

Jeremy Bullock Safe Schools Summit

Panel - Safe to Learn, Free to Thrive: Building Belonging Through Community Collaboration



CHRISTA ROWLAND, COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COALITION
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Christa Rowland believes in the power of uniting communities to create a brighter future for all children. Before joining the IEL team, Christa was the Director of Community Impact at the United Way of Treasure Valley in Boise, Idaho. She helped grow the system of Community Schools in Idaho, founded the Idaho Community School Learning Network, and co-founded the Idaho Coalition for Community Schools. Christa began her career as a Music Educator, teaching hundreds of students the joy of creating music. She has a Master's Degree in Public Administration, a Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Administration, and bachelor's degrees in Music Education and Violin Performance.



NICOLE GILBERT, RIVERSTONE BILLINGS
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Nicole Gilbert spent twenty years working in behavioral health before jumping into the medical side of health care. She received her MA in community counseling from Adams State College in Alamosa, CO. She also has her MBA in health care administration from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, CO. Nicole has worked as a teacher and a learner for the last 25 years with a goal of helping medical health care join with behavioral health to treat the whole person. She is the program manager at RiverStone Health, overseeing three School Based Health Centers, two Healthcare for the Homeless sites and the new Wellness On Wheels mobile unit.

Before her move to Montana, Nicole oversaw treatment courts for the State of Wyoming and was the director of multiple mental health and substance use facilities in Colorado, Wyoming and Vermont. Her role at RiverStone Health is the best of both worlds. Nicole is a proud mother of three children and two dogs. Her favorite things to do is disappear into the mountains or their home in Livingston to take pictures.



JESS SCHANK, MINERAL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
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Jessica Schaak is the Family Liaison Program Supervisor for the Mineral County Health Department, the Chairperson of the Mineral County Healthy Communities Coalition, and the co-coordinator of Mineral County's Early Childhood Coalition, the Family Connections Collaborative. Jess received her undergraduate degree from the University of Montana and her law degree from Marquette University. Following a decade of work in the professional sports arena, she returned to her home state of Montana with a goal of utilizing her education and skills to make her small corner of the world a better place. Jess loves supporting schools, helping our youngest learners get started on the right path, and making space for families and communities to find their voice to make change. She is thankful to have a job that allows her to wear dinosaur dresses, unicorn earrings and colorful headbands.

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ERICA ANDERSON, VANCOUVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Ericha Anderson is an Engagement Specialist at Vancouver Innovation Technology & Arts (VITA) elementary school in Vancouver Public Schools (Vancouver, WA). The focus of her work is to engage students in learning that is deep and long-lasting, inspires joy and personal connection, and amplifies communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Ericha has a BA in Elementary Education from the University of Montana, Masters of Educational Technology from City University, Library Endorsement from Portland State University, and Administration Certification from Gonzaga University. She has worked in the educational field for 25 years as an elementary classroom teacher, teacher librarian, and K-12 instructional coach. Ericha has served on several school and district-based committees focused on improving school safety and social-emotional learning. She has experience as a professional development leader in her district guiding nearly sixteen hundred teachers in best practices for developing a broader set of knowledge and skills to prepare students for college, careers, and beyond. She has presented at several state and national EdTech Conferences addressing impactful technology integration and digital safety including International Society for Technology in Education, Northwest Council For Computer Education, IntegratED, and CUE California.



BARBARA FRANK, MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Barbara Frank has over 20 years of experience in public education and currently serves as the Executive Director of Student Services for Missoula County Public Schools.

She holds bachelor's degrees in Elementary and Special Education and a master's in School Counseling from MSU-Billings, as well as a master's in Educational Leadership from MSU-Bozeman, where she was named Top Ranked Graduate in 2013. She also contributed to the 2014 research publication Trust and Maintaining Academic Optimism in The Researcher.

Throughout her career, Frank has focused on underserved student populations, building innovative partnerships between schools and community agencies. Her leadership helped establish Missoula's first Community School at Lowell Elementary. In recognition of this work, she received the 2023 Excellence in Early Childhood Award from the University of Montana's Early Childhood Institute.

Frank has held numerous leadership roles, including Vice Chair of the Lockwood School Board and board member for MT-ASCD, Spark Arts Ignite Learning, and Friends of the Children–Western Montana, where she currently serves as Board Chair.

A third-generation Montanan from Billings, she enjoys exploring the outdoors with her husband Casey and their four children.