

# 2022 Children's Mental Health Advocacy Conference

## CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

**Steven Almazán**, is the K12 Education Senior Program Manager at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the nation's oldest, largest, and most diverse civil and human rights coalition. Steven collaborates and communicates with coalition partners in national, state, and local civil rights organizations centered on policy proposals and policy remedies that advance educational equity and protect civil rights for all students in K12 education, specifically addressing barriers for students of color, students with disabilities, English learners, LGBTQI+ youth, immigrant students, students from families with low incomes, and students at the intersections of those identities.

**Caroline Cole**, is a co-host of Trapped in Treatment and Co-Founder of the non-profit, [Unsilenced](#). As a multi-hyphenate survivor, advocate, and graduate of Rise Justice Labs, Caroline brings a wealth of knowledge and interesting perspective through the lens of her own lived experience. She has been a central force behind the Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act which brought her to the White House and Capitol Hill.

**Morgan Craven, J.D.**, is IDRA's National Director of Policy, Advocacy and Community Engagement. She supports the integration and coordination of national and state policy reform efforts impacting school discipline and safety, school finance, education for emergent bilingual students, preparation and access to higher education, and community-led, culturally-sustaining schools. In addition to crafting community-centered policy positions and advocacy strategies, Morgan spearheads IDRA's critical work to expand access to policymaking spaces for impacted communities, particularly for students and families of color, families with limited incomes, and recent immigrant populations.

**Ross W. Greene, Ph.D.**, is Founding Director of the non-profit Lives in the Balance ([www.livesinthebalance.org](http://www.livesinthebalance.org)) and originator of the evidence-based Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS) model, as described in his books *The Explosive Child*, *Lost at School*, *Lost & Found*, and *Raising Human Beings*. He served on the faculty at Harvard Medical School for over 20 years and is now adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychology at Virginia Tech and adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Science at University of Technology Sydney in Australia. Dr. Greene developed and executive produced the award-winning documentary film, *The Kids We Lose*, and continues to consult to parents, schools, and therapeutic facilities throughout the world.

**Senator Sara Gelsler (D-OR)** is Chair of the Senate Human Services Committee and also serves on the Judiciary Committee, Education Committee, Mental Health Committee and Joint Transportation Committee. In 2010, President Barack Obama appointed Sara to the National Council on Disability. Sara was featured as one of Time Magazine's "Person of the Year" Silence Breakers in 2017, was honored by the Portland City Club with the Oregon Courage Award in 2019, received the Oregon Center for Women's Leadership Transforming Policy Award in 2018, and was given the Voice for Justice Award by the National Crime Victim Law Institute in 2017.

**Paris Hilton**, is a pioneer in television, podcasting and NFTs and an innovator in building businesses, social media and celebrity branding. Hilton revealed the abuses she suffered as a teenager within the Troubled Teen Industry and has helped pass seven U.S. state laws aimed at protecting youth and reforming facilities. In partnership with Breaking Code Silence, Hilton has helped develop the Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act that will positively impact 120,000 youth annually. (Pre-recorded remarks)

**Ruth Idakula** is the Program Director of the [Dignity in Schools Campaign](#). Ruth's background is in community organizing and she is also an educator around issues of racial justice/equity and education justice.

**Senator Robert Jackson (D-NY)** has taken on difficult fights on behalf of New Yorkers and never backed down: in his first elected position as School Board President where he launched the Campaign for Fiscal Equity school funding lawsuit, walked 150 miles to Albany to highlight the cause, and won a court judgment that awarded \$16 billion for NYC public schools; in his 12 years on the City Council where he sponsored the Small Business Jobs Survival Act and fought for justice and equality; and now as a State Senator championing public education, workers rights, climate justice, gun safety, and more. He knows how to get things done and has a record to prove it. Born and raised in Manhattan, Robert and his family have lived in Washington

Heights since 1975. He attended New York City public schools and graduated from State University of New York at New Paltz. He is married and a dedicated father of three daughters.

**Representative Ro Khanna (D-CA)** is a leading progressive voice in the House working to democratize the digital economy, bring advanced manufacturing jobs to factory towns, and advance U.S. leadership on climate, human rights, and diplomacy around the world. He sits on the House Agriculture, Armed Services, and Oversight and Reform committees, where he chairs the Environmental Subcommittee. Khanna is also the Deputy Whip of the Congressional Progressive Caucus; serves as an Assistant Whip for the Democratic Caucus and is the Democratic Vice Chair of the House Caucus on India and Indian Americans.

**Robyn Linscott** is currently the Public Policy Manager at The Arc of the United States—handling education, child care, and child welfare issues. Prior to joining The Arc, Robyn worked for then-Senator Kamala Harris as both a Legislative Assistant and policy fellow handling education, disability, and child welfare issues. Robyn taught special education for eight years in New York City before transitioning to policy work. Robyn received her Master’s degree in Special Education from Fordham University, and her bachelor’s degree in history, dance, and secondary education from Ursinus College.

**Representative Ian Mackey (D-MO)** serves on the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee, the House Judiciary Committee, and is Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee on Administrative Oversight. Rep. Mackey has successfully sponsored numerous pieces of legislation that have become law, including a law to limit the use of seclusion and restraint of schoolchildren in Missouri’s K-12 schools.

**Peter Mills**, a Legislative Assistant for U.S. Senator Chris Murphy. Peter works with Senator Murphy on a variety of policy issues affecting children and families with a focus on education, disabilities, child welfare, and LGBTQ+ policy. Peter is passionate about ensuring every child attends schools where they feel safe and supported. His background in teaching informs his work drafting the Counseling Not Criminalization in Schools Act, along with related legislative work to mitigate harmful disciplinary practices and implement programs that improve school climate.

**Cheryl Milne** is a practicing lawyer and the Executive Director of the David Asper Centre for Constitutional Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Toronto. She was called to the Ontario Bar in 1987 and completed her M.S.W. at University of Toronto in 1991. She practiced at the legal clinic Justice for Children and Youth from 1991 to 2008 where she appeared at all levels of court and various administrative tribunals on behalf of young people. She was counsel to the Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law in its constitutional challenge to the corporal punishment defense in the Canadian Criminal Code. She teaches a Constitutional Advocacy clinic and Children, Youth and the Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Toronto. She was awarded the Ontario Law Society Medal in 2019 in recognition of her contributions to legal education and advocacy for children’s rights.

**Eric Morrison-Smith** is the Executive Director of [Alliance for Boys & Men of Color](#). He formerly was the Policy Director for the Alliance and supported the network’s operations and communications. As the Executive Director, Eric works to center directly-impacted people and grassroots organizations to translate their vision and aspirations into structural change and works with network partners to build power to abolish systems of oppression and transform the material conditions of Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color.

**Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT)** has been a strong voice in the Senate fighting for job creation, affordable health care, education, sensible gun laws, and a forward-looking foreign policy. Senator Murphy has worked diligently to make college more affordable, ensure that our public education system works to serve all students, and is a leading proponent of common sense reforms to reduce gun violence. He sponsors the Keeping All Students Safe Act, Protecting Students in Schools Act, and Counseling Not Criminalization Act. (pre-recorded remarks)

**Kenneth Polishchuk** is the Senior Director for Congressional and Federal Relations & Education Policy Lead at the American Psychological Association where he leads APA’s education policy and advocacy portfolio. His issue areas of focus include the application of psychological science to teaching and learning; school and campus-based mental health; federal student loan and repayment programs; and mental and behavioral health care workforce development.

**Bonnie Washick** (she/her) is Federal Policy Manager at GLSEN, a nonprofit that researches and advocates for safe, inclusive K-12 schools for LGBTQ+ students. She is passionate about LGBTQ+ data inclusion, viewing it as a necessary means of identifying and addressing disparities through evidence-based programs and practices. Bonnie has a PhD in Political Science from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and over ten years of experience in the field of education, including as a policy analyst and advocate, a program manager, and a teacher.

**Richard O. Welsh** is an Associate Professor of Education and Public Policy in the Department of Leadership, Policy and Organizations at Peabody College of Vanderbilt University. Dr. Welsh's research focuses on understanding and transforming inequality in K-12 education, and his scholarship interests include urban education, the economics of education, school discipline, student mobility, the politics of education and research-practice partnerships.

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