



## College and Career Readiness and Students with Disabilities

*June 19, 2012 Webinar*

*Presenter Biographies*

### **Betsy Brand**

*Executive Director, American Youth Policy Forum*

Betsy Brand has served as the Executive Director of AYPF since 2004, and she served as Co-Director of the organization since 1998. Ms. Brand has spent her career working on education, workforce, and youth policy and specializes in comprehensive approaches to helping young people be prepared for today's careers, lifelong learning, and civic engagement.

Ms. Brand's education policy career started when she served as a Legislative Associate for the U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor from 1977 to 1983. She subsequently served with Senator Dan Quayle as a Professional Staff Member on the U.S. Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee from 1983 to 1989, where she handled all federal education and training legislation. In 1989, Ms. Brand was appointed Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education, under President George H.W. Bush, where she worked for four years. From 1993 to 1998, she operated her own consulting firm, Workforce Futures, Inc., which focused on policy and best practices affecting education and workforce preparation.

Ms. Brand has a B.A. from Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA and serves on various boards, including the Center for Occupational Research and Development, National Child Labor Committee, Educational Policy Institute, Latin American Youth Center, and Diploma Plus.

### **Louis Danielson**

*Director of Research, National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research*

Louis Danielson, a national leader in the field of special education, has been involved in programs that improve results for students with disabilities for over three decades. He brings an unparalleled and unique depth of knowledge in both special education policy and research. Since joining AIR, he has served as a senior advisor to the National Center on Response to Intervention and has led a National High School Center initiative on Response to Intervention. He currently serves as the Center Director for the National Center on Intensive Intervention.

Dr. Danielson was awarded a doctorate of philosophy in education from Pennsylvania State University. His career spans several roles in education including secondary school science and mathematics teacher, school psychologist, and teaching at the university level. Dr. Danielson has held leadership roles in the U.S. Office for Special Education Programs and was responsible for the discretionary grants program, including technical assistance and dissemination, personnel preparation, technology, parent training priorities and state improvement grants. He has served in numerous research and policy roles and has been involved in major school reform activities.



A frequent contributor to professional journals, Dr. Danielson has published extensively in the literature and is a frequent speaker at national conferences, international conferences and events focusing on special education. His particular areas of interest include policy implementation and evaluation and scaling up of evidence based practices.

### **Joseph R. Harris**

*Director, National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research*

Dr. Joseph R. Harris, Managing Researcher at the American Institutes for Research, has an extensive background in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) reform as both a practitioner and researcher/evaluator, and more than two decades of experience as an administrator and high school teacher in an urban public school environment. Since October 2006 he has served as the Director of the National High School Center, a national research and technical assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to help regions and states address both regular and special education high school issues related to implementing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provisions.

For the previous 12 years, Dr. Harris served as the Project Manager for a major technical assistance contract, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) in support of the Systemic Initiatives, a multi-year NSF effort designed to promote improved mathematics, science, and technology education in 100+ state, rural, and urban school districts and regional consortia. Dr. Harris also has lead several K-12 projects, ranging from the Math Science Program Evaluation Advisory Board to a differentiated compensation project for Springfield (MA) public schools. Dr. Harris has served as project leader on numerous consulting projects in areas such as program evaluation, student assessment, strategic planning, education policy, program equity, minority student achievement, and public/private partnerships that have focused on improved program operations and outcomes.

Prior to joining The McKenzie Group and AIR, Dr. Harris served as an administrator and teacher in the District of Columbia Public Schools. For more than a decade, he coordinated the development, implementation, and operation of an automated instructional management system and played a major role in the development and implementation of the district's five-year computer literacy plan.

Dr. Harris holds a B.A. in Mathematical Statistics from the University of Florida, an M.A. in Secondary Education from the Catholic University of America, and a Ph.D. in Education Policy from the University of Maryland, College Park.

### **Debra Hart**

*Educational Coordinator, Institute for Community Inclusion*

Debra Hart has over 30 years of experience working with youth and adults with disabilities, their families, faculty, and professionals that support youth in becoming valued members of their



community via participation in inclusive secondary and postsecondary education, and competitive employment. Currently, she is the Director of three national postsecondary education grants. Together, these projects conduct research to better understand characteristics and outcomes of postsecondary education options for youth with intellectual disabilities, and provide training and technical assistance to enhance existing PSE initiatives, and grow the choice of a postsecondary education for youth and their families nationwide. Additionally, she is the PI of a OPE model demonstration grant, Equity and Excellence in Higher Education that is focused on implementing a model for faculty development that provides them with the tools and knowledge to universally design all aspects of their courses to make the content accessible to a wider range of students including students with disabilities.

Ms. Hart has produced numerous training documents and published articles related to creating access to postsecondary education for students with significant disabilities, the role of assistive and instructional technology, coordinating and managing services and supports in secondary, postsecondary, and employment settings, and strategies and instructional practices that assist students with disabilities in participating in school, college, and employment. She has training at master's and doctoral levels in disabilities and social policy, as well as teacher certification in general education, as a consulting teacher, and as a teacher of students with moderate and severe disabilities.

### **Keith Ozols**

*Youth Transition Programs Coordinator, Oregon Youth Transition Program*

Keith Ozols is the Statewide Coordinator for Oregon's Youth Transitions Programs (YTP) at the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Currently YTP serves students with disabilities in 55 school districts and more than 115 high schools throughout Oregon.

Before joining the State of Oregon Mr. Ozols was the Executive Director of Incight, a nonprofit based in Portland, Ore. In his tenure with Incight Keith built bridges between over 20 colleges and universities that matched the Incight annual "Go-Getter" scholarships for students with disabilities. In the field of employment he developed inroads for jobseekers with disabilities by created summer internship sites and on the job training agreements with over 100 businesses, government agencies and nonprofits throughout the state.

Prior to his work with Incight Keith managed a college access program for at-risk youth and English language learners at the Oregon Council for Hispanic Advancement. He also managed an international college access program in Spain called Asesoría with the educational group Club Ivy, providing greater access to colleges in the United States and in Great Britain.

Currently, Keith serves on several boards focused on creating better opportunities for people with disabilities, including Portland Public Schools Community Transitions Program, the Oregon Department of Education's State Advisory Council for Special Education (SACSE), and United Way of the Columbia-Willamette Vision Council.