Eight Questions on Teacher Recruitment and Retention: What Does the Research Say?* A former professor of philosophy and ethics, he has also published articles on epistemology and a book on nonprofit ethics. He earned a Ph.D. and A.M. in philosophy from Boston University and an M.Ed. in research methods from Australia's Charles Sturt University.

Elizabeth Green, Author of *New York Times* Bestseller *Building a Better Teacher*

Great teachers have the power to change students' lives—we just need to give them the right tools. Elizabeth Green is the author of *New York Times* bestseller *Building a Better Teacher*, a groundbreaking new book that examines the hidden science behind the art of teaching. Her talks equip teachers and policymakers who want to improve the skills of our educators, and show parents what they should expect from the classroom.

We've all had great teachers who opened our minds, and maybe even changed our lives. But how can we make every teacher a "star" teacher? Elizabeth Green's *New York Times* bestselling book *Building a Better Teacher: How Teaching Works (and How to Teach It to Everyone)* presents teaching as a complex skill—one that requires infrastructure for support and training. She gives examples of the methods America's best educators are using in the classroom, as well as how Japan's education system has adopted policies that have changed teachers across the country. Her talks are a must-hear for teachers, parents, and policymakers.

Elizabeth Green is co-founder, CEO, and editor-in-chief of Chalkbeat, a nonprofit news organization that covers educational change efforts across the country. She has written for *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New York Sun*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. She was an Abe Journalism Fellow studying education in Japan and a Spencer Fellow in education journalism at Columbia University. She serves on the board of the Education Writers Association.

Kate Walsh, President, National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ)

Kate Walsh has served as the president of the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) since 2002. Before coming to NCTQ, she worked for The Abell Foundation in Baltimore, the Baltimore City Public Schools, and the Core Knowledge Foundation. Her work has tackled a broad spectrum of educational issues, with a primary focus on the needs of children who are disadvantaged by poverty and race. Among her accomplishments, she started and ran a boarding school in Kenya, East Africa to educate at-risk boys from Baltimore and also developed one of the nation's premier programs in mathematics and science for middle and secondary public school students, a program that has yielded numerous Intel Talent Search winners.

A long-time resident of Baltimore, she also started the first alternative certification program for teachers in Maryland, a project which led to her strong interest in teacher quality. Walsh has since authored many papers on teacher quality, with a particular interest in the impact of the policies and practices of institutions, including states, unions, districts and teacher preparation programs, on the teaching profession.

Ben Wildavsky, Director of Higher Education Studies, Rockefeller Institute of Government and Policy Professor, University at Albany

Ben Wildavsky is director of higher education studies at the State University of New York's Rockefeller Institute of Government, and policy professor at SUNY-Albany. A former senior scholar at the Kauffman Foundation and guest scholar at the Brookings Institution, he is the author of the award-winning book *The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities Are Reshaping the World*. He is also the co-editor of *Reinventing Higher Education: The Promise of Innovation*. His articles have appeared in the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Foreign Policy*, the *New Republic*, the *Atlantic*, and many other publications.

Wildavsky, a former education editor of *U.S. News & World Report*, has spoken to dozens of audiences in the United States and abroad, including at Google, Harvard, and the World Bank. He has convened gatherings of national education leaders, supervised the editorial operations of the best-selling *U.S. News* college guides, and managed a \$2.5 million foundation grant portfolio. As a strategic and editorial consultant, he has provided advice to education leaders and has written influential policy reports, including the report of the Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education. He is a member of the ETS Higher Education Advisory Council.

Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers

Randi Weingarten is president of the 1.6 million-member American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, which represents teachers; paraprofessionals and school-related personnel; higher education faculty and staff; nurses and other healthcare professionals; local, state and federal government employees; and early childhood educators. The AFT champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for students, their families and communities. The AFT and its members advance these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through members' work.

Prior to her election as AFT president in 2008, Weingarten served for 12 years as president of the United Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 2, representing approximately 200,000 educators in the New York City public school system, as well as home child care providers and other workers in health, law and education. In 2013, the *New York Observer* named Weingarten one of the most influential New Yorkers of the past 25 years. *Washington Life* magazine included Weingarten on its 2013 Power 100 list of influential leaders.

Weingarten has launched major efforts to place real education reform high on the nation's and her union's agendas. She created the AFT Innovation Fund, a groundbreaking initiative to support sustainable, innovative and collaborative education reform projects developed by members and their local unions. At Weingarten's direction, the AFT developed a model to transform teacher evaluations from a way of simply rating teachers to a tool for continuous improvement and feedback, and is using this model to align tenure and due process so that tenure serves as a guarantee of fairness, not of a job for life. Weingarten led an AFT committee that called for all prospective teachers to meet a high entry standard—as in medicine or law—so that they're prepared from the day they enter the classroom.