

Presenter Biographies

Christy L. Hovanetz, Ph.D., is a Senior Policy Fellow at the Foundation for Excellence in Education, an education policy and research organization launched by Jeb Bush, former Governor of Florida. Dr. Hovanetz has served in high level public policy and leadership positions as the Assistant Commissioner at the Minnesota Department of Education and Assistant Deputy Commissioner at the Florida Department of Education. She has worked in education policy since 1999. Dr. Hovanetz has extensive experience developing, implementing, and evaluating public education policies and programs. She routinely presents to local, state, and national organizations and has served on numerous national and state panels and committees as a topic expert on accountability, assessment, program evaluation, and data systems. Dr. Hovanetz graduated summa cum laude from St. Cloud State University earning a BS in Education with a minor in Mathematics and is a certified teacher in the state of Minnesota. She earned her MPA from the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota and a Ph.D. in Public Administration and Policy from the Askew School at Florida State University.

Robert H. Meyer, Ph.D. is research professor and director of the Value-Added Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Before that, he was on the faculty of the Harris School at the University of Chicago and the Economics Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Meyer is known for his research on value-added modeling and evaluation methods and is currently working intensively with school districts in Atlanta, Chicago, Hillsborough County (Florida), Los Angeles, Madison, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New York City, and Tulsa; as well as with the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Over the past two decades he has worked collaboratively with these districts and states to build value-added and performance management systems to inform decision making with respect to policy and school improvement strategies. He is co-leading a major initiative within Minnesota and the Dakotas (and their partner school districts) to provide value-added information to all teachers and to the colleges and universities that prepared these teachers. Dr. Meyer is currently working with many districts and states to expand value-added systems to include courses not typically covered by assessments under No Child Left Behind. He has conducted major statistical evaluations of programs and policies such as class size reduction, literacy, and Supplemental Educational Services. Meyer received a Senior Urban Education Research Fellowship from the Council of Great City Schools in 2007 and in 2010 received the University of Wisconsin-Madison Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Research.

Arie J. van der Ploeg (M.A., Comparative Education, University of Chicago) is a senior researcher at the Regional Educational Laboratory for the Midwest at Learning Point Associates. He has broad experience in data analysis, deep knowledge of educational policy, and is engaged in studies of the roles and consequences of accountability and assessment systems. He designs data analytic tools for schools and works to build capacity for data-driven decision-making and school improvement. Currently, he leads a USED-funded randomized controlled trial of the impact of interim assessments statewide in Indiana. He helps shape applications that model student performance and growth within school districts.

His past work includes web sites in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin that dynamically linked, graphically and interactively, disaggregated student performance and characteristics data to school improvement processes. He served as lead analyst for TIMSS work. He designed a national database on state student assessment practices (now maintained by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)).

Mr. van der Ploeg is co-chair of the steering committee of the Consortium on Chicago School Research. He is a member of the CCSSO's Accountability Systems and Reporting collaborative. He advises widely, including SRI International as it conducted a three-year study of data use in schools for the U.S. Department of Education; the NCES' 2000 Census project, the Data Quality Campaign, the Annenberg Institute of School Reform, and the Wisconsin Center for Education Research.

Richard Wenning is a national expert on the design and implementation of education accountability systems. He served until June 2011 as Colorado Associate Commissioner of Education and headed the Colorado Department of Education's Office of Performance and Policy. At CDE, Richard led public policy development resulting in enacted statutes for standards and assessments, education accountability, and educator effectiveness. He also led the design and implementation of Colorado's new education accountability system, including the SchoolView® data system and Colorado Growth Model.

Before joining CDE, Richard was Vice President for Quality & Accountability at the Colorado League of Charter Schools. He also served as an Executive on Loan to the Superintendent of Denver Public Schools, where he focused on strengthening the district's performance management practices and helped develop the district's School Performance Framework.

Prior to moving to Colorado from Washington, D.C., Richard was President of the Education Performance Network, an affiliate of New American Schools, where he led a consulting practice focused on educational accountability systems and new school development. Previously, he served as Senior Policy Advisor to the CEO of the D.C. Public Schools during the school district's takeover by the congressionally appointed D.C. Control Board. While at DCPS, he headed its offices of intergovernmental affairs and educational accountability and led implementation of charter school legislation enacted by Congress.

Before working with the D.C. Public Schools, Richard served as Clerk for the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for the District of Columbia and as a staff member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services. Richard began his career at the Government Accountability Office (GAO) where he led research on educational accountability, equity, and market-based education reform strategies.