

Michelle Kuhns, Balance Professional Learning

Michelle is an independent education consultant. She is a Central Washington University alumna who started her teaching career in Washington state before moving overseas with her family. She spent 21 years teaching and leading curriculum and professional development in American international schools in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Poland, and Dubai. She is currently working with schools interested in transformative change in both student and professional learning. Through workshops, coaching, and partnerships, she helps schools establish instructional coaching and teacher leadership programs that promote highly effective collaborative teams. She facilitates experiences that enable teacher leaders to see the bigger picture within their schools and explore strategies that support school leaders.

Jen Wickens, Chief Executive Officer & Co-Founder

Jen's experience in public education is vast, including successfully co-leading the launch of nine new public schools for low income families across the country. Prior to co-founding IPS, Jen was the Chief Regional Officer for Summit Public Schools, co-founded the Washington State Charter Schools Association (WA Charters) and served as the Vice President of Teaching & Learning for Envision Schools. She has consulted for charter schools and districts throughout the country, including Seattle Public Schools where she led principal professional development. She was the Founding Principal of Impact Academy, an Envision charter high school in Hayward, CA, which continues to be one of the highest performing schools for low-income students of color in the Bay Area. Prior to this, Jen was a teacher leader in Seattle Public Schools and Highline. Jen graduated from Willamette University, holds a Master's degree in education from Seattle University, completed her administrative training through New Leaders for New Schools and was selected as a Stanford Principal Fellow.

Kayla Vickaryous, Director of Professional Development

Kayla is originally from a small town in southwest Washington state. She has spent the last nine years teaching and leading in Oklahoma and Washington state. She began her teaching career in Oklahoma City Public Schools, at an elementary school that served a large English learner population. Kayla was a founding literacy teacher at one of Washington's first charter schools and went on to serve on the school's leadership team. Kayla was inspired by Impact's commitment to community outreach, family partnership, and social emotional learning, and joined Impact's curriculum team in 2019. She has led the development and implementation of Impact's social emotional learning curriculum, and served as an instructional coach for teaching and teaching fellows. Kayla has her Master's degree in School Leadership and Bachelor's degree in Business.

Cathryn Berger Kaye, M.A., CBK Associates, travels the globe in-person or virtually to provide meaningful and practical professional learning in support of educators and administrators, and of course, students - from primary to higher ed. While well-known as the author of *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*, Cathryn's work extends to wellbeing and social and emotional dynamics, best teaching practices, meaningful curriculum, youth and adult leadership, and restoring communities to be inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive.

Cathryn loves to write, read, dance, collaborate, and play with her granddaughter Lou. She lives in Los Angeles where on a clear day, she can see the ocean. Having begun her education career in rural education, she is more than happy to be with us for the retreat.

Maria Esponda-Medina, Senior Executive Director, Program Implementation

Maria is the Senior Executive Director of Program Implementation for New Leaders. She currently manages and supports the work of Executive Directors in Illinois, California and Washington State. Previously, Maria has led several partnerships, including Baltimore, Richmond County, and Socorro, Texas. Maria began her career in the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) seventeen years ago as a classroom teacher. During her career, she worked in a variety of roles, including Teacher Developer, Regional Instructional Specialist, Middle School Facilitator, Principal, Deputy Network Leader for the Bradbury Children First Network, and Senior Director of School Organization. Prior to joining New Leaders, Maria served as the Program Director for the Office of School innovation at the University of the State of New York (USNY) Regents Research Fund and as the Executive Director of Leadership Programs and Development for NYCDOE. Her mission is to work alongside educators who envision a world where every child receives an equitable education.

Courtney Strozyk, Executive Director, Program Implementation

Courtney is the Executive Director of Program Implementation for New Leaders where she manages program directors from across the United States to implement high quality programs to educational leaders. This impacts student learning nationwide, which is her main passion and mission in life. Currently, Courtney is working with several school districts on the west coast to develop educational programs for leaders so that all

students can have access to an education that is rigorous, equitable, and will allow them to be contributing members of society. She does this by calibrating Leadership Walks and Communities of Practice using New Leaders Foundational of Instructional Leadership Programming. Courtney has spent seventeen years in education prior to coming to New Leaders. She is a National Board Certified teacher who previously taught middle school Language Arts and Social Studies as well serving as an Elementary, Middle, and High School Principal.

Jeff Utech, Educational Technology Consultant, Educator and Author

Jeff is an educational technology consultant, educator and author. He holds a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus in Technology as well as his administrative certification through Washington State. Jeff began his career in the Elementary Classroom at a public school in Washington State. In 2001, he was the recipient of a Bill and Melinda Gates Grant called the Technology Leadership Program. This marked the beginning of his journey with technology and learning. Over the past 10 years, Jeff has taught at International Schools in the Middle East and Asia. Moving from a classroom teacher into technology facilitator roles and administrative positions, Jeff began sharing his passion for learning via his blog The Thinking Stick. In 2007, he was invited to create an innovative conference focusing on learning and technology; the Learning 2.0 Conference was initiated. He also began consulting with East Asia Regional Council of Schools. Continuing to share his vision, Jeff provided regular articles and blog posts for Tech & Learning publications, authored chapters in numerous books, worked as the educational consultant for a wiki company, and began speaking at schools and educational events around the globe. He has worked with politicians in Washington DC and participated in The Educational Project at the invitation of the Prince of Bahrain. In 2010 Jeff was invited to present at the first TEDx conference in Bangkok, Thailand.

Alice Opalka, Research Analyst for The Center on Reinventing Education

Alice is a research analyst at the Center on Reinventing Public Education, where she works on projects related to portfolio strategy, cross-sector collaboration, system governance, and more. Before joining CRPE, Alice was an Education Pioneers Fellow in Los Angeles and an AmeriCorps volunteer coordinator at a children's literacy organization in Los Angeles, and a college access mentor with College Access Now in Seattle. Alice holds a BA in environmental Analysis from Scripps College, and an MPA from the University of Southern California.

Jessica Orenstein, MPH, The JED Foundation

Jessica joined JED in February of 2019. Prior to joining the Jed Team, she worked in the field of public health workforce development for non profit organization in both Los Angeles and New York City. Before gaining experience in workforce development, Jessica worked in the higher education field devoting several years to the academic, professional, and personal development of new and first year students at St. Lewis University. Jessica grew up in the suburb of Belleville, Illinois and completed both her BS in Communication Sciences and Disorders and her MS in Public Health – Behavioral Science and Health Education at St. Lewis University in St. Lewis, Missouri.

Marilyn Nielson, Spokane Community College, Director of NWGETEP

As part of the Environmental Sciences Department at Spokane Community College, Marilyn teaches introductory and advanced courses in GIS to students in the Water Resources and Natural Resources programs. These courses focus on attaining proficiency in an applied setting and emphasize the field collection, processing, and display of spatial data. Prior to coming to SCC, Marilyn worked as Senior Project Ecologist with Golder Associates and Terrestrial Biologist with Ecosystems Research Institute. She earned her M.S. in Fishery Resources at University of Idaho and B.S. in Natural Resource Sciences at Washington State University.