Improving the quality of life in the Great Lakes region and across the country.

At the Joyce Foundation, we focus on public policy to address today’s most pressing issues. For nearly a decade, our Education Program has worked to close the achievement gap by ensuring every student has an effective teacher.

In Chicago, we’re pleased to see promising results from the first year of a new teacher evaluation system. A recent UChicago Consortium on Chicago School Research report, which Joyce funded, found that one year into implementation, the overwhelming majority of teachers and principals believe that the new evaluation’s in-depth classroom observation process is fair, promotes teacher growth, and is likely to lead to instructional improvement. As more than 40 states roll out new teacher evaluation systems, this study was the first to look back on year one in a large school district and ask: How’d it go and how can we get better from here?

We hope that Chicago and other districts use this information to help teachers strengthen their practice. Districts must support school leaders in providing clear feedback and targeted professional development to grow the profession and strengthen student learning.

Learn more at joyce.org/reach-results/
Dear Colleague,

Welcome to Chicago! We are delighted you could join us here at the University of Chicago to learn more about a topic of exceptional prominence in today’s debate over how to improve America’s schools.

“More Than Scores: Assessing the Future of Teacher Evaluations” is a joint effort of the Education Writers Association and Michigan State University’s School of Journalism, in consultation with Education Trust-Midwest. We see this event as a sequel both to EWA’s seminar “Evaluating Teachers: Beyond the Rhetoric,” held here in November 2011 with support from The Joyce Foundation, and the “Grading the Teachers” Specialized Reporting Institute that MSU held this past May in Detroit with support from The Robert R. McCormick Foundation.

Ordinarily, we might say that those past events had adequately covered the subject. But with teacher evaluations, the landscape is evolving so fast that there’s no question that this sequel is needed.

Whether you’re new to this topic—or an old hand—you’ll come away with fresh insights, new connections and plenty of story ideas. We look forward to following your coverage in the months to come.

Best regards,

Caroline Hendrie  Joe Grimm
Executive Director, EWA  Visiting Editor in Residence, MSU

This event was made possible in part by a grant to EWA from The Joyce Foundation and a grant to MSU School of Journalism by the Robert R. McCormick Foundation through its partner The Poynter Institute. EWA and MSU retain editorial control over all programming.
Thursday, Oct. 10

12:30 p.m. Welcome

- Caroline Hendrie, Education Writers Association
- Joe Grimm, Michigan State University School of Journalism

12:45 p.m. Framing Remarks
How is the changing landscape of teacher evaluations influencing broader conversations about school improvement and student achievement?

- Tim Knowles, University of Chicago Urban Education Institute

1 p.m. National Overview: Evaluations and Equity
How are states responding to the push for greater accountability and transparency in how teacher job performance is measured? How are union leaders helping members adjust to the new expectations? Can evaluations be used as a lever to more equitably distribute teacher talent, and ensure the neediest students get the most effective instruction?

- Stephanie Banchero, Wall St. Journal (moderator)
- Sandi Jacobs, National Council on Teacher Quality
- Sarah Lenhoff, Education Trust – Midwest
- Dennis Van Roekel, National Education Association

2 p.m. Session Takeaways and Story Ideas (Cindy Johnston, NPR)

2:10 p.m. Understanding and Using Value-Added Data
What questions should reporters ask when using evaluation-related data in stories? What is essential for reporters to learn about the use of student
growth, and what must officials provide when they report the numbers? How can reporters convey the nuance without getting bogged down in technical details?

Sabrina Laine, American Institutes for Research, interviewed by Stephen Sawchuk, Education Week

3 p.m. Session Takeaways and Story Ideas (Beth Shuster, Los Angeles Times)

3:15 p.m. Break

3:30 p.m. Classroom Observations: What Do Evaluators Look For?

Using a flipped classroom approach, Brian Rowan and Lesli Scott of the University of Michigan lead an interactive session on videos of teachers delivering actual lessons. They walk participants through the videos to highlight hallmarks of effective instruction and areas of concern.

4:30 p.m. Session Takeaways and Story Ideas (Scott Elliott, Indianapolis Star)

4:45 p.m. How I Did The Story I: Reporters Share Their Expertise

Since 2010, The Hechinger Report has been taking an in-depth look at efforts to improve teacher effectiveness. In Indiana, Hechinger’s Sarah Butrymowicz teamed up with Scott Elliott, then education reform reporter for the Indianapolis Star, for an in-depth look at efforts to improve educator accountability and student outcomes.

- Howard Blume, Los Angeles Times (Moderator)
- Sarah Butrymowicz, The Hechinger Report
- Scott Elliott, Chalkbeat Indianapolis

5:30 p.m. Adjourn

6:30 p.m. Group Dinner (optional)
Friday, Oct. 11

7:30-8:15 a.m.  Breakfast

8:15 a.m. “Confessions of a Bad Teacher”

John Owens, who worked in the media world, decided he wanted to contribute to society by becoming a teacher. He lasted only a few months and wrote an article called “Confessions of a Bad Teacher.” The column hit a nerve and the article became a book. Owens describes his experiences as a teacher with evaluations, classroom observations, and a principal who he says gamed the system.

Author John Owens interviewed by Greg Toppo of USA Today

9 a.m. The Chicago Perspective – A New Model for Teacher Evaluations in the Windy City

How are teacher evaluations impacting teaching and learning in the nation’s third-largest school district? How might Chicago’s experience be a teachable moment for educators and policymakers in other communities?

- Linda Lenz, Catalyst Chicago (moderator)
- Carol Caref, Chicago Teachers Union
- Paulette Poncelet, Chicago Public Schools
- Sue Sporte, University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research

9:50 a.m. Session Takeaways and Story Ideas (Angela Tuck, Atlanta Journal-Constitution)

10 a.m. The Early Education Connection: Measuring the Youngest Learners

Robert Pianta describes his research into what makes a good early childhood teacher and how the University of Virginia developed an instrument to measure early childhood teachers. Laura Bornfreund discusses different approaches that districts use to measure student growth
for the purpose of evaluating teachers of pre-K through grade 3, as well as the potential hurdles to widespread, reliable implementation.

- Cornelia Grumman (moderator)
- Laura Bornfreund, New America Foundation
- Robert Pianta, University of Virginia

11 a.m.  Session Takeaways and Story Ideas (Liz Willen, The Hechinger Report)

11:15 a.m.  BREAK

11:30 a.m.  How I Did the Story II: Reporters Share Their Expertise

Molly Bloom of StateImpact and Patrick O’Donnell of the Cleveland Plain Dealer describe their project analyzing how Ohio used value-added measure to assess its teachers. The project included a database of individual teachers and their ratings. Bloom and O’Donnell walk journalists through how they put together their project and why they published the individual scores.

- Howard Blume, Los Angeles Times (moderator)
- Molly Bloom, StatelImpact Ohio
- Patrick O’Donnell, Cleveland Plain Dealer

12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m.  Lunch

1:30 p.m.  Teacher Voices: How Evaluations Are Shaping Classroom Practice

Two classroom teachers from Hillsborough (Fla.) County Public Schools share their experiences of being evaluated, and how those reviews have informed their classroom practice.

- Mackenzie Ryan, Florida Today (moderator)
- Sheri Cerni, Hillsborough County Public Schools
- Greta Woolley, Hillsborough County Public Schools
2:15 p.m. **Session Takeaways and Story Ideas** (Melissa Bailey, New Haven Independent)

2:30 p.m. **Teachers and Reporters Roundtables**

Educators from the VIVA Teachers program join reporters for small-group discussions.

3:30 p.m. **Brainstorming: Where Do We Go From Here?**

Joe Grimm of the MSU School of Journalism, Emily Richmond of EWA, and Liz Willen of The Hechinger Report lead breakout sessions to brainstorm story ideas based on the prior seminar sessions.

4:30 p.m. **ADJOURN**
**Speaker Bios**

**Stephanie Banchero** has been a national education reporter for The Wall Street Journal since April 2010, covering national and state K-12 education issues. Previously, she served for 13 years as a national education reporter at the Chicago Tribune and worked as a reporter at The Charlotte Observer, The Philadelphia Inquirer and The Salt Lake Tribune. She has received numerous awards, including a 2006 first-place feature award from EWA for her magazine profile of a father struggling with the care and education of his children and a 2004 first-place award from EWA and the Missouri School of Journalism for her three-part series on a student transferring schools as part of the No Child Left Behind law. Banchero received a bachelor’s from the University of Utah in communications, a master’s degree in journalism from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism and served as a Knight Fellow at Stanford University 2008-09. Contact her at stephanie.banchero@wsj.com.

**Melissa Bailey** is the managing editor and education reporter for the New Haven Independent, an online-only, hyperlocal news website all about New Haven, Conn. Before joining the Independent in 2005, she was the lead reporter for the Middletown (Conn.) Press. She holds a bachelor’s degree from Yale University. Contact her at melissa.m.bailey@gmail.com.

**Molly Bloom** is a reporter for StateImpact Ohio, a collaboration of NPR and Ohio public radio covering the effect of state education policy on people’s lives. She has covered education and other topics for the Austin American-Statesman and the Newark Star-Ledger. A New Jersey native, she has a bachelor’s degree in history from Princeton University. Contact her at mollypbloom@gmail.com and follow her on Twitter @M_Bloom.

**Howard Blume** is a staff writer covering mostly education for the Los Angeles Times. Prior to rejoining the Times in 2006, he was managing
editor of The Jewish Journal and, before that, a staff writer and associate news editor at the L.A. Weekly. He co-hosts Deadline LA on KPFK 90.7 FM in Los Angeles. Contact him at howard.blume@latimes.com.

Laura Bornfreund is a senior policy analyst for New America Foundation’s Early Education Initiative. She examines early education (birth through grade 3) policies, writes policy papers, and contributes to the Early Ed Watch blog. Bornfreund also writes about the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, high-quality early education programs, teacher effectiveness, literacy and assessment. Before joining NAF, she worked for education policy organizations including the Forum for Education & Democracy, Common Core, and the Institute for Educational Leadership. Previously, she was a Fellow at Thomas B. Fordham Institute. She helped implement Parramore Kidz Zone, an initiative modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone, in Orlando, Fla., before moving to Washington, D.C. She was also a fourth grade teacher. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Central Florida. Contact her at bornfreundl@newamerica.net.

Sarah Butrymowicz is a staff writer for The Hechinger Report, a nonprofit news outlet based in New York City that covers national education news. Her work has appeared in The Washington Post, Atlantic.com, Time.com and NBCNews.com, among other publications. She was the winner of the 2012 New York Press Club’s Nellie Bly Cub Reporter Award for her coverage of charter schools and the achievement gap. Contact her at butrymowicz@hechingerreport.org.

Carol Caref taught high school mathematics for 25 years in Chicago Public Schools before coming to work for the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) in 2010. During her time as a teacher, she was awarded National Board Certification and also earned a Ph.D. in mathematics education from the Illinois Institute of Technology. At CTU, Caref co-authored several reports, including The Schools Chicago’s Students Deserve, which laid out CTU’s plan for improving education. Caref heads CTU’s
Teacher Evaluation work, and in that role has fought for the evaluation system to focus on opportunities for self-reflection, collaboration, and professional learning. Contact her at carolcaref@ctulocal1.com.

Sherri Cerni teaches sixth grade language arts at Franklin Middle Magnet School in Tampa, Fla. Previously, she worked in the corporate world, specializing in marketing. She graduated from Florida State University with a bachelor’s degree in English and is currently working on her master’s in education leadership. Contact her at Sherri.Cerni@sdhc.k12.fl.us.

Scott Elliott is the president of the Education Writers Association and covered education for the Indianapolis Star from 2011 to October 2013, when he was the only education journalist in the country with the title of education reform reporter. His reporting focused on education state policy, urban school reform and school choice in addition to covering Indianapolis Public Schools. Next he will be the founding editor of Chalkbeat Indianapolis, a nonprofit news website covering education that launches in November. Contact him at scemel@aol.com.

Joe Grimm teaches Michigan State University journalism students how to cover local communities by helping them run local news sites in and around East Lansing. Grimm also teaches students how to edit for print and digital news outlets and is campus advisor for the student chapters of the Society of Professional Journalists and the National Association of Black Journalists. He is also co-director of The Living Textbook, an Asian American Journalists Association project in a Dearborn middle school. Grimm writes a column for the Freedom Forum’s Diversity Institute, hosts biweekly chats for the Poynter Institute, and has run workshops on professional branding for the American Press Institute. Grimm joined the Free Press in 1983 and has been a copy editor, news editor, front-page designer, weekend editor and ombudsman. Grimm earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in journalism and a teaching certificate from the University of Michigan. Contact him at joe.grimm@gmail.com.
**Cornelia Grumman** recently stepped down as executive director of the First Five Years Fund, where for more than four years she led its federal advocacy and national communication efforts to secure greater public investment in high-quality early childhood education programs, beginning at birth. Prior to the First Five Years Fund start-up, she was a member of the Chicago Tribune editorial board, where she won many awards, including the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for a series of editorials that led to reforms of Illinois’ criminal justice system, a 2001 Studs Terkel Award for coverage of disadvantaged communities, and 2006, 2005 and 2001 Casey Medals for Meritorious Journalism for her coverage of children and families. Grumman joined the Chicago Tribune in 1994 as a general assignment reporter. She also worked at the News & Observer in Raleigh, N.C., and the Daily Southtown in Chicago, and as a stringer in The Washington Post’s Beijing bureau. She has a master’s degree in public policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a bachelor’s degree in public policy from Duke University. Contact her at cgrumman@gmail.com.

**Caroline Hendrie** is executive director of the Education Writers Association, the national professional organization for members of the news media who cover education. She leads strategy, development and programming for the nonprofit organization in support of its mission to increase the quantity and quality of education coverage to better inform the public. Hendrie was herself an award-winning education journalist for more than two decades, with experience covering education from early learning through postsecondary schooling at the local, state, and national levels. From 1996 to 2010, Hendrie held various reporting and editing positions, including managing editor, at Education Week. Hendrie started at daily newspapers in Connecticut and spent seven years as state education writer and editor at The Record, a daily newspaper based in Bergen County, N.J. She is a graduate of Wesleyan University. Contact her at chendrie@ewa.org.

**Sandi Jacobs** is the vice president and managing director for state policy at the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ). Before joining NCTQ,
Jacobs worked at the U.S. Department of Education as a senior education program specialist for the Reading First and Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration programs. Prior to that, she taught fourth and fifth grade for nearly a decade at Public School 9 in Brooklyn, New York. Jacobs was a presidential management intern and a charter corps member of Teach for America. She holds a master’s in sociology of education from Columbia University’s Teachers College and a bachelor’s in history from Columbia College. Contact her at sjacobs@nctq.org.

Cindy Johnston is a senior editor with NPR’s National Desk. She covers education, religion and regional stories in New England and the Mid-Atlantic. She and her team cover a wide range of issues in both K-12 and higher education. Their focus is on stories that explain how education policies and trends affect the lives of students, teachers and parents. Johnston has won numerous awards throughout her journalism career. She is a graduate of the University of Chicago and always is glad to be back on campus. Contact her at cjohnston@npr.org.

Timothy Knowles is director at University of Chicago’s Urban Education Institute (UEI) as well as clinical professor on the Committee on Education. UEI produces research on education in urban settings at the practitioner and scholarly levels. Prior to coming to Chicago, Knowles served as deputy superintendent for teaching and learning at the Boston Public Schools. While in Boston, he created two organizations devoted to building the pipeline of high-quality teachers and school leaders for Boston Public Schools and served as co-director of the Boston Annenberg Challenge, a nationally recognized effort to improve literacy instruction. Prior to his work in Boston, Knowles founded and directed a full-service K-8 school in Bedford-Stuyvesant, New York City. He also served as the founding director of Teach for America in New York City and was a teacher of African history in Botswana. He has written and spoken extensively on the topics of school leadership, teacher quality, school reform and accountability in public schools. He received his bachelor’s in anthropology and African history from Oberlin
College and a master’s and doctorate from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Contact: tknowles@uchicago.edu.

**Sabrina W. M. Laine** is vice president of education at the American Institutes for Research. Within the education program at AIR, Laine leads a team of more than 100 researchers, policy analysts and technical assistance providers focused on critical education reform issues such as educator effectiveness, and college and career readiness. Laine has led policy research and resource development with a particular emphasis on managing and supporting educator talent including recruitment, compensation, evaluation, distribution and professional development. She has previously served as principal investigator on multiple educator quality-focused technical assistance initiatives funded by the U.S. Department of Education, such as the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and the Center for Educator Compensation Reform. Laine has worked in recent years to advance policies and programs that give all children access to highly qualified teachers and leaders. She is the primary author of the 2011 book “Improving Teacher Quality: A Guide for Education Leaders” and a contributing author on the recently released book, “Everyone at the Table: Engaging Teachers in Evaluation Reform.” Laine earned her doctorate in educational leadership and policy studies from Indiana University. Contact her at slaine@air.org.

**Sarah Lenhoff** is director of policy and research at Education Trust–Midwest, a nonprofit focused on closing achievement and opportunity gaps in Michigan’s public schools. In her research career, Lenhoff’s mixed-methods work has focused on teacher evaluation, instructional improvement, school reform and civic education. She co-authored a chapter on assessing teachers for tenure in the 2010 book “Teacher Assessment and the Quest for Teacher Quality.” Lenhoff defended her dissertation for a doctoral degree in educational policy from Michigan State University. Lenhoff began her career as a middle school teacher in New York City Public Schools. In addition, she has worked as a research analyst and policy interviewer for The New Teacher Project and as a graduate instructor in MSU’s teacher preparation program. She holds a
bachelor’s degree in English and women's studies from the University of Georgia and a master's degree in teaching from Pace University. Contact her at slenhoff@edtrustmidwest.org.

**Linda Lenz** is the founder and publisher of Catalyst-Chicago, a nonprofit education news outlet covering Chicago schools. Before launching Catalyst in 1990, Lenz was the chief education writer at the Chicago Sun-Times and before that was an editorial writer and reporter at the Chicago Daily News. Previously, she served as political editor of Pioneer Press, North Shore. Catalyst has won numerous local and national journalism awards, and Lenz is a recipient of the Studs Terkel Community Media Award. Lenz received a bachelor’s degree in communications from the University of Illinois at Urbana. Contact her at lenz@catalyst-chicago.org.

**Patrick O’Donnell** has been a reporter at The Plain Dealer since 1992 and has covered the Cleveland Municipal School District since mid-2011, with increasing responsibility for statewide education issues. He has written about school reform, teacher accountability, state education finance, the district’s effort to raise taxes and its shift to a portfolio model. Contact him at paodonnell@plaind.com.

**John Owens** is editor in chief of Anton Community Newspapers, a chain of 18 weeklies covering New York’s Nassau County and the author of “Confessions of a Bad Teacher: The Shocking Truth from the Front Lines of American Public Education.” An award-winning journalist with decades of experience in newspapers, magazines and digital media, Owens previously served as senior vice president and editorial director of Hachette Filipacchi Media, overseeing magazine brands including American Photo, Boating, Cycle World, Flying, Popular Photography, Road & Track, Sound + Vision, and Travel Holiday. He left magazines to attend graduate school in order to “give back” as a public school teacher in New York’s South Bronx. That experience led him to write the book. Owens attended public schools and is a graduate of New York State’s Binghamton University. Contact him at acibooks@gmail.com.
Robert Pianta is dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. He joined Curry in 1986 in the clinical and school psychology program and was appointed dean in May 2007. He serves as director of the National Center for Research in Early Childhood Education and is the founding director of the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia. Pianta’s recent work focuses on the assessment of teacher quality and teacher-child interactions, using standardized observational assessment and video feedback. He also has extended his work into design and delivery of professional development using Web-based formats and interactive video. Pianta is the senior author and developer of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), a method for assessing teacher/classroom quality being used at the district, state and national levels. His assessments of teacher effectiveness are the national standard for Head Start classrooms and are included in the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s Measures of Effective Teaching study. Pianta earned a bachelor’s and master’s in special education from the University of Connecticut. He earned his doctorate in psychology from the University of Minnesota. Contact him at pianta@virginia.edu.

Paulette M. Poncelet is the Executive Director of Educator Effectiveness for Chicago Public Schools, responsible for teacher and principal evaluation systems that support teacher and principal growth and development. Prior to joining the Talent Office of Chicago Public Schools, she served as Chief of Research, Assessment and Accountability for Pittsburgh Pubic Schools under Superintendent Mark Roosevelt and Director of Research, Evaluation and Assessment in Cleveland Public Schools under CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett. Ms. Poncelet earned a Ph.D. in Education Policy from Cleveland State University and a Master’s Degree in Education from the University of Akron. Her research interests include systemic reform in K-12 education and equity. Contact her at pmponcelet@cps.edu.

Emily Richmond is the public editor of Education Writers Association. She coordinates programming and training opportunities for members
and provides individualized reporting and writing help to journalists. She also authors EWA’s “The Educated Reporter” blog. Prior to joining EWA, she was the education reporter at the Las Vegas Sun, where she covered local, state and national issues. Recognition of her work includes a first-place award for feature writing from the Associated Press News Executives Council of Nevada-California. In 2007, she was named Outstanding Journalist of the Year by the Nevada State Press Association. Richmond was a 2011 Knight-Wallace Fellow at the University of Michigan. She holds a bachelor’s degree from Wellesley College and a master’s in journalism from Stanford University. Contact her at erichmond@ewa.org.

**Brian Rowan** is a professor in education at the University of Michigan, where he is also a research professor at the Institute for Social Research and a professor of sociology. A sociologist by training, he is a member of the National Academy of Education and a recipient of the William J. Davis Award for outstanding scholarship in the field of education administration. Rowan has directed studies of schools as organizations as well as research on school and teaching effectiveness. Currently, he is principal investigator of two efficacy trials examining the effects of educational interventions on teaching and learning in low-performing schools. He is also a contributing researcher on the Measures of Effective Teaching extension project, where he leads various efforts to collect, archive, disseminate, and analyze video and quantitative data on effective teaching practices. In 2011, he was appointed director of pilot research for the Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness, conducting a study of more than 100 Michigan schools as they implemented new teacher evaluation practices. Rowan received his bachelor’s from Rutgers University and a doctorate at Stanford University. He has been at the University of Michigan since 1991. Contact him at browan@umich.edu.

**Mackenzie Ryan** is the education reporter at Florida Today, covering K-12 and local colleges. She has reported for newspapers for nearly 10 years, the last five covering education on the Space Coast of Florida and
Stephen Sawchuk is an assistant editor at Education Week. He has more than eight years of experience covering the teaching profession, including evaluation, pay and unionism. His work has also appeared in The Hechinger Report, the Harvard Education Letter, and on smithsonian.com. He holds degrees from Georgetown and Columbia universities. Contact him at ssawchuk@epe.org.

Beth Shuster is the education editor at the Los Angeles Times, overseeing coverage of preschool through higher education. Prior to that, she was state editor at the Times and a reporter for nine years covering education, city hall and law enforcement. She was a member of the teams that won the Pulitzer Prize for the 1997 North Hollywood shoot out/bank robbery and for the 1994 Northridge earthquake. She also has worked at the Daily News in Los Angeles, the Riverside Press-Enterprise and States News Service in Washington, D.C. Contact her at Beth.Shuster@latimes.com.

Lesli Scott is a co-founder of the education and well-being program at the Institute for Social Research. She has directed research and methodology projects at academically based centers within University of Michigan and Washington State University since 1983. She serves as the senior study director for large-scale school-based data collection projects and innovative methodological studies conducted at the Institute for Social Research. Her main areas of interest include: quality/cost factors related to design of multimode school studies; Web-based data collection methodologies; and use of multimedia approaches to observe classroom instruction and to develop teacher professional development systems. Contact her at ljscott@umich.edu.

Susan Sporte is director of research operations at the Consortium on Chicago School Research within the University of Chicago. Her current
research focuses on teacher preparation and measuring effective teaching. Prior to joining UChicago CCSR, she worked as a community college math instructor and as a college administrator. Sporte holds a bachelor’s from Michigan State University, master’s degrees from the University of Illinois at Springfield and Harvard, and a doctorate in education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Contact her at ssporte@ccsr.uchicago.edu.

**Greg Toppo** is the national K-12 education reporter for USA Today. His first job was with the Santa Fe New Mexican, a 50,000-circulation daily. He worked for four years as a wire service reporter with the Associated Press, first in Baltimore then in Washington, D.C., where he became the AP’s national K-12 education writer. He came to USA Today in 2002 and in 2005 broke the Armstrong Williams “pay for punditry” story that launched a widespread look at government propaganda. Toppo also co-led the USA Today team that in 2011 looked at educator-led cheating on standardized tests. The paper’s series prompted the Washington, D.C., inspector general to investigate high erasure rates in D.C. schools. Toppo was also a 2010 Spencer fellow at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism. He taught in both public and private schools for eight years before moving into journalism. Toppo earned his bachelor’s at St. John’s College in Santa Fe, N.M. Contact him at gtoppo@usatoday.com.

**Angela Tuck** is the education assignment editor at the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. The reporters on her team cover K-12 education. Her team also produces the Weekly Best in Class column that spotlights the achievements of students and teachers. Tuck has been a journalist for 34 years, including 23 years at the AJC, where she has been a reporter, editor, newsroom recruiter and public editor. Previously, she worked at the Detroit Free Press and the Tampa Bay Times. Contact her at atuck@ajc.com.

**Dennis Van Roekel** is president of the National Education Association, which represents more than 3 million public school employees. He is a member of the U.S. Department of Education’s Equity and Excellence
Commission, which is tasked with studying inequitable school finance systems and their effects on student achievement. He serves as vice president of Education International for North America and the Caribbean, pursuing a common course of action on issues like collective bargaining, raising student achievement, and adequate funding. He also serves on leading boards, including the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Executive Committee and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Executive Board. In 2010, he established the Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching, which recommended raising the bar for entry into the teaching profession. Van Roekel taught high school mathematics in Phoenix for 23 years. Van Roekel earned a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Phoenix University and a master’s degree in math education from Northern Arizona University. Contact him via smaiers@nea.org.

Liz Willen is editor of The Hechinger Report and director of The Hechinger Institute. She is a former senior writer focused on higher education at Bloomberg Markets magazine. Willen spent the bulk of her career covering the New York City public school system for Newsday. She has won numerous prizes for education coverage and shared the 2005 George Polk Award for health reporting with two Bloomberg colleagues. Willen is a graduate of Tufts University and Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism, and an active New York City public school parent. Contact her at willen@tc.columbia.edu.

Greta Woolley is a first grade teacher and team leader at Essrig Elementary in Tampa, Fla. She was awarded 2011-2012 Elementary Reading Teacher of the Year at Hillsborough County Public Schools. Woolley has worked extensively with developmentally delayed and emotionally disturbed students. She graduated from the University of Florida with honors receiving bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education. Woolley also completed postgraduate work at the Institute for Reality Therapy. Contact her at Greta.Woolley@sdhc.k12.fl.us.
The mission of the Urban Education Institute is to create knowledge to produce reliably excellent schooling for children growing up in urban America.

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