

Presenter Biographies

Dave Akerly

Dave Akerly is the Director of Communications (acting) for the Michigan Department of Human Services. Before being promoted to his current duties, Akerly was the Director of Public Relations and Marketing for DHS. He has been a part of the implementation, branding and marketing of a number of key DHS initiatives, including Pathways to Potential and the Partnership, Accountability, Training and Hope (PATH) program. He also served two terms on the board of directors for Highfields, a residential/community based resource for troubled juveniles and their families, and founded their holiday giving campaign in 2004 which has served more than 3,500 children to date.

Prior to joining the State of Michigan and DHS, Akerly spent more than 20 years as a weeknight anchor for the CBS affiliate in Lansing. During his tenure, he reported and covered stories from around the world, and right down the street, including pieces from Germany and the EU; the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast and New Orleans; and efforts by a Michigan man to help change the lives for orphans in an area of Mexico now ravaged by drug cartel violence.

The Emmy-nominated Akerly has been honored more than 20 times by both the Michigan Association of Broadcasters and the Associated Press. He is a Fellow with the RIAS Berlin Kommission. Akerly is a sports nut and reporter who has covered the World Series, numerous Final Four's and nearly every major sporting spectacle in North America. His favorite event is the annual Army-Navy football game, favorite team is Tottenham Hotspur F.C. of the English Premier League and he likes golf, though the feeling isn't mutual. Akerly is married, has four wonderful children and two spoiled German Shepherd Dogs.

Honorable Dorene S. Allen

Judge Allen attended the University of Michigan, Highest Honors – 1976, and went on to earn a juris doctor from Michigan State University – Detroit College of Law, Cum Laude – February 1981. After a successful private practice career involving probate issues, abuse & neglect cases, divorce and civil litigation, Judge Allen was elected to the Probate bench in 2001 and re-elected in 2006. Judge Allen has participated in a number of local and statewide committees and initiatives. Most recently she was appointed by Governor Snyder to chair the Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice. Please refer below to a list of affiliations and awards.

Sergio Cira-Reyes

For the last three years, Sergio Cira-Reyes has worked with the Kent School Service Network Team, to bring the Community School Model to the next level at Sibley Elementary. Sergio spent eight years working with youth involved with the juvenile justice system at Wedgwood Christian Services while translating for their families in the Kent County Courts System, with Accurate Interpreters LLC. The unfortunate reality faced by youth once they have reached this threshold is what led Sergio to move to the prevention side, currently as the Community School Coordinator at Sibley Elementary. Building strong partnerships with the community, which are centered around the students' needs, and leveraging these partnerships to eliminate their barriers, has proven to be a winning model in the journey to educate and empower our youth. Sergio Cira-Reyes is currently employed through D.A Blodgett – St. John's in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Christopher Corbat

Christopher Corbat is a Success Coach with the Midland County Department of Human Services, dividing his time between Floyd Elementary (Bullock Creek School District) and Eastlawn Elementary (Midland Public Schools). He is also a graduate of Saginaw Valley State University. Chris has enjoyed a long-standing presence within the Midland area schools as a football and baseball coach at both the middle and high school levels. Throughout his coaching career, Chris has built strong relationships with community stakeholders, which has helped him quickly develop a strong Community School Model within Midland County. When he's not busy working, Chris' wife and two small children keep him on his toes, and he has never met a golf course he didn't like.

Maura D. Corrigan

Governor Rick Snyder named Maura D. Corrigan director of the Michigan Department of Human Services on Jan. 6, 2011. Corrigan previously served as a judge of the Michigan Court of Appeals and justice of the Supreme Court for 19 years. She served on the Michigan Supreme Court beginning in 1999, including four years from 2001 – 2005 as chief justice.

She graduated from Marygrove College and the University of Detroit-Mercy School of Law. She then became a law clerk to Michigan Court of Appeals Judge John Gillis, a Wayne County assistant prosecutor, and an assistant U.S. attorney in Detroit. She was first appointed chief of appeals and later, chief assistant U.S. attorney – becoming the first woman to hold that position. Director Corrigan became a partner at the Detroit law firm of Plunkett & Cooney in 1989. From 1992 to 1998, she served on the Michigan Court of Appeals -- the last two years as chief judge. Director Corrigan participates in numerous community and professional activities.

Paul Elam

Paul Elam, Ph.D., is a skilled researcher and team builder recognized for his ability to assist government, academic, community, and philanthropic organizations with pressing sociological issues. He received his doctorate in family and child ecology with minors in criminology, community services, and measurement and methods; master's degree in criminal justice and urban studies; and bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Michigan State University. His work includes extensive research on disproportionate treatment of African American youths in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Dr. Elam is PPA's lead researcher for the Michigan Coalition for Race Equity, a statewide alliance studying racial inequities and developing strategies for policy makers, civic leaders, and civil servants. He is also managing a project with the Michigan Department of Human Services' Bureau of Juvenile Justice and the Michigan State Court Administrator's Office to help state and local governments prevent and control juvenile delinquency and ensure compliance with the four core requirements of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. He has also worked at Michigan State University in the Departments of Urban Affairs, Criminal Justice, and Family and Child Ecology, where he assisted with the study and instruction of crime, juvenile delinquency, research methodology, multiculturalism, demography, urbanism, and multicultural communication.

Mike Flanagan

A stalwart of education leadership and reform in Michigan, Mike Flanagan pushes local, state, and federal policy to ReImagine instruction for all students. Mike has directed the Michigan Department of Education since May 2005 and chairs the State Board of Education. With 30 years of leadership as a local, regional, and state superintendent, Mike brings decisive and practical vision to re-building a system that develops stronger educators and higher-achieving students.

As State Superintendent, Mike advises the State Board of Education, the Governor, and the state Legislature regarding public education in Michigan. He also has served as the Executive Director of the statewide associations that represent Michigan public school superintendents and intermediate school districts in the state.

For seven years, Mike Flanagan served as the Superintendent of the Wayne Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA). Prior to that, he was Superintendent of the Farmington/Farmington Hills School District in Michigan for five years. He is past chairperson of the Education Alliance of Michigan, a nonprofit coalition of leading parent, business, and education associations; and past president of the National County Superintendents Association.

Superintendent Flanagan has degrees from the University of Notre Dame and Eastern Michigan University. He is married to Anna and has three married children: Mike, Brian, and Christa and grandchildren: Alysha, Ella, Avery, Will, and Landen.

Steve Goodman

Steve Goodman is director of Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (miblsi.cenmi.org), a Michigan Department of Education funded project that develops capacity to implement a multi-tiered system of supports in over 620 schools. He is also director of Michigan's State Personnel Development Grant funded by Office of Special Education Programs, U. S. Department of Education. His interests include an integrated approach to behavior and academic supports, and an organizational systems approach to fidelity of implementation that endures over time. He has been a classroom teacher and teacher consultant.

Kyle L. Guerrant

Mr. Guerrant has been a strong leader and advocate in youth health, development and safety issues in community-based non-profits, local schools, and state government for over 12 years. Currently, he is the Director of the Office of School Support Services at the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). Mr. Guerrant and his team are charged with improving the health and educational outcomes of Michigan students through the implementation of Coordinated School Health initiatives. His office has a broad set of responsibilities that include USDA Child Nutrition Programs, primary care, and mental health services, as well as bullying prevention, health and physical education. Previously, Mr. Guerrant served as the Supervisor of the Coordinated School Health and Safety Programs Unit at MDE, and as the Acting Manager of the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program at the Michigan Department of Community Health. Kyle earned a Bachelor's (BA) in Psychology (Child Development) from Long Island University, and a Master's in Social Work (MSW) from the University of Michigan. He has served on numerous organizational boards ranging in focus from youth homelessness to adolescent sexual health. Kyle was also selected as a fellow in Michigan State University's Educational Policy Fellowship Program.

Bob Higgins

Safe Schools Consultant, MDE, CSHSP unit. Mr. Higgins has been in education for 36 years, first, as a teacher and an administrator in both public and private schools and later as a consultant and program manager for the Calhoun ISD. He is an experienced trainer in prevention programming with specialties in organizational change process, healthy youth development, critical incident stress debriefing, data management, pandemic planning, and gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth issues. He has presented at local, State, regional, and national conferences. Bob is a certified prevention consultant through the Michigan Certification Board of Addiction Professionals and an internationally certified prevention specialist through the International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium. In his capacity at MDE, he also served as the Project Director of the State Data Management Grant from the US ED, as the co-project manager of the Sexual Minority Youth Project, and is a member of the Crisis Management Team for the Department.

Dr. Daniel Keating

Dr. Daniel Keating is Professor of Psychology, Psychiatry and Pediatrics, and Research Professor in the Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, at the University of Michigan. His work has focused on social disparities in developmental health, and on their biodevelopmental sources, as well as on child and adolescent development more generally. He has served on the faculties at the University of Minnesota, University of Maryland, and the University of Toronto, and as a Visiting Scientist at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin, Germany. He has published 9 books and has over 200 papers in scientific journals and scholarly collections.

Justice Mary Beth Kelly

Justice Mary Beth Kelly was elected to the Michigan Supreme Court in November 2010 and will serve a term that ends December 31, 2018. She served on the Wayne County Circuit Court for 11 years, having been appointed by Governor John Engler in 1999; she was elected to the court in 2000 and re-elected in 2002 and 2008. In 2002, the Michigan Supreme Court appointed her the chief judge of the Wayne Circuit Court, making her the first woman to lead that bench. She served as chief judge through 2007, focusing on budget deficit reduction, timely dockets, jail overcrowding, and the court's Family Division. Under her leadership, the Family Division doubled in size to devote more judicial resources to cases concerning children and families. She also led efforts to improve the racial diversity of the Wayne County jury system, working with the National Center for State Courts to gather data and recommend county-wide solutions. Her leadership on this issue has been recognized by The Detroit News. She has been praised as "one of the most effective judges in the history of the Michigan Court system" by then-Chief Justice Clifford Taylor.

Justice Kelly has received numerous honors for her judicial leadership, including the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Council's Distinguished Leadership Award. For her work on children's issues, she was named Vista Maria's Child Advocate of the Year and was also recognized by the Ennis Center for Children as Advocate of the Year. Justice Kelly serves as an advisor to Vista Maria and to the University of Michigan's Detroit Center for Family Advocacy. She has served as an adjunct law professor at the University of Detroit-Mercy Law School. Before becoming a judge, Justice Kelly was a successful commercial litigation partner with the law firm Dickinson Wright, which she joined in 1987. She earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Michigan at Dearborn and her law degree from the University of Notre Dame Law School. Justice Kelly is an active member of Sacred Heart-Grosse Ile parish where she has taught Catechism; she has also chaired the parish's Youth Commission and served on the pastoral council. Justice Kelly resides on Grosse Ile with her teen-aged son. In addition to her professional and community achievements, Justice Kelly is an avid runner and continues to run competitively.

Diana LaRue

Diana LaRue, MA, LLMSW, has worked with Children and Families in the Court System for over 20 years. She is currently the Court Services and Foster Care Coordinator for the 42nd Circuit Court - Family Division. Diana coordinates Truancy and Incurability Intakes, facilitates Evidence Base Programs including BSFT Family Therapy, Aggression Replacement Training (ART), Thinking for a Change (T4C) and Common Sense Parenting (CSP) Classes for the Court. Diana also manages the Court's Specialized Foster Care Program. She was previously employed as an Intensive Juvenile Probation Officer and Youth Development Worker in the Midland County Detention and Day Treatment Programs, and worked as an Outpatient Therapist for Family and Children Services. She earned a Master's degree in Clinical Social Work from Michigan State University and Master's degree in Criminal Justice from Saginaw Valley State University.

Justice Bridget Mary McCormack

Justice Bridget Mary McCormack joined the Michigan Supreme Court in January 2013. Before her election to the Court in November 2012, she was a law professor and dean at the University of Michigan Law School. Since joining the Court, Justice McCormack continues to teach at the Law School as a Lecturer. Justice McCormack is a graduate of the New York University Law School, where she was a Root-Tilden scholar and won the Anne Petluck Poses Prize in Clinical Advocacy. She spent the first five years of her legal career in New York, first with the Legal Aid Society and then at the Office of the Appellate Defender, representing over 1,000 clients in New York's trial and appellate courts. In 1996, she became a faculty fellow at the Yale Law School.

In 1998, she joined the University of Michigan Law School faculty. At Michigan Law, she taught criminal law, legal ethics, and various clinical courses. Her scholarship focused on the professional benefits of clinical legal education. She also created new clinics at the law school, including a Domestic Violence Clinic and a Pediatric Health Advocacy Clinic. In 2002, she was made Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs. Responsible for the continuing development of the law school's practical education, she continued to expand the clinical offerings at Michigan Law School, launching a Mediation Clinic, a Low Income Taxpayer Clinic, an International Transactions Clinic, a Human Trafficking Clinic, a Juvenile Justice Clinic, and an Entrepreneurship Clinic. In her capacity as professor and associate dean, she conducted and supervised many types of civil and criminal litigation at all levels of the state and federal courts. The University of Michigan Law School's clinical programs are now recognized nationally as one of the best places to be trained as a lawyer.

In 2008, then-Associate Dean McCormack cofounded the Michigan Innocence Clinic, in which students represent wrongfully convicted Michiganders. The clinic has exonerated seven people so far, and has shined a light on the important justice issues underlying wrongful conviction. In 2010, McCormack won the "Justice for All" Award for the Clinic's work, and in 2011 the Washtenaw County Bar Association gave her the "Patriot Award." In 2012, she won the Cooley Law School's "Distinguished Brief Award" for the best brief filed in the Michigan Supreme Court during the term. Also in 2012, the Justice Caucus presented her with the Millie Jeffrey Award and the Washtenaw County Women Lawyers recognized her with the Mary Foster Award. In 2013, Justice McCormack was honored with the Hon. Kaye Tertzag Purple Sport Court Award. Justice McCormack currently participates with a number of professional organizations including the American Bar Association Access to Justice committee, the American Bar Association Working Group on Pro Bono and Public Service, the advisory board of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts, the judicial elections committee of the National Association of Women Judges, the State Bar of Michigan Planning Committee for Legal Services, and as a board member of the National Board of Legal Specialty Certification.

Justice McCormack is married to Steven Croley, also a lawyer and law professor, currently on leave from the University of Michigan Law School to serve as Deputy Counsel to the President in the Office of White House Counsel. They have four children in the Ann Arbor public schools, and enjoy frequent family trips to west Michigan.

Elizabeth Birr Moje

Elizabeth Birr Moje is Associate Dean for Research and Community Engagement and Arthur F. Thurnau Professor in the School of Education at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Moje also serves as a Faculty Associate in the University's Institute for Social Research, and a Faculty Affiliate in Latino/a Studies. Moje teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in secondary and adolescent literacy, literacy and cultural theory, and qualitative and mixed research methods. Her current research focuses on communities and schools in Detroit, Michigan. Her research interests revolve around the intersection among home, school, and peer group literacies and texts and on how to use those intersections to support student learning in and out of school. She also engages in literacy professional development with teachers in Detroit and around the world. These research and professional development interests stem from the start of her career when she taught history, biology, and drama at high schools in Colorado and Michigan.

MaryAnn Prisichenko

MaryAnn Prisichenko is a 30 year veteran of public education. She received her bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University with a major in Child Development and a minor in Reading. She later earned her Master's in Administration from San Diego State University and holds an English degree as a Second Language endorsement. She spent 15 years teaching in San Diego, California leading Child Study and literacy teams. As a principal in Grand Rapids Public Schools, MaryAnn led a team of dedicated staff to successfully turnaround Sibley Elementary from the lowest 5% performing schools in Grand Rapids Public to the top 5%. As part of the Kent Schools Services Network, Sibley also became a model for a Community School offering mental health, social services, and significantly increasing daily attendance rates for its students. As a consultant, MaryAnn continues her lifelong commitment to education.

Lori Pritchard

Lori Pritchard holds an undergraduate degree from Grand Valley State University in Psychology and Special Education. She also has a Masters' Degree in Special education, from Central Michigan University, and a Masters' Degree in Administration, from Grand Valley. She began her career in 1995 working as a teacher in the Partial Hospitalization Program for Psychiatric Youth at Bay Medical Hospital, in Bay City, Michigan. In 1997 she started working as a teacher for adjudicated youth at the Midland County Juvenile Care Center. Shortly after, she went on to become a Special Education Administrator and later, an Assistant Principal at Midland High School. Since the Fall of 2010, she continues her work as an Assistant Principal at Northeast Middle School (enrollment of approximately 1000 students). Lori is originally from Traverse City, Michigan currently residing in Midland, Michigan with her husband, Ryan and their 5 year old son, Porter.

Joseph P. Ryan

Joseph Ryan, Ph.D. Dr. Ryan is an Associate Professor at the University of Michigan's School of Social work and a Faculty Associate with the Institute for Social Research. He has approximately twenty years of juvenile justice and child welfare practice and research experience. Prior to doctoral studies, Dr. Ryan worked in a variety of child welfare and juvenile justice facilities in the State of Michigan including Boysville (now Holy Cross), Starr Commonwealth and Huron Services for Youth.

He currently serves as the PI for two Title IV-E waiver demonstrations (Illinois and Michigan). Dr. Ryan is also a co-PI (with Dr. Rosemary Sarri) on a statewide study (Michigan) of youth moving from child welfare to juvenile and adult corrections. Dr. Ryan is firmly committed to developing University, State and County research partnerships – with a specific focus on gathering and utilizing empirical evidence for the development of effective policies and practices. Dr. Ryan received an MSW from the University of Michigan and a doctorate from the University of Chicago.

Governor Rick Snyder

Rick Snyder ran for office with a pledge to “reinvent Michigan.” Since becoming Michigan’s 48th governor on Jan. 1, 2011, Snyder has worked with his trademark “relentless positive action” to do just that.

Michigan has eliminated its \$1.5 billion deficit and delivered balanced budgets for the second straight year. Snyder has worked with the Legislature to bring greater simplicity, fairness and efficiency to the state’s tax structure, pay down Michigan’s long-term obligations, and enact numerous other meaningful reforms that have made Michigan the nation’s “comeback state.”

This is Snyder’s first foray into politics. He earned three degrees from the University of Michigan, all by age 23. Snyder then worked as a tax accountant at Coopers & Lybrand. He later joined Gateway, helping it to expand to a Fortune 500 company, before forming his own venture capital firm in Ann Arbor. Snyder and his wife, Sue, have three children.

Sheryl Thompson

Sheryl Thompson is currently the Deputy Director of Field Operations Administration in Lansing where she oversees policy and allocation implementation in the 83 counties as well as Project lead on new initiatives such as the Pathways to Potential which is the DHS new business model. Sheryl has been with the Department of Human Services for over twenty six years and was previously the Genesee County director before being appointed to her current position. Sheryl has over 20 years of experience in Child Welfare- CPS, FC, Assistant Payments, Child Support program areas.

Ms. Thompson was also the interim Director of Outstate Operations prior to the bifurcation and was the first Child Welfare Manager for the 78 non-urban counties as the consent decree was implemented in 2008. Sheryl has a bachelor of Social Work degree and a Masters in Administration from Central Michigan University. Sheryl has a passion for working with those less fortunate and is committed to breaking the cycle of generational poverty by empowering and educating our families.

Frank E. Vandervort

Frank E. Vandervort is Clinical Professor of Law at the University of Michigan Law School where he teaches in the Child Advocacy Law Clinic and is the Co-Director of the Juvenile Justice Clinic. He is the President-Elect of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children. Professor Vandervort has represented children in juvenile court proceedings from more than twenty years, and writes and speaks frequently on legal issues involving minors.

Abbey VanHoeven

Abbey VanHoeven is a current out-stationed DHS case manager in Kent County and part of the Kent School Services Network. She has been with DHS for over 10 years and has spent the last 6 years providing DHS services and barrier removal for at-risk students with attendance concerns. In this role she has found her niche and has been an important contributor to a very successful team under the KSSN community school model.