

## Presenter Bios

### Vito Borrello

Vito Borrello is president of EPIC - Every Person Influences Children, a national not-for-profit organization founded in 1980 dedicated to helping families, schools, and communities raise children to become responsible and capable adults. In addition to its regional offices, EPIC operates 8 Parental Information Resource Centers (PIRCs) across New York State including New York City, the largest school district in the nation. EPIC has been widely recognized for its research-based programming with numerous national accolades including the Mutual of America Community Partnership Award and designation as a National Point of Light by President George H.W. Bush. Through EPIC's work with the U.S. Department of Education, the New York State Education Department, and hundreds of thousands of parents from across the country, Borrello is a nationally recognized advocate for Family Engagement as an educational strategy to improve academic achievement in low performing schools. Borrello currently serves as a board member for a number of New York state and national organizations including the National PTA, National Working Group for Family, School and Community Engagement, and the National Coalition for PIRC Steering Committee. Borrello has a degree in Education from Wittenberg University and resides in Buffalo, NY.. with his wife Maria and two daughters.

### Mishaela Durán

Mishaela Durán serves as Interim-Executive Director of National Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Previously, Durán served as the Director of Government Affairs for the Association, where she was responsible for developing public policy recommendations, representing PTA before Congress, the Administration, and national coalitions, educating and mobilizing PTA members around critical public policy issues. Prior to joining the PTA, Durán was vice president of Public Policy at the National Network for Youth, where she led the successful reauthorization of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. She has worked on children and youth policy issues for over a decade on the federal, state and local levels, concentrating on reforms in education, child welfare, juvenile justice, youth development, and service-learning. Durán brings a practitioner's lens to her work in public policy, having worked as a public school teacher and social worker. Durán holds a Master's degree in educational policy from Harvard's Graduate School of Education and a Bachelor's degree in English literature from Yale University.

### Rev. Larry Snyder

In February 2005, Rev. Larry Snyder took the helm of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA)—the national office of more than 1,600 local Catholic Charities agencies and institutions nationwide that provide help and create hope for nearly eight million people a year, regardless of their religious, social, or economic backgrounds. Father Snyder oversees Catholic Charities USA's work to reduce poverty in America. In February, President Barack Obama appointed Father Snyder the newly created President's Council of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. In 2008, The Nonprofit Times recognized Father Snyder in its 11th annual "Power and Influence Top 50" for having influenced the nonprofit sector throughout his career, as well as during the past 12 months. Before assuming his post at CCUSA, Father Snyder served for more than five years as executive director of Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis—the largest private provider of social services in the Twin Cities. Prior to entering the seminary, Father Snyder was a high school teacher for eight years. Father Snyder earned a bachelor's degree from Illinois Benedictine College in Lisle, Ill.. He also holds a master's degree in divinity from the St. Paul Seminary and a Master of Public Administration from Hamline University in St. Paul, Minn.

### Vanessa Taylor-Dotison

Chicago native and Program Manager, Vanessa Taylor-Dotison joined Parents Challenge in 2005. An alumna of Chicago State University, she relocated to Colorado Springs, Colo. to be close to her grandchild. With an extensive public relations and information systems background, Taylor-Dotison is instrumental in the development of Parents Challenge programs, policies and procedures. Her knowledge and work experience has proven beneficial to the scope and growth of the Parents Challenge Mission. Taylor-Dotison's own personal life experiences have allowed her to quickly adapt to the many situations that occur in the work environment. She is best described as a caretaker and very personable who's earned a high level of trust with the Parents Challenge families and in the community of Colorado Springs as well as the state of Colorado. Her passion in the Education Reform movement is demonstrated daily as she always keeps the best interest of all children in mind and works to ensure their individual needs are being met.

### Presenter Bios *(continued)*

#### **Abby Weiss**

Abby Weiss joined the Full-service Schools Roundtable in November 2007 as its second Executive Director. With nearly 20 years of experience in family and community engagement, out-of-school time programming, and evaluation, Weiss has engaged partners from multiple sectors to advance the Roundtable's mission of ensuring that every child in Boston - and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts - has access to integrated services through school-community partnerships. Weiss oversees all of the Roundtable's efforts, including fundraising, communication to key constituencies, partnership development, program planning and implementation, and evaluation. Prior to arriving at the Roundtable, Weiss was a Project Manager at Harvard Family Research Project. She was also the Co-Director of the National PIRC Coordination Center, providing technical assistance and training to Parent Information and Resource Centers across the country. From 1992 till 2000, Weiss worked at the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE) in Boston. At IRE, she served as Associate Director and led the organization's research efforts on charter schools. She also managed projects that promoted family-school-community partnerships and provided technical assistance and training to schools across the country as they engaged in this work. After leaving IRE, Weiss was an independent consultant for 5 years. During that time, she conducted evaluations of family-school-community partnership programs, out-of-school time initiatives, individual charter schools, and a federally-funded charter school accountability program. Weiss received her master's degree in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and her B.A. in Political Science from Brown University.