



22ND ANNUAL

Becca Conference

NOVEMBER 6th, 2025 | 7:30 am PST – 4:30 pm PST

NOVEMBER 7th, 2025 | 8:30 am PST – 12:45 pm PST

Central Washington University, Ellensburg, WA

Experts representing education, justice, and community from across the state will provide new information, training, and development to professional and community members who support young people in their pursuit of successful post-secondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.



WELCOME

ABOUT CCYJ

At CCYJ, we are reimagining how the child welfare and youth justice systems can better support our children and young people regardless of their race, gender identity, sexual orientation, or background. We are a diverse and multidisciplinary team, with team members personally touched by the child welfare and youth justice systems and staff with professional systems experience, working upstream to ensure that kids get the equitable support needed to thrive. Every year we help improve the lives of 50,000 young people.

For more information, please visit www.ccyj.org.

ABOUT BECCA

The Washington State Becca Task Force is a multidisciplinary statewide organization founded to support schools, courts, and service providers in carrying out the goals of the mandatory attendance and at-risk youth laws, known as “Becca laws.”

The Becca Bill was passed in 1995 to create a structured response for youth and families experiencing crises, including Truancy, Child in Need of Services (CHINS), or At-Risk Youth (ARY) petitions known as status offenses filed with the court. The Becca Task Force works collaboratively to expand and educate the community, schools, and courts on best practices and ways to engage youth and families in crisis to close this gap between youth and families that are unaccounted for and not receiving services.

Since 2004, CCYJ and the Becca Task Force have partnered to host the Becca Conference, where stakeholders gather to train, network, share best practices, and discuss issues and solutions related to the Becca Laws.

For more information, please visit www.ccyj.org/our-work/keeping-kids-in-school



AGENDA

Thursday, November 6, 2025

7:30 – 8:15 am **Registration/Coffee, Room 215A/B**

8:15 – 8:30 am **Introduction & Welcome, Room 215C**
Barbara McInville, Commissioner, Pierce County Superior Court
Glenn Hasslinger, Director of Pupil Management, Bellevue School District

8:30 – 10:00 am **Big Room Talk, Room 215C**
Working with Parents of CSEC and At-Risk Children
Pema Wilson, CSEC Advocate, Organization for Prostitution Survivors School
The State of Becca: Legislative History, the 2025 Session, and the Impact of Budget Cuts on School Engagement
Nicholas Oakley, Director of Public Policy & TTA, Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ)
Giannina Ferrara, Policy & TTA Manager, Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ)

10:00 – 10:15 am **Transition/Snack**

10:15 – 11:15 am **Breakout Session 1**

Room 201	Room 137B
<p>Going Upstream: Universal Screeners as a Tool for Prevention</p> <p>Dimitri Groce, <i>Director of Practice Innovation Team, Building Changes</i></p> <p>Kayla Blau, <i>Strategic Advisor of Housing and Education, Building Changes</i></p>	<p>Legal Tools for Non-Lawyers - How a non-lawyer can protect the rights of the youth and children you are working with, including youth in our LGBTQ+ community</p> <p>Alexandra Narvaez, <i>Youth Defense Program Supervisor, Legal Counsel for Youth and Children</i></p> <p>David Totten, <i>Public Defender, Associated Counsel for the Accused</i></p>

Room 202	Room 135	Room 137A
<p>Innovative Approaches to Supporting “Girls” in the Youth Criminal Legal System: A Two-Part Series Part I – Innovating Systems on Behalf of Girls: It Starts with Understanding Who the Girls in Our System Are</p> <p>Nicholas Oakley, <i>Director of Public Policy & TTA, CCYJ</i></p> <p>The Honorable Melissa A. Hemstreet, <i>Judge,</i> <i>Kitsap County Superior Court</i></p>	<p>WYCA Supports Second Chances – An Opportunity for Reengaging Youth</p> <p>Elizabeth Bergmann, <i>Recruiting, Mentoring, and Placement Coordinator,</i> <i>Washington Youth ChalleNGe Academy</i></p>	<p>Concerning Youth Substance Abuse Trends</p> <p>John Holbrook, <i>Director of Security,</i> <i>Renton School District</i></p>

11:15 – 11:30 am

Transition

11:30 – 1:00 pm

Big Room Talk, Room 215C

All of Us, Every System: Reimagining Truancy Through Holistic, Justice-Centered Action

Ericka Weathers, PhD, *Assistant Professor of Education, University of Pennsylvania*

1:00 – 2:00 pm

Lunch/Tabling, Room 215A/B

Room 202	Room 137B	Room 201
<p>Innovative Approaches to Supporting “Girls” in the Youth Criminal Legal System: A Two-Part Series Part II – Innovative Approaches in Action: An Overview of Kitsap County’s Girls Court Program</p> <p>Nicholas Oakley, <i>Director of Public Policy & TTA, CCYJ</i></p> <p>The Honorable Melissa A. Hemstreet, <i>Judge, Kitsap County Superior Court</i></p>	<p>Community Engagement Board Guidance & Implementation</p> <p>Vicki Wood, <i>Attendance & Truancy Program Supervisor, OSPI</i></p> <p>Alicia Flinn, <i>Attendance Specialist, Evergreen Public Schools</i></p> <p>Aaron Helenihi, <i>Student Engagement Specialist, Evergreen Public Schools</i></p> <p>Jason Castro, <i>Assistant Director of Student Services and Athletics, Evergreen Public Schools</i></p>	<p>Healing 2 Hope: The Consortium Approach to Healing-Centered Behavioral Health</p> <p>Jason Clark, <i>Director/Founder, Northwest Credible Messenger Statewide Consortium</i></p> <p>Khalia Williams-O’Neal, <i>Certified Peer Counselor, Northwest Credible Messenger Statewide Consortium</i></p> <p>Johnny Cheng, <i>Credible Messenger Ambassador, Northwest Credible Messenger Statewide Consortium</i></p>
Room 135	Room 215C	Room 137A
<p>Community Circles: Rooted Relationships</p> <p>Aaron Norikane, <i>Facilitator, BELONG Partners</i></p> <p>Roxana Amaral, <i>Director of Strategic Partnerships, BELONG Partners</i></p>	<p>Community Conversations in Support of Elementary Student Attendance, Engagement, and Success</p> <p>Thao Vo, Ph.D., <i>Research Associate, Washington State University</i></p> <p>Laura Pires Gifford, <i>Doctoral Student, Washington State University</i></p> <p>Brian French, Ph.D., <i>Regents Professor, Washington State University</i></p> <p>Alexis Downey, <i>Doctoral Student, Washington State University</i></p> <p>Paul Strand, <i>Professor, Washington State University</i></p>	<p>Part I – Principles for Working Across Cultural Differences</p> <p>Leyla Welkin, Ph.D., LMHS, PLLC, <i>Clinical Cross-Cultural Psychotherapist</i></p>

3:00 – 3:30 pm

Transition/Snack, Room 215A/B

3:30 – 4:30 pm

Breakout Session 3

Room 137B	Room 135
<p>Community Engagement Board Guidance & Implementation</p> <p>Vicki Wood, <i>Attendance & Truancy Program Supervisor, OSPI</i></p> <p>Alicia Flinn, <i>Attendance Specialist, EPS</i></p> <p>Aaron Helenihi, <i>Student Engagement Specialist, EPS</i></p> <p>Jason Castro, <i>Assistant Director of Student Services and Athletics, EPS</i></p>	<p>Reimagining Resilience: Understanding Trauma & Creating Safer Environments</p> <p>Aaron Norikane, <i>Facilitator, BELONG Partners</i></p> <p>Roxana Amaral, <i>Director of Strategic Partnerships, BELONG Partners</i></p>
Room 201	Room 137A
<p>From Home to Neighborhood: How Domestic Violence Impacts Community Violence</p> <p>Alisha Guthery, <i>Visiting Professor/Founder of BRIDGES, Palo Alto University/BRIDGES</i></p> <p>Jeremy Crowe, <i>Restorative Justice Programs Supervisor, King County Superior Court</i></p> <p>Sandra Shanahan, <i>Program Manager at the Regional Domestic Violence Firearms Enforcement Unit (RDVFEU), the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office</i></p>	<p>Part II – Principles for Working Across Cultural Differences</p> <p>Leyla Welkin, Ph.D., LMHS, PLLC, <i>Clinical Cross-Cultural Psychotherapist</i></p>



Friday, November 7, 2025

8:30 – 9:00 am **Coffee, Room 215A/B**

9:00 – 9:15 am **Overview/Announcements, Room 215C**

Barbara McInville, Commissioner, Pierce County Superior Court

Glenn Hasslinger, Director of Pupil Management, Bellevue School District

9:15 – 10:15 am **Panel 1, Room 215C**

**Our Role in Promoting School Engagement for Each and Every Student:
Why We Need to Provide Individualized and Holistic Support for LGBTQIA+
Students and Some Tools for Doing So**

*Alexandra Narvaez, Youth Defense Program Supervisor, Legal Counsel
for Youth and Children*

Nicholas Oakley, Director of Public Policy & TTA, CCYJ

Karen Pillar, Executive Director, TeamChild

10:15 – 11:15 am **Panel 2, Room 215C**

**Less Money, No Less Need: A Panel Discussion on Addressing Attendance
Challenges Amid a Budget Crisis**

Facilitator: *Vicki Wood, Attendance & Truancy Program Supervisor, OSPI*

Glenn Hasslinger, Director of Pupil Management, Bellevue School District

Rebekah Lawson, Spokane Public Schools

Jenna Carroll, Operations and Attendance Manager, Lumen High School

Barbara McInville, Commissioner, Pierce County Superior Court

*Caesy Morphis, District School Social Worker, Attendance/Truancy, Foster Care
& McKinney-Vento Liaison, Central Valley School District*

11:15 – 11:45 am **Transition/Snack, Room 215A/B**

11:45 am – 12:45 pm **Breakout Session 1**

Room 201	Room 202	Room 137A
<p>Uncuffed: Breaking the System’s Casting Call Dr. Conrad Webster, Ed.D, <i>CEO Black Boy Heal</i></p>	<p>A Brief Introduction to the Labor Trafficking of Minors Morgan Silverman, <i>Senior Director of Innovations, CCYJ</i> Emily Nicewonger, <i>Associate Director of Innovations, CCYJ</i></p>	<p>I AM Foster KID - Generational System Impacts Angela Cruze Boldt, <i>Policy and System Consultant, I AM Foster KID</i></p>
<p>Room 137B</p>		
<p>Reimagining Safety to Foster Belonging, Trust, and Connection Dr. Monica Vavilala MD, <i>Professor of Anesthesiology and Pediatrics, University of Washington</i> Susan Seabrooks, <i>Doctoral Candidate in Public Health</i> Zaher Kmail, <i>Professor of Statistics at the University of Washington Tacoma</i> Marcus Stubblefield, <i>Criminal Justice Policy & Strategy Manager, King County</i></p>		

12:45 pm **Closing**



Working with Parents of CSEC and At-Risk Children

This training explores how to effectively engage and support parents of CSEC and at-risk youth through a trauma-informed lens. We will examine how generational trauma and systemic oppression shape parenting behaviors, and how service providers can build trust while avoiding blame. Participants will gain tools to understand parents' responses as survival strategies, and learn approaches that strengthen family partnerships and break cycles of harm across generations.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Pema Wilson
CSEC Advocate

Pema Wilson has over a decade of experience working with youth, with a focus on trauma-informed care, survivor advocacy, and youth empowerment. Her work centers the voices and leadership of young people, particularly those impacted by systems of harm. Drawing from both professional and lived experience, Pema approaches her work with compassion, cultural humility, and a deep commitment to equity. She currently works as a CSEC Advocate, providing individualized support to youth navigating complex trauma and exploitation.



The State of Becca: Legislative History, the 2025 Session, and the Impact of Budget Cuts on School Engagement

This session will provide a brief overview of the legislative history of Becca legislation as it relates to school engagement/truancy, a recap of Becca related items in the 2025 legislative session, and highlight the results of a survey that assesses the impact of budget cuts to Becca. To learn and engage more on this topic, attendees are encouraged to attend the workshop, Washington State Legislation & Advocacy 101.

PLENARY SPEAKERS



Nicholas Oakley

Director of Public Policy & TTA, CCYJ

Nicholas Oakley is Senior Director, Public Policy, TTA, & Capacity Building at the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ). Nicholas' work is based on close partnerships with juvenile justice, child welfare, and homeless youth service systems across Washington. He convenes policy-makers, leaders, and front line workers from all of these sectors and uses collaborative strategies to develop proposed reforms to policy and practice, coordinates the pilot implementation of the reforms, and advocates for widespread adoption of the reforms once they have been tested and evaluated. Nicholas also provides training on LGBTQIA+ youth to various stakeholders across Washington and the US. Prior to joining CCYJ, Nicholas worked at a Seattle law firm representing children, youth, and families in juvenile offender, dependency, education, domestic, and criminal matters. He also served as a lecturer in the University of Washington School of Law Child and Youth Advocacy Clinic. Nicholas holds a JD from the University of Washington School of Law and a BA from the University of California at Santa Cruz. Between entering law school and completing his undergraduate degree, he spent four years as an educator, two of which were as a Peace Corps volunteer. Nicholas Oakley, JD, is Director of Policy, TTA, & Capacity Building at the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ). Nicholas' work is based on close partnerships with juvenile justice, child welfare, and homeless youth service systems across Washington. He convenes policy-makers, leaders, and front line workers from all of these sectors and uses collaborative strategies to develop proposed reforms to policy and practice, coordinates the pilot implementation of the reforms, and advocates for widespread adoption of the reforms once they have been tested and evaluated.



Giannina Ferrara **Policy & TTA Manager, CCYJ**

Giannina Ferrara is the Policy & TTA Manager at the Center for Children and Youth Justice (CCYJ). CCYJ’s mission is to create better lives for generations of children and youth by reforming the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Prior to this role, Giannina was a Policy and Program Assistant working on surveying state agencies, nonprofits, and other youth centered organizations to understand the policies, procedures, training, and systems regarding commercially sexually exploited children. Since this role, she has worked in a variety of focus areas that include the child welfare system, juvenile justice system, as well as youth homelessness and behavioral health. Key aspects of her work include new initiative research, policy tracking, coalition coordinating, and implementation analysis, all which have been done in partnership with other advocates. Giannina received her graduate degree in Public Administration from the University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy and Governance, and a Bachelor of Arts in Public Health from the University of Washington. Prior to CCYJ, she has worked in health research and analysis, and coordinating care and services for families.



All of Us, Every System: Reimagining Truancy Through Holistic, Justice-Centered Action

Since Massachusetts enacted the first compulsory attendance law in 1852, every U.S. state has adopted policies requiring students to attend school, with nationwide implementation by 1918. Over time, more than 85% of states have created specific statutes targeting “truancy” and “habitual truancy,” typically defined by a threshold of unexcused absences. While these policies are framed as efforts to promote school attendance, many rely on punitive measures—often directed at students or their families—that can worsen non-attendance and deepen educational inequities. By coupling truancy with delinquency and deviance, policy narratives locate the problem at the individual level (i.e., students and their caregivers), while overlooking the role of macro-level systems—schools/districts, legal, health, employment, housing, and other systems—in creating supportive, culturally sustaining, and evidence-based pathways to school attendance. Black and Latinx students, who are disproportionately labeled truant, are more likely to experience these punitive interventions. These disparities are not accidental; they reflect the compounding effects of structural racism, resource inequities, and biased enforcement practices that shape both the labeling of truancy and the responses to it. In this keynote, Dr. Weathers will explore critical questions: What does it mean to compel students to attend schools that are unwelcoming, harmful, or under-resourced? What does it mean to require family engagement without addressing compounding structural needs? And how might truancy itself reflect student resistance to systems not designed to support their success? Drawing on empirical research and theoretical frameworks, this talk calls for a shift toward holistic, justice-centered perspectives on truancy—ones that address root causes, redistribute responsibility, and foster meaningful engagement for our most marginalized students.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Ericka Weathers

Assistant Professor of Education, University of Pennsylvania

Weathers, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Education in the Policy, Organizations, Leadership, and Systems Division in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research focuses on racial and socioeconomic inequality in K-12 education, drawing on sociological and political perspectives to understand the role of policy and practice in shaping educational supports, experiences, and outcomes. Her published and ongoing work spans three topic areas: (i) school segregation and racial disparities in educational opportunity; (ii) policies and practices that criminalize student behavior (e.g., truancy); and (iii) racial disparities in special education. Her work has been funded by the Russell Sage Foundation and the National Academy of Education/Spencer Foundation. She was also recently selected for the William T. Grant Foundation Scholars Class of 2030. Dr. Weathers holds a Ph.D. in Education Policy from Stanford University, a M.A. in Policy Studies from the University of Washington Bothell, and a B.A. in Psychology from Hampton University.



Our Role in Promoting School Engagement for Each and Every Student: Why We Need to Provide Individualized and Holistic Support for LGBTQIA+ Students and Some Tools for Doing So

We cannot promote school engagement for each and every student unless and until we take action to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of LGBTQIA+ students. This interactive session will review our purpose in providing individualized and holistic support for LGBTQIA+ students, some of the current challenges this population faces, and tools we can use to fulfill our responsibility to promote school engagement for each and every student, whether we work in schools, at the district level, or in court or community programs that support students.

PANELISTS



Alexandra Narvaez

Youth Defense Program Supervisor, Legal Counsel for Youth and Children

Alexandra (Alex) Narvaez has been working at Legal Counsel for Youth and Children (LCYC) since 2014. During her time at LCYC, she has practiced in all LCYC programs, but her primary caseload is youth defense (juvenile) cases and Becca matters. She serves as the Supervisor for the Youth Defense Program at LCYC and is the Lead Attorney for the Youth Access to Counsel Program which responds in real time to advise youth of their rights when they are detained by law enforcement. She was a 2024 Ambassador for Racial Justice, a program through The Gault Center and Georgetown Law. She is also certified trainer of their Youth Defense Advocacy Program. Alex started her legal career in 2007 as a public defender with The Defender Association (TDA), which at the time was a non-profit organization. At TDA, she represented both youth and adults in criminal, civil commitment, dependency, truancy, At-Risk youth, and Child in Need of Services cases. She graduated with honors from Seattle University School of Law and received her BA in political science from the University of Washington.

PANELISTS



Nicholas Oakley

Director of Public Policy & TTA, CCYJ

Nicholas Oakley is Senior Director, Public Policy, TTA, & Capacity Building at the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ). Nicholas' work is based on close partnerships with juvenile justice, child welfare, and homeless youth service systems across Washington. He convenes policy-makers, leaders, and front line workers from all of these sectors and uses collaborative strategies to develop proposed reforms to policy and practice, coordinates the pilot implementation of the reforms, and advocates for widespread adoption of the reforms once they have been tested and evaluated. Nicholas also provides training on LGBTQIA+ youth to various stakeholders across Washington and the US. Prior to joining CCYJ, Nicholas worked at a Seattle law firm representing children, youth, and families in juvenile offender, dependency, education, domestic, and criminal matters. He also served as a lecturer in the University of Washington School of Law Child and Youth Advocacy Clinic. Nicholas holds a JD from the University of Washington School of Law and a BA from the University of California at Santa Cruz. Between entering law school and completing his undergraduate degree, he spent four years as an educator, two of which were as a Peace Corps volunteer. Nicholas Oakley, JD, is Director of Policy, TTA, & Capacity Building at the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ). Nicholas' work is based on close partnerships with juvenile justice, child welfare, and homeless youth service systems across Washington. He convenes policy-makers, leaders, and front line workers from all of these sectors and uses collaborative strategies to develop proposed reforms to policy and practice, coordinates the pilot implementation of the reforms, and advocates for widespread adoption of the reforms once they have been tested and evaluated.



Karen Pillar

Executive Director, TeamChild

Karen Pillar is the Executive Director at TeamChild. TeamChild is a not-for-profit law firm for youth in Washington State. TeamChild's mission is to uphold the rights of youth involved, or at risk of being involved, in the juvenile justice system to help them secure the education, healthcare, housing, and other support they need to achieve positive outcomes in their lives. Karen's legal practice has focused on children's rights, education law, child welfare, mental health, public benefits, and post-conviction relief. Karen has worked on policy issues at the local, state, and federal arenas for systems reform that serve youth, including child welfare, education, disability, mental health, and juvenile court. She has provided training on a variety of topics including education law, representing youth, the juvenile court process, public benefits for children, the history of child welfare policy and the school to prison pipeline. She received her BA from the University of Notre Dame. She received her law degree from Duquesne University School of Law in her hometown, Pittsburgh, PA.



Less Money, No Less Need: A Panel Discussion on Addressing Attendance Challenges Amid a Budget Crisis

Washington State is facing an unprecedented budget crisis, impacting our ability to support students and support school engagement. Yet while funding has dropped, the need for services and supports for students has not. This panel will focus on promoting school engagement and addressing chronic absenteeism in light of recent cuts so that we can better strategize on how to respond to funding challenges in our own districts and jurisdictions.

PANELISTS



Vicki Wood

Attendance and Truancy Program Supervisor, OSPI

Vicki Wood has nearly a decade of experience in supporting student attendance and engagement in Washington State. She began her career as a Truancy Project Specialist, providing direct case management to students facing attendance challenges. She later served as an Attendance Specialist for one of the state's largest school districts, where she led efforts to implement attendance policies, collaborated with families through Community Engagement Boards, and facilitated court truancy proceedings. Currently, Vicki serves as the Attendance & Truancy Program Supervisor at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), where she brings her deep expertise and passion for equitable student support. A lifelong resident of Vancouver, Washington, Vicki enjoys the natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest - from stormy beach visits to exploring Portland and Seattle. Outside of work, she cherishes time with her two young adult daughters, her border collie Rosie, and cat Trinket. She also finds joy in coffee, books, puzzles, and discovering new food locations.

PANELISTS



Glenn Hasslinger

Director of Pupil Management, Bellevue School District

Glenn Hasslinger is currently the Director of Pupil Management for the Bellevue School District overseeing discipline, attendance, and harassment, intimidation, and bullying. As part of his role with attendance, Glenn builds district-wide interventions working with community partners, runs school engagement workshops, and facilitates community truancy boards. He started his career in the Bellevue School District teaching middle school students at Robinswood Middle/High School (alternative school), prior to serving as an administrator at Robinswood and district-wide administrator charged with addressing truancy. While at Robinswood, Glenn was part of a partnership between the King County Prosecuting Attorney's office and the Bellevue School District working on Truancy Workshops. Through Glenn's leadership, the Bellevue School District then partnered with the Center for Children and Youth Justice working on a tiered intervention process that included work with Community Truancy Boards. Over the last seven years the community truancy boards have expanded to include elementary parents.



Rebekah Lawson

Spokane Public Schools

Rebekah was born and raised in Spokane, earning her bachelor's and master's of Public Administration from Eastern Washington University. Prior to working for Spokane Public Schools, she worked at Spokane County Juvenile Court in Social Files, Diversion, and the Court Investigation Unit. As a first generation high school graduate, Rebekah understands the complexities and challenges families face in obtaining high school diplomas and college education, and is an avid supporter of public education. Rebekah believes that each child, if given the proper information and appropriate resources, can find their own success and positively impact their life, their families, and their communities.



Jenna Carroll

Operations and Attendance Manager, Lumen High School

Jenna Carroll is the Operations and Attendance Manager at Lumen High School, where last year they reduced chronic absenteeism from 75% to 42%. With a strong background in nonprofit leadership and community engagement, she is dedicated to building systems that support student success.

PANELISTS



Barbara McInville

Commissioner, Pierce County Superior Court

A native of Colorado, Barb graduated from Colorado State University with a Bachelor of Music Degree in Vocal Performance (Opera). Barb attended law school at Seattle University School of Law and was a judicial assistant at Division II of the Washington Court of Appeals through her graduation. She then served as a judicial law clerk to the late Hon. J. Dean Morgan, and the Hon. Elaine Houghton, ret. Barb practiced family law at the trial and appellate levels primarily in Pierce County for nearly 14 years. She was appointed by the judges of the Pierce County Superior Court to serve as Superior Court Commissioner in January of 2017. Barb is also a member of the American Inns of Court, Hon. Robert J. Bryan Chapter XXV, in Tacoma, where she serves as the chapter liaison to the National Chapter. She also serves as a member of their National Program review committee. She is active in the Washington State Superior Court Judges' Association and their Family and Juvenile Law Committee. Barb has been the statewide judicial co-chair of the BECCA Taskforce since 2019.



Caesy Morphis

District School Social Worker, Attendance/Truancy, Foster Care & McKinney-Vento Liaison, Central Valley School District

Caesy Morphis is a District School Social Worker with the Central Valley School District (CVSD). She serves as a McKinney-Vento, Foster Care and Attendance/Truancy Liaison, working to ensure equitable access to education and essential supports for all students. Caesy earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Counseling, Educational, and Developmental Psychology (2003) and her Master of Social Work (MSW) from Eastern Washington University (EWU), in 2005. She began her school social work career in the East Valley School District, where she served for nearly a decade before joining CVSD in 2014. In 2009, as part of a collaborative team alongside Washington State University, Caesy was part of the pioneering team that launched the first Community Truancy Board replication site under the Models for Change initiative; advancing restorative, research-based approaches to attendance, truancy and engagement. With a career spanning over 20 years, Caesy has continued to facilitate Community Engagement Boards in CVSD and has dedicated her professional life to mitigating the barriers that prevent students from attending school. Throughout her tenure as a school social worker, Caesy has served on the Boards of Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council (GSSAC), Spokane Valley Partners and the Washington Association of School Social Workers (WASSW). She continues to serve on the EWU Professional Advisory Board (PAB) for the School of Social Work, the leadership team for the Greater Valley Support Network (GVSN) and serves on the Innovia/LaunchNW Attendance Taskforce. Caesy is passionate about equity in education and works intentionally to disrupt the systemic barriers and practices that perpetuate the school-to-prison pipeline. She believes that restorative approaches and inclusive practices help to create pathways for students that foster student growth, belonging and success.

SPEAKER BIOS



Roxana Amaral

Director of Strategic Partnerships, BELONG Partners

Roxana Amaral is a dedicated educator and equity-centered leader with nearly two decades of experience partnering with schools, families, and community organizations. Her work is rooted in creating spaces where every student and adult feels seen, heard, and valued. As a Director and Co-Leader at BELONG Partners, Roxana brings deep expertise in social-emotional learning, culturally responsive practices, and trauma-informed approaches that cultivate inclusive, relationship-centered school communities. She supports schools and districts through coaching, professional development, and systems alignment—always centering equity and sustainability in the work. Roxana holds a master’s in teaching and a professional degree in Educational Leadership & Program Administration. She has served in multiple leadership roles and has been recognized locally and nationally for her efforts in advancing racial equity and expanding college and career readiness. A committed community leader, Roxana made history as the first woman president of the Board of Directors for El Centro de la Raza, a Seattle-based nonprofit advancing social justice and community empowerment. Known for her collaborative spirit, strategic thinking, and heart-centered facilitation, Roxana grounds her leadership in brain science, healing-centered engagement, and a deep belief that meaningful change begins with authentic relationships and honoring the lived experiences of those she serves.



Elizabeth Bergmann

Recruiting, Mentoring, and Placement Coordinator, Washington Youth ChalleNGe Academy

Elizabeth has been involved in youth work all her adult life. She started as a day camp leader/Director for the YMCA and Metro Parks Tacoma, Para-Educator for Tacoma and Central Kitsap Public Schools, and Youth Detention Officer for Kitsap County Juvenile Department. Elizabeth was awarded her Bachelor of Arts in Human Services through Western Washington University in June 2008. Elizabeth has obtained her Human Service Board Certified Practitioner Certificate. She has been with the academy for 17+ years. In 2017 she was recommended and granted permission to be involved in the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program (NGYCP) Subject Matter Expert (SME) group. She is currently a Staff Trainer with the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Programs. She has been awarded the 10- and 15-year Service Award and The Adjunct General (TAG) State Employee Exceptional Performance Award through the State of Washington. Elizabeth raised two grown sons and currently live in on 5 acres in Seabeck, WA with my husband of 34 years and our dog Zoey.



Kayla Blau

Strategic Advisor of Housing and Education, Building Changes

Kayla Blau (she/her), MSW is the Strategic Advisor of Housing and Education at Building Changes. She has over 15 years of experience working with youth that have experienced complex trauma in a domestic violence shelter, various non-profits, and school districts across King County.



Jason Castro

Assistant Director of Student Services and Athletics, Evergreen Public Schools

The Attendance Team at Evergreen Public Schools consists of Alicia Flinn, Attendance Specialist; Aaron Helenihi, Student Engagement Specialist; and Jason Castro, Assistant Director of Student Services. Together, the team is committed to supporting district goals to improve attendance and strengthen student engagement. Their work includes developing supportive Community Engagement Boards, recruiting members, planning and facilitating training, and managing events that ensure families and community partners are active participants in student success planning.



Johnny Cheng

Credible Messenger Ambassador

Johnny Cheng's guiding purpose is to bring those at the margins into the center of the work. Inspired by the Khmer proverb, "It takes a spider to repair its own web," he approaches his commitment to young people with the same love and compassion he holds for his own children.

Johnny's journey as a Credible Messenger began informally through his involvement with Khmer in Action, an initiative dedicated to advancing equity and social justice within the Cambodian community. Recognizing the limitations of working in silos, he expanded his vision to build partnerships with like-minded organizations, creating a collective effort to empower all marginalized communities. As a Credible Messenger ambassador, Johnny is deeply committed to the belief that lasting community change is rooted in healing—and that the path to transformation begins from within.



Jason Clark

Director/Founder, Northwest Credible Messenger Statewide Consortium

Jason Clark is a father, mentor, and the Director/Founder of Northwest Credible Messenger Statewide Consortium (NWCM) in Washington State. He served as an Equity and Justice Advocate for King County Superior Court, where he sharpened the Procedural Justice lens of the largest trial court in Washington. He achieved this through training all staff and judicial officers, policy advocacy, and building alternatives to incarceration for King County Juvenile Court Services. Before founding NWCM, Jason focused on the Equity Impact Review, ensuring equity impacts were considered for the design and implementation of proposed actions of Superior Court programs and projects impacting target communities. His work involved undoing institutional barriers and archaic policies and procedures negatively impacting local communities. During his time as a Project Manager for the City of Seattle, Jason concentrated on growing the leadership of various government departments and community partnerships through Racial Equity, Experiential Learning Theory, and Healing Centered Engagement. Now, NWCM Jason leads a statewide behavioral health consortium, and a social enterprise focused on building the infrastructure of community organizations and providing culturally responsive care to communities across Washington state. Jason understands that "relationships produce results", and it takes partnership to provide the healing our communities need.



Jeremy Crowe

Restorative Justice Programs Supervisor, King County Superior Court

Jeremy Crowe is the supervisor of Restorative Programs at King County Juvenile Court in Seattle. This team focuses on youth arrested or referred for family violence and diversion pathways, including Family Violence Intervention and Restorative Services and Step-Up. Step-Up has been a unique and highly successful family violence prevention program for 30 years, duplicated in a variety of other cities/jurisdictions across the U.S. and even a few places abroad. FIRS was created through a collaborative process with juvenile probation, judges, juvenile detention staff, and both prosecuting and defense attorneys. It started as an alternative to formal court for family violence offenses in 2016 and remains funded through a combination of city and county dollars. The program includes an unsecure respite center next to secure detention, which is staffed 24/7 by a local community mental health agency. Jeremy and his team are passionate advocates for youth and families receiving the right, timely support, accountability, and opportunities for skill-building and healing, often with little or no formal court or detention experience. Jeremy has been in this supervisor role for almost 8 years, after working for 11 years as a Juvenile Probation Counselor, handling a variety of case types. Prior to juvenile probation, Jeremy worked as an ARY Case Manager, a wraparound facilitator and researcher, a vocational rehabilitation counselor, and a therapeutic group home youth counselor.



Angela Cruze Boldt

Policy and System Consultant, I AM Foster KID

Angela is originally from Washington state. She currently works and resides in Oregon. Her advocacy for foster youth began in 2013. Through her time as a Congressional Foster Youth Shadow Day delegate, the 29-year-old hopes to learn more on policy decisions that impact foster youth. She also hopes to learn ways to source resolutions for foster youth voices for a better System Of Care. During her time in Washington, D.C. Angela hopes to network with other young people impacted by the foster welfare system to create long lasting professional relationships. She also hopes her experience as a delegate helps her to gain a collective overview into the work that goes into decision-making at the federal level. A fun fact about Angela is that she collects quirky alien oddball art. One of her favorite quotes to live by is, “what you put into your life, is what you will get out of life.”



Alexis Downey

Doctoral Student, Washington State University

Alexis Downey is a doctoral student working with Washington Assessment of the Risks and a research assistant for the Washington Assessment for the Risks and Needs of Students (WARNS).



Alicia Flinn

Attendance Specialist, Evergreen Public Schools

The Attendance Team at Evergreen Public Schools consists of Alicia Flinn, Attendance Specialist; Aaron Helenihi, Student Engagement Specialist; and Jason Castro, Assistant Director of Student Services. Together, the team is committed to supporting district goals to improve attendance and strengthen student engagement. Their work includes developing supportive Community Engagement Boards, recruiting members, planning and facilitating training, and managing events that ensure families and community partners are active participants in student success planning.



Brian French

Regents Professor, Washington State University

Brian French, Ph.D. is a Regents Professor in the Educational Psychology program at Washington State University. His research is centered on the methodology and application of measurement to address fairness and equity issues with scores used to make decisions about individuals.



Dimitri Groce

Director of Practice Innovation Team, Building Changes

Dimitri (he/him) is the Director of Practice Innovation team at Building Changes. He partners with public sector entities, service providers, and community leaders in supporting efforts to end homelessness and enhance racial equity in our system. Dimitri is inspired by the legacy of Black-led organizing efforts that made community the hub for enrichment, solutions, and survival. The legacy of this work grounds Dimitri's commitment to culturally-responsive approaches like Diversion, and efforts to elevate the voices of people with lived experience.



Alisha Guthery

Visiting Professor/Founder of BRIDGES, Palo Alto University/BRIDGES

Dr. Alisha Guthery holds a PhD in Counseling, Education, and Supervision and is a licensed mental health counselor in Washington State. She has worked in the field of domestic violence for over 10 years in the Seattle area, leading initiatives to prevent and address relational violence, particularly among youth. Dr. Guthery also serves as a visiting professor at Palo Alto University in California and an adjunct professor at Antioch University in Seattle. Dr. Guthery is committed to trauma-informed care and anti-violent work with youth. Her clinical practice integrates neurobiological research with embodied healing approaches to create innovative interventions tailored to young people. She is the creator of BRIDGES, a groundbreaking program designed to prevent and intervene in adolescent violence. BRIDGES equips youth with essential skills for emotional regulation, healthy communication, and relationship building while fostering accountability and resilience. As an educator, Dr. Guthery strives to cultivate collaborative and inclusive learning environments. She has developed and taught courses on trauma, somatic theory, and feminist theory, all through a trauma-informed lens. Her teaching emphasizes the importance of equipping future counselors with tools to support young people effectively and compassionately. Dr. Guthery's contributions extend beyond the classroom. She has worked on program development and implementation for youth and adults impacted by violence, including initiatives for incarcerated populations. Her research focuses on societal beliefs that perpetuate relational violence in the United States, with an emphasis on creating practical solutions for prevention and healing. She has shared her work through national and international presentations, advocating for systemic change.



Aaron Helenihi

Student Engagement Specialist, Evergreen Public Schools

The Attendance Team at Evergreen Public Schools consists of Alicia Flinn, Attendance Specialist; Aaron Helenihi, Student Engagement Specialist; and Jason Castro, Assistant Director of Student Services. Together, the team is committed to supporting district goals to improve attendance and strengthen student engagement. Their work includes developing supportive Community Engagement Boards, recruiting members, planning and facilitating training, and managing events that ensure families and community partners are active participants in student success planning.



The Honorable Melissa A. Hemstreet

Judge, Kitsap County Superior Court

Judge Hemstreet graduated from Willamette University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies. She earned her Juris Doctorate degree from Willamette University College of Law. Judge Hemstreet was admitted to the Washington State Bar in 1998. As an attorney, she worked as a contract public defender in criminal and involuntary commitment proceedings. She also spent over 15 years helping clients through their family law, civil protection order, and estate planning matters. Judge Hemstreet was a frequent volunteer as a pro bono attorney for individuals needing legal assistance through Kitsap Legal Services. She also served as a Trustee, Vice President, and finally President of the Kitsap County Bar Association. She also served on the Kitsap County Family Law Practice and Procedure board. She was a member of the Washington State Trial Lawyers Association, the Washington Defenders Association, and Washington Women Lawyers. Judge Hemstreet was appointed to the Kitsap County Superior Court bench by Governor Inslee in July 2015. As a judicial officer, Judge Hemstreet is the co-chair of the Kitsap County Human Trafficking Taskforce and is a steering committee member for the National Judicial Network Forum on Human Trafficking and Immigration in State Courts. She is one of the current treatment court Judges for Kitsap County, presiding over the Family Treatment Court, the Safe Babies Court, and Girls Court. She is the Chair of the Superior Court Judges Association Therapeutic Courts Committee, on the executive committee for the statewide Criminal Justice Treatment Account, and a board and executive committee member for the Washington Association of Drug Court Professionals/Washington Association of Drug Courts. In her non-Judicial life, she is also a founding member of the Women's Giving Circle through the Kitsap Philanthropy Foundation and a member of the South Kitsap Rotary. Plus, she is a wife and mother to two wonderful children.



John Holbrook

Director of Security, Renton School District

John was born and raised in Shelton, WA before joining the Army and serving as an intelligence warrant officer. After service, John began working with school districts and currently serves as the Director of Security for Renton School District. John has over 18 years of experience in security, analysis, and emergency operations. The recipient of a Bronze Star and the Washington State Governor's Lifesaving Award, John brings a deep commitment to protecting school communities.



Zaher Kmail

Professor of Statistics, University of Washington Tacoma

Zaher Kmail, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Statistics at the University of Washington Tacoma in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences' Division of Sciences and Mathematics. His general areas of research are in theoretical and applied statistics with a specialization in the design and analysis of experiments. His current research focuses on causal structure modeling, optimal design and its applications, multivariate analysis, and mathematics and statistics education. In addition to applied statistics, Dr. Kmail has published in a wide variety of fields including agronomy, engineering education, special education, student success in higher education, public health, nursing, medicine, and environmental chemistry.



Emily Nicewonger

Associate Director of Innovation, CCYJ

Emily's background includes direct engagement with youth and families across systems; managing specialized, community-based case management programs; and leading homelessness prevention initiatives. Emily is passionate about working alongside communities to develop programs and systems that center and uplift the humanity, experiences, and voices of children and families.



Aaron Norikane

Facilitator, BELONG Partners

Aaron Norikane (he/him) has been pushing to transform our education systems (both in schools and in our communities) for young people in the Seattle area for over 30 years. He has been a tireless advocate for building communities that heal and tearing down systems that harm young people. Working as an after school provider, program director, substitute teacher, ESD board director and various other roles has given him the opportunity to see how strong communities built around People and not Profit, open up a world of possibility. Aaron joined the BELONG Partners team in 2016. As a Facilitator, he helps educators and community members build spaces where young people have agency, power, and learn new ways of being in community. He feels extremely grateful to be in a profession that aligns with his values. When he was young, Aaron always thought he would be an architect or airline pilot or ideally an NBA player. Never once did he think he would get over his intense fear of public speaking to take on a job where he facilitates workshops with audiences as big as 300 people. A lifelong Seattleite, Aaron finds his greatest source of joy in watching his two children learn, grow and giggle. His colleagues describe him as passionate, caring, and continually pushing to make our systems better. By the end of his career, Aaron hopes that he will have helped shift the education system away from producing consumers and laborers... and towards producing communities that center humanity and hope.



Laura Pires Gifford

Doctoral Student, Washington State University

Laura Pires Gifford is a doctoral student working with our WARNS users and conducting research around WARNS.



Susan Seabrooks

Doctoral Candidate in Public Health

Susan K. Seabrooks, MPH, is doctoral candidate in Public Health with a focus on holistic school safety. She obtained her Master of Public Health through the University of Washington, and is pursuing her doctorate with the Medical College of Wisconsin. She continues to work with the Collaborative Leadership Addressing School Safety (CLASS) multi-partner team to support schools developing and enhancing safety safety planning from a whole child perspective. She is a three-time Golden Acorn award winner for her PTSA work both at the school level, and at the Lake Washington PTSA Council. She is also a past board member the Lake Washington Schools Foundation. Her educational engagements focused on food insecurity, youth mental health, and equity and inclusion.



Sandra Shanahan

Program Manager at the Regional Domestic Violence Firearms Enforcement Unit (RDVFEU), the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Sandra Shanahan is the Program Manager of the Regional Domestic Violence Firearms Enforcement Unit in King County, Washington. The unit is one of the first in the nation to intervene to remove firearms in cases where the court has ordered their removal. Sandra works on a variety of collaborative efforts locally, regionally and nationally to more fully implement firearm dispossession laws related to domestic violence, civil protection orders and Extreme Risk Protection Orders. Prior to starting this position, she managed the Protection Order Advocacy Program housed within the Domestic Violence Unit of the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. Sandra has worked for the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office in the Domestic Violence Unit since 1998. Much of her work over the past two decades has included efforts to reform systems, promote risk-based approaches to domestic violence, firearm policies and increase access to justice. Sandra has served on various committees including the Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment Oversight Committee, the Domestic Violence Initiative, Child Death Review, and various other collaborative efforts to improve the system's response to domestic violence and firearms. Sandra holds a Masters in Social Work.



Morgan Silverman

Senior Director of Innovation, CCYJ

Morgan Silverman, LICSW, serves as a director at the Center for Children & Youth Justice in Seattle, Washington. Morgan has worked in the nonprofit sector for over 20 with a specific focus on working with families, youth and young adults. Working with individuals in different situations, but often experiencing similar barriers, led to Morgan's desire to work on a macro level, addressing systemic issues in order to equitably serve children and families in crisis.



Paul Strand

Professor, Washington State University

Paul Strand is a Professor of Psychology at Washington State University whose work focuses on the social and emotional development of children.



Marcus Stubblefield

Criminal Justice Policy & Strategy Manager, King County

Marcus Stubblefield is the Criminal Justice Strategy & Policy Section Manager for King County Executive Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget where he will oversee King County's efforts to transform the entire criminal justice system through strategic partnerships, policy and practice change yielding better outcomes for everyone the criminal legal system touches. Prior to that he served as the program manager/systems integration coordinator for 9 years. King County's Systems Integration Initiative is a consortium of local and state youth serving agencies. This multi-agency consortium works to create a more coordinated and effective response for youth and families involved in the juvenile justice, child welfare, behavioral health, and educational systems. Marcus serves as the primary point person and is responsible for overall management, organization, and advancement of the goals and daily work associated with implementing the Initiative's Strategic Plan. Another critical component of Mr. Stubblefield's position involves facilitating community partnerships primarily with youth, parents/guardians, and other key stakeholders. His strong roots in the Seattle area help him to stay connected with community and break down some of the barriers that exist between systems and community. He also actively coordinates and collaborates with his counterparts - other County, State and National Systems Integration Coordinators and Foundation personnel.



David Totten

Public Defender, Associated Counsel of the Accused

David Totten is a public defender with the Associated Counsel for the Accused, a division of King County Department of Public Defense, and is currently practicing juvenile defense and Becca as assigned counsel for youth. Prior to becoming a public defender, David worked in Seattle homeless services and music education. He also a board member of the Seattle chapter of Minds Matter, an organization dedicated to providing educational resources and tutoring for low-income families to prepare high school youth for success in higher education.



Dr. Monica Vavilala

Professor of Anesthesiology and Pediatrics, University of Washington

Monica Vavilala, M.D., is a board certified anesthesiologist and director of Harborview's Injury Prevention and Research Center. She is also a UW professor of Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine and Pediatrics and an adjunct professor of Neurological Surgery and Radiology. Dr. Vavilala believes in patient-centered care, where the team of healthcare providers strives to provide evidence-based medical care to improve outcomes. Dr. Vavilala earned her M.D. at the University of Texas, Houston. Her clinical and research interests include neurasthenia, pediatric trauma, acute care of traumatic brain injury and the translation of evidence-based guidelines into practice.



Thao Vo
Research Associate, Washington State University

Thao Vo, Ph.D., is a Research Associate at the Learning & Performance Research Center (LPRC) at Washington State University, where she provides specialized consultation in psychometrics, measurement, and advanced quantitative research methods. Her research focuses on providing methodological and analytical support for projects related to equitable assessments and systems.



Dr. Conrad Webster
CEO, Black Boy Heal

Dr. Conrad Webster is a mental health advocate, critical race theorist, writer, organizer, facilitator, and professor from Houston, Texas. He is the CEO of Black Boy Heal LLC and Co-founder of the African American Leadership Conference. Since 2012, Dr. Webster has served in Washington State's community colleges and universities, beginning as a Black and Brown Retention Specialist in the Office of Multicultural Services at Green River College (GRC). He later worked as an Outreach Specialist at GRC before transitioning into K-12 education as an Academic Advisor for the College Success Foundation. He went on to serve as Project Manager for Seattle Public Schools and Director of Student Support at Seattle School for Boys. After earning his doctorate, Dr. Webster became an adjunct professor at institutions including Pierce College, Oregon Institute of Technology, University of Washington Tacoma, City University, Seattle University, University of Puget Sound, and currently, Highline College. Dedicated to academic achievement and Black wellness, he uses storytelling as a form of liberation—empowering students and staff to recognize their capacity to organize for change. His published work includes *Where Did My Black Folk Go?: The Exclusion of African American Men in the K–12 School System*, *I Don't Think They Like Us: School Suspensions as Anti-Black Male Practice*, and the co-authored piece *Black Bodies, Dueling Pandemics*, and the *Hidden Rules for White Profit in the NBA*.



Leyla Welkin, Ph.D., LMHS, PLLC
Clinical Cross-Cultural Psychotherapist

Leyla Welkin is a clinical cross-cultural psychologist who has practiced psychotherapy, taught as an intercultural educator, and developed programs internationally for 40 years. Her birth in Gaziantep, Turkey to American parents began a life lived between many cultural worlds. She received her interdisciplinary master's and doctoral degrees in the United States, where she worked for many years in outpatient clinics and in private practice psychotherapy. Her early work focused on women and families struggling with the effects of trauma, sexual, and family abuse. She began teaching in university psychology and counselor training programs in 1995. In 2008 Leyla returned to Turkey and founded the Pomegranate Connection program. She spent the next six years conducting research and providing training and consultation services around Turkey, finally working for the United Nations UNFPA developing programs for Syrians fleeing civil war. She is once again based in the U.S. Pacific Northwest and continues to offer training, consultation, and psychotherapy services locally and internationally. Leyla's most recent focus is on consulting and supervising therapists and other helpers who work with survivors of violence, and with individuals and families with a history of migration or cultural complications. Her website is www.leylawelkin.com. The website of the Pomegranate Connection, a non-profit organization registered in the US and delivering services internationally is: pomegranateconnection.org



Khalia Williams-O'Neal

Certified Peer Counselor, Northwest Credible Messenger Statewide Consortium

Khalia Williams-O'Neal is an Operations Manager, Project Manager, and Certified Peer Counselor dedicated to empowering Black and Brown communities. Passionate about healing, representation, and equity, she leads initiatives that address behavioral health challenges and dismantle systemic barriers. After graduating from Seattle University, Khalia joined Northwest Credible Messenger as a Project Manager for the Healthy Masculinity Project, tackling intimate partner violence through culturally responsive discussions with Black and Brown youth. As a Certified Peer Counselor and Trainer, she integrates lived experience into behavioral health spaces, centering and uplifting underrepresented voices. She also co-led the B&B CoP: Barber and Beauty Behavioral Health Project, equipping trusted community leaders with behavioral health tools to transform barbershops and salons from informal safe spaces into central hubs for healing and resource navigation. As Northwest Credible Messenger's behavioral health agency (BHA) Healing to Hope is implemented, Khalia remains deeply committed to her mission of increasing access and opportunities in Black and Brown communities—ensuring individuals can receive services from providers with a shared lived experience. Rooted in a vision of justice and wellness, Khalia continues to amplify community-driven solutions, making healing and representation not just ideals, but everyday realities.



SESSIONS

Thursday, November 6, 2025

BREAKOUT 1 A



TOPIC

Going Upstream: Universal Screeners as a Tool for Prevention

Presented by Dimitri Groce, *Director of Practice Innovation Team, Building Changes*;
Kayla Blau, *Strategic Advisor of Housing and Education, Building Changes*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

10:15 – 11:15 am, Room 201



ABOUT

Universal screeners have become a standard tool in the social service system. Upstream is a dynamic model that centers the administration of a universal screening assessment in schools in order to identify multiple intersecting risk factors of housing insecurity, homelessness, community violence and school disconnection for students and their families. In addition to the individualized and collaborative response between school-based staff and CBOs that the Upstream model facilitates, this model has shown to be successful in identifying and preventing crises before they occur for students and families, and is elevated as a best practice that creates cohesion across the education and homeless response system. In this session, participants will hear about historical successes of implementing Upstream in other communities across the country, and a current effort to pilot the model at a high school in South Seattle.



BREAKOUT 1 B



TOPIC

Legal Tools for Non-Lawyers - How a non-lawyer can protect the rights of the youth and children you are working with, including youth in our LGBTQ+ community.

Presented by Alexandra Narvaez, *Youth Defense Program Supervisor, Legal Counsel for Youth and Children*; **David Totten**, *Public Defender, Associated Counsel of the Accused*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

10:15 – 11:15 am, Room 137B



ABOUT

Many youth find themselves needing assistance to protect and utilize their basic rights. Rights to a safe home environment, supportive caregivers, and access to services and basic necessities. There are many legal tools that anyone can assist a youth in using. Child in Needs of Services (CHINS), private dependencies, to name a few. Attorneys practicing in these areas will guide you on which tools are available, how they can be useful to particular situations, and how to assist youth in using such legal tools. You don't need to be a lawyer to use these legal tools, and we are here to show you how to do so!



BREAKOUT 1 C



TOPIC

Innovative Approaches to Supporting “Girls” in the Youth Criminal Legal System: A Two-Part Series Part I – Innovating Systems on Behalf of Girls: It Starts with Understanding Who the Girls in Our System Are

Presented by **Nicholas Oakley**, *Director of Public Policy, CCYJ*;

The Honorable Melissa A. Hemstreet, *Judge, Kitsap County Superior Court*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

10:15 – 11:15 am, Room 202



ABOUT

In this two-part workshop, participants will learn about the innovative work of the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ) and Kitsap County Juvenile Court to support “girls” involved in the youth criminal legal system.

In Part I, we will provide an overview of innovative approaches through the lens of CCYJ’s four components of systems change: 1). Identify and Understand Impacted Youth; 2) Improve Practice; 3) Enhance Multisystem Coordination & Collaboration; and 4) Foster Sustainability. We will pay particular attention to the first component to better understand who the “girls” in our system are.

In Part II, we will provide an overview of a court program that has implemented these innovative approaches – Kitsap County’s Girl’s Court. In this part of the workshop, we will contrast Kitsap County’s approach to traditional approaches, emphasizing the components Improve Practice and Enhance Multisystem Coordination & Collaboration.



BREAKOUT 1 D



TOPIC

WYCA Supports Second Chances - An Opportunity for Reengaging Youth

Presented by **Elizabeth Bergmann**, *Recruiting, Mentoring, and Placement Coordinator, Washington Youth ChalleNGe Academy*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

10:15 – 11:15 am, Room 135



ABOUT

The Washington Youth ChalleNGe Academy (WYCA) is the premiere academic and life-coping intervention program for youth 15.5-18, who are behind in credit, dropped out of high school or at-risk of dropping out. A National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program in partnership with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Academy is FREE to disengaged youth residing in the State of Washington. Our vision is to provide youth at risk of dropping out (behind in credits or disengaged from school) with the opportunity to change through personal growth in positive values, life coping skills and job skills training. Helping youth get back on track toward a quality education, the program incorporates a highly structured, quasi-military format, with an emphasis on student discipline and personal responsibility. Class cycles begin every January and July.

It is the WYCA’s goal to collaborate with all school districts, juvenile departments, and community-based organizations to identify students who are ideal candidates for this opportunity from among those who have either dropped out or are at-risk of dropping out of high school. Students attend the 5 ½ month residential program and return to their school with eight to twelve credits to use towards on-time graduation. The WYCA connects graduates with volunteer Regional Advocates from their hometown and assigned Academy staff, both of whom monitor and support the graduates’ action plans for 24 months – assistance highly valued by school counselors.

BREAKOUT 1 E



TOPIC

Concerning Youth Substance Abuse Trends

Presented by **John Holbrook**, *Director of Security, Renton School District*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

10:15 – 11:15 am, Room 137A



ABOUT

I discuss substances being abused by youth in WA and across the nation. Many of which are legal for youth to purchase, and most are not known to be concerning by adults. I also discuss concerning trends around vaping and school culture as it relates. All of the issues identified relate back to the safety of students. I also discuss how young people are easily able to access substances.



BREAKOUT 2 A



TOPIC

Innovative Approaches to Supporting “Girls” in the Youth Criminal Legal System: A Two-Part Series Part II – Innovative Approaches in Action: An Overview of Kitsap County’s Girls Court Program

Presented by Nicholas Oakley, *Director of Public Policy, CCYJ*;
The Honorable Melissa A. Hemstreet, *Judge, Kitsap County Superior Court*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

2:00 – 3:00 pm, Room 202



ABOUT

In this two-part workshop, participants will learn about the innovative work of the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ) and Kitsap County Juvenile Court to support “girls” involved in the youth criminal legal system.

In Part I, we will provide an overview of innovative approaches through the lens of CCYJ’s four components of systems change: 1) Identify and Understand Impacted Youth; 2) Improve Practice; 3) Enhance Multisystem Coordination & Collaboration; and 4) Foster Sustainability. We will pay particular attention to the first component to better understand who the “girls” in our system are.

In Part II, we will provide an overview of a court program that has implemented these innovative approaches – Kitsap County’s Girl’s Court. In this part of the workshop, we will contrast Kitsap County’s approach to traditional approaches, emphasizing the components Improve Practice and Enhance Multisystem Coordination & Collaboration.

BREAKOUT 2 B



TOPIC

Community Engagement Board Guidance & Implementation

Presented by Vicki Wood, *Attendance & Truancy Program Supervisor*; **Alicia Flinn**, *Attendance Specialist*; **Aaron Helenihi**, *Student Engagement Specialist*; **Jason Castro**, *Assistant Director of Student Services and Athletics*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

2:00 – 3:00 pm, Room 137B



ABOUT

An overview of OSPI’s latest guidance on Community Engagement Boards highlighting the eight modules on the Truancy Supports and Resources webpage. In collaboration with Evergreen Public Schools who will present on their experience with offering Community Engagement Boards.



BREAKOUT 2 C



TOPIC

Healing 2 Hope: The Consortium Approach to Healing-Centered Behavioral Health

Presented by Jason Clark, *Director/Founder, Northwest Credible Messenger Statewide Consortium*; **Khalia Williams-O'Neal**, *Certified Peer Counselor, Northwest Credible Messenger Statewide Consortium*; **Johnny Cheng**, *Credible Messenger Ambassador*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

2:00 – 3:00 pm, Room 201



ABOUT

As a statewide consortium of partners, Northwest Credible Messenger work collectively to address the needs of youth impacted by community violence, juvenile legal system involvement, chronic absenteeism, and unstable housing. Our approach centers on Peer Credible Messenger models—mentors with lived experience—integrated with behavioral health strategies that address trauma, build resilience, and promote healing.

This workshop will share how statewide collaboration, culturally responsive practices, and evidence-based interventions come together to break cycles of harm. Participants will explore practical tools to address root causes of at-risk behaviors and create sustainable partnerships between schools, community organizations, courts, and behavioral health providers.

Through real-world case studies, facilitated discussions, and interactive activities, attendees will leave with concrete strategies to strengthen youth–adult relationships, address underlying behavioral health needs, and foster systemic change.



BREAKOUT 2 D



TOPIC

Community Circles: Rooted Relationships

Presented by **Aaron Norikane**, *Facilitator, BELONG Partners*; **Roxana Amaral**, *Director of Strategic Partnerships, BELONG Partners*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

2:00 – 3:00 pm, Room 135



ABOUT

Are you a community member who values youth voice, restorative practices, and growing equitable and connected communities? Our workshop will share some of the foundational barriers to seeing mistakes as opportunities to learn; help adults transition to a solution-focused community mindset; and share a scaffolded process to implement community circles focused on building community through problem-solving. Our vision of liberation prioritizes the power of a collective community over the limitations of an individualistic society.



BREAKOUT 2 E



TOPIC

Community Conversations in Support of Elementary Student Attendance, Engagement, and Success

Presented by *Thao Vo, Ph.D.*, Research Associate, Washington State University; *Laura Pires Gifford*, Doctoral Student, Washington State University; *Brian French, Ph.D.*, Regent Professor, Washington State University; *Alexis Downey*, Doctoral Student, Washington State University; *Paul Strand*, Professor, Washington State University



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

2:00 – 3:00 pm, Room 215C



ABOUT

This session offers a facilitated space for school administrators, teachers and other professionals to engage in community conversations about the challenges, strategies, and successes of working with elementary students. The Washington Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students (WARNS) team will facilitate these conversations, through a World Café method, which entails prompted small group conversations among professionals. Participants will explore practical strategies for navigating how assessment data can be used not only to track outcomes but also to inform collaborative, student-centered, and community-grounded interventions. An overarching question is, if you could change student and family engagement in the schools, what would you change? Possible small group discussion prompts include: (a) what unique challenges arise when trying to engage elementary students and their families; (b) what approaches successfully engage parents of elementary school-age students; (c) what can we learn about attendance and school engagement from young students' lived experiences, and how could that information be used; (d) how might we leverage data to facilitate collaboration between teachers and administrators to effectively engage with elementary school students and their families?



BREAKOUT 2 F



TOPIC

Part I – Principles for Working Across Cultural Differences

Presented by **Leyla Welkin, Ph.D., LMHS, PLLC**, *Clinical Cross-Cultural Psychotherapist*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

2:00 – 3:00 pm, Room 137A



ABOUT

I-Introduction: Who am I? Who are you?

II-Why should we work across cultural differences?

1) Differences and collaboration; a. No longer optional, this is the norm; b. The challenge of awareness and respect; i. awareness exercise- what is culture?

2) Power issues; a. ADDRESSING Model and US power structures; i. Exercise to identify your positions;

III-Principles to Guide cross-cultural collaboration; a. Know your strengths, know your limits; b. Listen!; c. Communicate your strengths and your limits; d. Define the goals of the system; e. Define the roles of all parts of the system; f. Act from praxis

VI- How do we know if collaboration is working?; a. Look for what went right. Acknowledge what went wrong. Build on strengths.; b. All parts must thrive - as defined in their own terms.; c. Healthy systems increase in complexity and resiliency.;

V-Applications: closing exercise i-Exercise: Applying this in your own work.

Closing

BREAKOUT 3 A



TOPIC

Community Engagement Board Guidance & Implementation

Presented by **Presented by Vicki Wood**, *Attendance & Truancy Program Supervisor*; **Alicia Flinn**, *Attendance Specialist*; **Aaron Helenihi**, *Student Engagement Specialist*; **Jason Castro**, *Assistant Director of Student Services and Athletics*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

3:30 – 4:30 pm, Room 137B



ABOUT

An overview of OSPI’s latest guidance on Community Engagement Boards highlighting the eight modules on the Truancy Supports and Resources webpage. In collaboration with Evergreen Public Schools who will present on their experience with offering Community Engagement Boards.



BREAKOUT 3 B



TOPIC

Reimagining Resilience: Understanding Trauma & Creating Safer Environments

Presented by **Aaron Norikane**, *Facilitator, BELONG Partners*; **Roxana Amaral**, *Director of Strategic Partnerships, BELONG Partners*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

3:30 – 4:30 pm, Room 135



ABOUT

“I’m Safe. I Belong. I Matter.” Every young person needs to feel this way so they can learn and thrive. Today’s communities face the challenge of supporting young people who are affected by the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), as well as the ongoing stressors of environmental factors such as the pandemic and systemic racism.

In this interactive workshop, we will explore how brain science and restorative practices can be used to create safe and inclusive spaces where all youth can succeed.

We introduce foundational concepts like the ACEs study and Adlerian psychology to provide theory, alongside practical strategies for navigating power dynamics, strengthening relationships, and promoting equity in our communities.



BREAKOUT 3 C



TOPIC

From Home to Neighborhood: How Domestic Violence Impacts Community Violence

Presented by Alisha Guthery, *Visiting Professor/Founder of BRIDGES, Palo Alto University/BRIDGES*; **Jeremy Crowe**, *Restorative Justice Programs Supervisor, King County Superior Court*; **Sandra Shanahan**, *Program Manager at the Regional Domestic Violence Firearms Enforcement Unit (RDVFEU), the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

3:30 – 4:30 pm, Room 201



ABOUT

Exposure to domestic violence (DV) during childhood is a significant predictor of later aggressive behavior, criminal involvement, and perpetration of interpersonal violence. Children who witness DV are more likely to develop maladaptive coping strategies, normalize violence as a conflict resolution tool, and face long-term mental health impacts such as post-traumatic stress, anxiety, and depression (Perry & Szalowitz, 2017). When domestic violence is combined with other hardships, such as child maltreatment, poverty, and community disinvestment, the risks to youth increase significantly. In these environments, young people are more likely to associate with peers who engage in risky or harmful behaviors, be exposed to neighborhood violence, and have limited access to supportive services (Bundock et al., 2020; Finkelhor et al., 2015). This confluence of adversities often shapes a developmental pathway in which vulnerability in childhood progresses into Adolescent Dating Violence (ADV). ADV is both a continuation of earlier trauma and a predictor of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in adulthood, with patterns of escalation and chronicity often intensifying over time (Gomez, 2011; Gillum, 2017). Critically, homicide is the second leading cause of death for adolescents aged 15–19, with a high proportion of these deaths related to intimate partner violence and most often perpetrated by another adolescent (Adhia et al., 2019). Firearm access magnifies these risks: in homes with a history of DV, the presence of a firearm increases the risk of homicide for women by fivefold, and for youth, it is linked to higher rates of suicide and unintentional shootings (Azrael et al., 2018; Campbell et al., 2003). When adolescents are exposed to DV and also have access to firearms, the likelihood of severe community violence escalates dramatically. This intergenerational cycle of harm extends beyond intimate relationships, spilling into peer and community settings, where learned behavioral patterns and unresolved trauma fuel broader patterns of violence. Addressing these risks requires early, trauma-informed interventions, such as Family Intervention and Restorative Services (FIRS) and BRIDGES, that foster accountability, emotional regulation, and nonviolent conflict resolution, and that can provide immediate safety for youth and families. This presentation will examine the developmental trajectory from childhood exposure to domestic violence through adolescent dating violence and into adult intimate partner violence, highlighting how these interconnected forms of harm contribute to community violence. Drawing from current research and lived experiences, we will explore the neurobiological, relational, and structural factors that perpetuate the cycle of violence, including the role of firearms in increasing lethality. Participants will be introduced to two intervention models, FIRS and BRIDGES, that disrupt these cycles by addressing trauma, fostering accountability, and building skills for nonviolent conflict resolution.



BREAKOUT 3 D



TOPIC

Part II – Principles for Working Across Cultural Differences

Presented by Leyla Welkin, Ph.D., LMHS, PLLC, *Clinical Cross-Cultural Psychotherapist*



WHEN

Thursday, November 6, 2025

3:30 – 4:30 pm, Room 137A



ABOUT

I-Introduction: Who am I? Who are you?

II-Why should we work across cultural differences?

1) Differences and collaboration; a. No longer optional, this is the norm; b. The challenge of awareness and respect; i. awareness exercise- what is culture?

2) Power issues; a. ADDRESSING Model and US power structures; i. Exercise to identify your positions;

III-Principles to Guide cross-cultural collaboration; a. Know your strengths, know your limits; b. Listen!; c. Communicate your strengths and your limits; d. Define the goals of the system; e. Define the roles of all parts of the system; f. Act from praxis

VI- How do we know if collaboration is working?; a. Look for what went right. Acknowledge what went wrong. Build on strengths.; b. All parts must thrive - as defined in their own terms.; c. Healthy systems increase in complexity and resiliency.;

V-Applications: closing exercise i-Exercise: Applying this in your own work.

Closing



Friday, November 7, 2025

BREAKOUT 1 A


TOPIC

Uncuffed: Breaking the System’s Casting Call

Presented by Dr. Conrad Webster, CEO, Black Boy Heal


WHEN

Friday, November 7, 2025

11:45 am – 12:45 pm, Room 201


ABOUT

Black boys are too often cast into roles they didn’t audition for, gladiators, threats, statistics, by systems that thrive on fear, control, and survivalist narratives. This workshop challenges that casting. Uncuffed: Breaking the System’s Casting Call introduces Strength-Centered Structural Engagement (SCSE), an innovative, evidence-informed framework designed to recenter youth voice, community healing, and structural accountability in juvenile justice reform.

Focusing on youth impacted by community violence, legal system involvement, and unstable housing, this workshop identifies the intersecting challenges of marginalization and state neglect. Participants will explore how these young people, particularly Black males, are not only misrepresented but systematically failed. Drawing from models proven effective in major U.S. cities, we will explore:

- Credible Messenger & Mentorship Programs
- Multisystemic and Functional Family Therapy (MST & FFT)
- Cognitive Behavioral Interventions paired with Community Mentorship
- Tech-driven Diversion Tools for Equitable Service Access
- Community-Led Coalitions like Communities That Care (CTC)

Through interactive design labs, attendees, policymakers, law enforcement, healthcare leaders, and youth advocates, will build cross-sector partnerships grounded in King County’s local assets. Together, we will begin to rewrite the script: one where Black boys are no longer criminalized characters, but protagonists in a system built to serve, not sentence.



BREAKOUT 1 B



TOPIC

A Brief Introduction to the Labor Trafficking of Minors

Presented by **Morgan Silverman**, *Senior Director of Innovation, CCYJ*;
Emily Nicewonger, *Associate Director of Innovation, CCYJ*



WHEN

Friday, November 7, 2025

11:45 am – 12:45 pm, Room 202



ABOUT

This training will provide an overview of the essential knowledge and tools available to identify and support young people experiencing labor trafficking. In this training, participants can expect to develop a general understanding of what labor trafficking is and who is most impacted; explore some indicators that may point to the presence of labor trafficking; and learn about beginner strategies in working with survivors.

BREAKOUT 1 C



TOPIC

I AM Foster KID - Generational System Impacts

Presented by **Angela Cruze Boldt**, *Policy and System Consultant, I AM Foster KID*



WHEN

Friday, November 7, 2025

11:45 am – 12:45 pm, Room 137A



ABOUT

I AM Foster KID Founder; Angela CruzeBoldt will share her story coming from a 2nd generation system lived expert. Story telling; about her father & uncle who were foster to prison inmates. How gang violence impacted her family and institutions shaped the livelihood of her twin sister and herself. The Storytelling experience will be authentic and raw. As a multiracial family the pieces of impact will pave a new perspective on how foster to prison impacts the next generation on kind.



BREAKOUT 1 D


TOPIC


WHEN


ABOUT

Reimagining Safety to Foster Belonging, Trust, and Connection

Presented by Dr. Monica Vavilala MD, *Professor of Anesthesiology and Pediatrics, University of Washington*;

Susan Seabrooks, *Doctoral Candidate in Public Health*;

Zaher Kmail, *Professor of Statistics, University of Washington Tacoma*; **Marcus Stubblefield**, *Criminal Justice Policy & Strategy Manager, King County*

Friday, November 7, 2025

11:45 am – 12:45 pm, Room 137B

School safety remains a critical priority for students, families, educators, and administrators. However, navigating competing philosophies, interests, and pressures often makes meaningful progress difficult. The Collaborative Leadership Addressing School Safety (CLASS) initiative, a partnership between the University of Washington and King County (Executive’s Office, Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, and Public Health’s Regional Office of Gun Violence Prevention), supports school districts in building a shared vision and coordinated strategies for improving safety.

Grounded in the CDC’s Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) framework, CLASS promotes a holistic and collaborative approach that strengthens collective efficacy, aligns cross-system efforts, and supports inclusive, community-centered solutions. From prevention to intervention and re-entry, this work addresses the interconnected challenges schools face, including student mental health, community violence, digital safety, and inequitable discipline practices.

This session will explore how coordinated safety efforts can move beyond compliance to create environments where all students, particularly those with the greatest needs, feel safe, supported, and able to thrive. Participants will engage with actionable strategies that center family and community voices, integrate restorative practices and holistic threat assessments, and align safety planning with equity and student well-being. Digital safety will also be explored as a key component of comprehensive safety strategies, reflecting the evolving ways technology impacts student behavior, communication, and risk. This session will also emphasize the importance of fostering a culture of attendance and belonging, recognizing that consistent engagement in school is both a key safety factor and a reflection of whether students feel connected and valued.

Attendees will leave with practical tools, cross-sector insights, and strengthened approaches for building trust, collaboration, and resilience within their school communities. Developing a safer school environment can be strengthened by leveraging existing resources through prioritization, effective communication, coordination and communication among stakeholders.

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