Massachusetts Institute for College and Career Readiness Spring Convening
Speaker Bios

**Gerald Chertavian** is the CEO and founder of Year Up, an innovative program that empowers urban young adults to enter the economic mainstream. With its annual operating budget of approximately $90M, Year Up is one of the fastest growing nonprofits in the nation and was recognized by Fast Company and The Monitor Group as one of the top 25 organizations using business excellence to engineer social change. Gerald has received numerous awards and honorary degrees for social entrepreneurship and youth development, and his work has been featured in the New York Times, USA Today, Newsweek, The Newshour with Jim Lehrer, and Fox Business. He serves on the Board of Advisors for the Harvard Business School Social Enterprise Initiative, and in 2013 was appointed by Massachusetts’ Governor Deval Patrick to serve as Chairman of the Roxbury Community College Board of Trustees. A graduate of Bowdoin College and Harvard Business School, Gerald lives in Boston with his wife and three children. His book, A Year Up, is a New York Times Best Seller.

**Dr. Hardin Coleman** has spent his career as an educator focused on helping adolescents become effectively engaged citizens. After starting as a religion teacher, counselor, and coach at Quaker Schools in the Philadelphia area and a year teaching at the Shanghai Teachers University in China, Dr. Coleman earned his PhD in Counseling Psychology with a focus on multicultural counseling. He then spent 17 years at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he trained school counselors, produced research on the role of cultural identity in student achievement, and rose to the position of Associate Dean of Outreach and Multicultural Initiatives in the School of Education.

Since 2008 he has served as Dean in the School of Education at Boston University. In his time at BU he has helped the school to focus on its role of using research to improve the practice of education, preparing educators who are leaders in their schools, and meeting the needs of practicing educators through effective professional development. Dr. Coleman is deeply involved in the improvement of educational opportunities within the Boston area through his service on the External Advisory Council on School Assignment as well as advisory board membership for EdVestors and FUEL – non-profits that are driving change in urban education. He is a Fellow in the Society of Counseling Psychology and has numerous publications. He celebrates 30 years of marriage with Gail Coleman and enjoys watching his sons Jesse and Aaron emerge as the next generation of Colemans engaged in education.

**Carrie Conaway** is the associate commissioner for planning, research, and delivery systems for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. She is responsible for the agency's work on research and evaluation, planning, program implementation, data collection and reporting, and district accountability, all of which works together to help the state and districts improve educational outcomes.

Previously she was the deputy director of the New England Public Policy Center at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and an associate editor of the Bank's flagship publication, Regional Review. She holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from Oberlin College; a master's degree in policy analysis and labor policy from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota; and a master's degree in sociology and social policy from Harvard University.
Robert Curtin is the Director of Education Data Services and the Center for School and District Accountability at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. During his 13 years with the Department, Rob has overseen the development and rollout of its major data initiatives and been a lead developer of the district and school accountability system. Rob also serves on the General Statistics Permanent Standing Task Force that advises the U.S. Department of Education on data collection and analysis issues, and is a member of the Management Board of the Schools Interoperability Framework Association.

Dr. Chad d'Entremont is the executive director of the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy. Chad has devoted his career in education to bridging the divide between research and practice, working with educators and policymakers to ensure all children have the opportunity to succeed in school and in life. He began his career as a teacher, serving high needs students in both urban and rural settings. He is the former assistant director of a nationally-renowned research center at Teachers College, Columbia University and, from 2007-2011, was the research and policy director at Strategies for Children. Most recently, he managed Massachusetts’ successful application for a $50 million Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge award. He has a Ph.D. in Education Policy and Social Analysis and an MA in the Sociology of Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. His experiences bring an in-depth understanding of cutting-edge education reforms, yet he remains acutely aware of the realities of classroom practice and daily school life.

Dr. Pia Durkin became New Bedford's Superintendent on July 1, 2013. Prior to her appointment here, she served as the Superintendent of Attleboro Public Schools for seven years. There she led an ambitious PK-12 reform agenda that resulted in increased achievement in all grades, outpacing the state averages in English Language Arts and Math. Attleboro was recognized for dramatically increasing its Graduation Rate above the state average, decreasing the dropout rate to below 2%, and quadrupling the number of students participating in Advanced Placement courses (from 73 students in 2008 to 412 students in 2012). Previously, she served as Associate Director with the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, consulting with districts across the country in redesigning their central offices to better support schools toward narrowing the achievement gap. She has also served as the Assistant Superintendent for Boston Public Schools, the Director of Special Education in Providence, Rhode Island and also held several leadership positions in New York City Public Schools where she began her career in teaching. Except for one year where she served as Superintendent in a small district in Rhode Island, she has spent her entire career working and dealing with urban education issues. She holds a Master’s degree and a Ph.D. from New York University and has written several articles on special education and district reform practices.

Benjamin Forman is Director of MassINC’s Gateway Cities Innovation Institute, a nonprofit center devoted to building and advancing a policy agenda for midsize regional cities. Previously, he served as a researcher at the Brookings Institution, director of performance management for the DC Department of Parks and Recreation, and consultant at Nathan Associates, a global economic development consulting firm. He graduated from Trinity College, Hartford with a bachelor’s degree in economics and completed his master’s degree in city planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Jonathan E. Keller is Senior Associate Commissioner for Research, Planning and Information Systems with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE). He oversees data analysis and reporting activities, with special emphasis on performance measurement and accountability. In his capacity as Senior Associate Commissioner, Jonathan has sought to expand
and enhance the research resources and analytic capabilities of the Department. Jonathan was a key player in the development of data-sharing agreements among higher education and other agencies and was part of the original School-to-College Database Leadership Team, which won the 2007 Commonwealth Citation for Outstanding Performance. Jonathan also leads the effort to develop and refine metrics and analyses for the Vision Project for public higher education in Massachusetts and has served on a variety of advisory committees for the National Center for Education Statistics. He has worked for more than 18 years in higher education administration and, prior to coming to the DHE, Jonathan designed and coordinated accountability systems for both the University of Wisconsin System and the Arizona Board of Regents. He also worked with the Arizona Postsecondary Commission. Over the past 15 years he has taught many graduate-level courses regarding Techniques of Public Policy Analysis, Research Methods as well as Higher Education Administration.

**Dr. Richard Lapan**, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, is a professor, counselor educator, and psychologist committed to transforming the profession of school counseling from an ancillary support service to a comprehensive program central to the academic, personal development, and social justice/diversity mission of every school. The effectiveness of these efforts was recognized in 2006 when Dr. Lapan won the prestigious Counselor Educator of the Year award from the American School Counselor Association. Dr. Lapan has had extensive experience providing counseling services (career, family, individual, group, and residential) to children, adolescents, and adults. From 1975 until 1980, he worked as a Master’s-level counselor providing counseling, educational, and residential treatment services for urban, suburban, and rural adolescents. He has worked in several school settings and psychiatric hospitals. Dr. Lapan has published numerous empirical studies, 3 books on a wide range of topics related to positive youth development (from the process of compromise adolescents engage in when orienting themselves towards possible futures to the entry of women into non-traditional science-related careers), and has received two national awards in recognition of his work. His work has consistently emphasized expanding meaningful and satisfying educational and career opportunities for all young people.

**Joe McLaughlin** is the Research and Evaluation Director at the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC). The PIC serves as Boston’s Workforce Investment Board and leads the city’s school-to-career initiatives. Prior to joining the PIC, Joe worked as a Senior Research Associate at the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University. In this role, Joe co-authored several reports on the youth labor market in New England and the U.S., and the economic and social consequences of dropping out of high school in the 21st Century.

**Emily Murphy** is the director of programs at the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy. She joined the Rennie Center with a background in education policy and a focus on labor-management collaboration and the role of teacher voice in district policymaking. Emily started her education career as a Montessori Spanish teacher, dedicating after-school hours to teaching adult English Language Learners through the Center for New Americans and coaching skiing for the Special Olympics. She is a former middle school special education teacher and program liaison for students with significant disabilities. Teaching within the public sector made her conscious of the need for research and policy that immediately impacts student outcomes, yet is sensitive to the reality that affecting meaningful change takes time and the investment of multiple stakeholders. More recently, she was the Project Manager of the MEP’s District Capacity Project. Emily holds a M.A. in Education Policy and Social Analysis from Teachers College, Columbia University and a M.S. in Special Education from Simmons College.
**Dr. David Perda** is the Chief Research and Accountability Officer for the Worcester Public Schools. Dr. Perda serves as a senior member of the Superintendent’s cabinet and is responsible for the development and implementation of a district-wide research and evaluation agenda. He provides technical assistance to central office and school-based staff on the appropriate use of evidence to guide programmatic and instructional decision-making and oversees the management of student assessment in the district. Before joining the district, Dr. Perda was a Research Scientist at the Institute for Education Science (IES) at the United States Department of Education. He previously held research positions at the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) at the University of Pennsylvania and at the Massachusetts Department of Education. Dr. Perda is the co-author of several articles including “Is the Supply of Mathematics and Science Teachers Sufficient?,” “The Status of Teaching as a Profession,” and “Creating Data-Driven Schools.” He holds a doctorate in Education Policy from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Jennifer Poulos** is the director of research at the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy. Jennifer has over a decade of experience in conducting and managing research and evaluation projects to examine critical federal and state education policy issues. Spanning the for-profit, non-profit and government sectors, her career began at the US Department of Education staffing the America Reads Challenge. During her tenure with Abt Associates and RTI International, Jennifer played key roles in several large-scale evaluations of federal education reform initiatives, among them Reading First, smaller learning communities, and college and career readiness programming. In her role at Jobs for the Future, she was a lead team member on a national postsecondary initiative aimed at reducing college costs and improving student success. Most recently, Jennifer served as the Director of Research and Evaluation at The Achievement Network (ANet), overseeing the organization’s i3 grant, and impact evaluation of ANet’s data-driven instruction model in schools. Jennifer holds a Masters of Public Policy from Georgetown University, and a Bachelors of Arts from College of the Holy Cross.

**Dr. V. Scott Solberg** is the associate dean of research at Boston University’s School of Education. He is an active member in the Society for Vocational Psychology, a Section in Division 17 (Society for Counseling Psychology) of the American Psychological Association. He is also a member of International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance, National Career Development Association and currently serves on the editorial boards of the Career Development Quarterly and an ad-hoc reviewer for the Journal of Vocational Behavior and Journal of Career Development. Dr. Solberg has published more than 40 professional articles, chapters, monographs and technical reports that focus on career development for youth including how to promote optimal youth development and college and career readiness through the use of individualized learning plans and resiliency-based curriculum. He has served in leadership roles with the Milwaukee Partnership Academy and Milwaukee Public Schools Small Schools reform movement and is author of Success Highways, a proven resiliency development curriculum for middle and high school students.

**Dr. Cindy Walker** is the associate dean for research and engaged scholarship and a professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Dr. Walker conducts research in the area of testing and measurement. Her research focuses primarily on applied issues in psychometrics, especially those related to item response theory. Walker has worked with the Certification and Skills Assessment team at Microsoft Corporation, the Office of the Superintendent of Instruction in the state of Washington, the Division of Research and Assessment at Milwaukee Public School District, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the WI Department of Public Instruction, the National Science Foundation, Junior Achievement of Southeastern WI, the Center for Self-Sufficiency, Appleton Public Library, and many local school
districts in Southeastern WI. Moreover, she has extensive experience conducting program evaluations, designing research studies and sound measurement tools, as well as working with large testing databases, such as TIMSS, NAEP, PISA and those associated with states and districts. Walker has published on the topics of differential item functioning, multi-dimensional item response theory, and computer adaptive testing in journals including Journal of Educational Measurement, International Journal of Testing, and Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice. Her interest in psychometrics is enhanced by her interest in how children learn and are assessed in a constructivist mathematics classroom. Walker received an M.S. in mathematics education from Illinois State University and a Ph.D. in quantitative research methodologies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Keith Westrich** currently is the Director of College and Career Readiness for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Center for Vocational, Workforce, and College Readiness Programs. Through the Office of College and Career Readiness, Mr. Westrich manages and oversees Department initiatives designed to prepare students for success after high school. Previously, Mr. Westrich led the Department’s Connecting Activities initiative providing resources and technical assistance to the 16 local Workforce Investment Boards and local School to Career Partnerships supporting the development and implementation of the state's work-based learning agenda for districts/schools participating in school to career programs across the Commonwealth.

Prior to his work at the Department, Mr. Westrich served as the Director of the Boston Private Industry Council's nationally recognized ProTech program which laid the foundation for the integration of school and work-based learning designed to give students the academic, workplace readiness and personal/social skills necessary to compete in higher education and high performance workplaces.