



# Letters of Support

Community Engagement

Advisory Board

2024

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 508**

**Name**

Su Jin Jez

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Katherine Georgiev

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

I am writing as a member of the C2C governing board to express my support for the appointment of Katherine Georgiev to the Community Engagement Advisory Board.

The Community Engagement Advisory Board plays a vital role in fostering robust feedback mechanisms with data users, promoting evidence-based decision-making, enhancing analytical capacity, ensuring equitable access, and advancing diversity and inclusivity within the data system.

Katherine Georgiev is a results-driven leader with over 15 years of experience leading large, complex organizations centered on academic and curricular development. In her current role as a Senior Program Officer at Tipping Point, she has demonstrated exceptional strategic and operational acumen, advancing programs that aim to lift the Bay Area out of poverty and provide transformative educational experiences that positively impact students and their families for generations. Previously, she led Presentation High School in San Jose as Principal, where she overhauled core infrastructure, implemented innovative new programs, and steered the organization through its most challenging times. She excels in developing cross-organizational initiatives and garnering support from diverse and complex stakeholders.

For these reasons, I believe Ms. Georgiev will be instrumental to the advisory board, and I urge your support of her appointment.

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
553**

**Name**

Jamey Nye

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Marisa Johnson

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

As the Deputy Chancellor of Los Rios Community College District, I have worked closely with Marisa Johnson and the Campaign for College Opportunity on a number of critical issues in higher education. In particular, our shared work on increasing access and transfer has greatly benefited community college students statewide. As part of this work, Marisa designed and led a statewide listening tour to gather feedback on issues impacting community colleges. We hosted this event in Los Rios, and we were very pleased with the engaging format and level of participation from our regional partners. Marisa did an amazing job.

Marisa's effective communication and facilitation skills coupled with her deep understanding of policy have made her an outstanding advocate for higher education. She has also been an excellent partner to Los Rios and we look forward to continuing our work with her and the Campaign. I would be happy to provide additional information and examples of Marisa's leadership skills and qualifications for this Advisory Board position if you have any questions.

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
555**

**Name**

Myra Snell

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Marisa Johnson

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Dear Cradle-to-Career Governing Board Members:

I support Marisa Johnson's application to serve on the Cradle-to-Career System Community Engagement Advisory Board. As Executive Director of the California Acceleration Project, I have worked with Marisa for two years in the Equitable Placement and Completion Coalition that she co-leads on behalf of the Campaign for College Opportunity with The Education Trust-West. During that time, Marisa has demonstrated her ability to synthesize technical guidance, bill language, and research in ways that are accessible to the wide range of organizations that are part of the Coalition. She has excellent facilitation skills and creates a participatory and positive experience during meetings even when there is disagreement. As important, she is dependable in her follow up on action items and is responsive to feedback. Marisa would be an outstanding addition to the Community Engagement Advisory Board. I urge you to include her on the Board.

Thank you for your consideration of this request,  
Myra Snell  
Executive Director, California Acceleration Project  
Professor of Mathematics, Los Medanos College

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
570**

**Name**

Micaela Pasillas

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Marisa Johnson

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

To Whom It May Concern:

I write in support of Marisa Johnson's candidacy for the Community Engagement Advisory Board. As a K-12 school counselor my work requires a lot of knowledge and support for students in terms of college, and academic success. Marisa has been a great help in not only my life but the students I pass on her knowledge to. Her ability to go out of her way to educate me on certain aspects of education as a whole, college and different resources, has made it a lot easier to provide answers, spark curiosity and motivate students to pursue higher education.

With the every changing college prep, I can always depend on Marisa for any questions I may have. Some of these questions include topics related to college preparation, financial aid, and dual enrollment. When she does not have the answer, she will reliably point me in the right direction or connect me with the right individuals.

I believe her skill set, relationships, and motivation to help students strive, make her well positioned to support the Cradle To Career Data System through the Community Engagement Advisory Board.

Thank You For Your Time,  
Micaela Pasillas

[REDACTED]

MTSS School Counselor

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
572**

**Name**

Diana Amaya

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Marisa Johnson

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Dear Cradle-to-Career Governing Board Members:

On behalf of Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE)®, I strongly support Marisa Johnson's candidacy to serve on the Cradle-to-Career System Community Engagement Advisory Board. This Advisory Board is critical to ensuring that California's efforts to enact and implement policy solutions to increase college preparation, access, attainment, and connections to our workforce are informed by comprehensive data accessible to California's diverse population. This ambitious initiative necessitates appointing qualified individuals to the Cradle-to-Career Data System's Advisory Boards who reflect the diversity of California students. As an organization, we have championed diversity efforts in state appointments precisely because they lead to inclusive and better policy outcomes for all.

With these criteria in mind, we strongly support the appointment of Marisa Johnson, Senior Manager of Policy Impact at the Campaign for College Opportunity, to the Community Engagement Advisory Board. We first met Marisa four years ago when she participated in one of our leadership and civic training programs. Since then, through her work in education policy, Marisa has demonstrated a commitment to improving educational access and quality for California's students and an understanding of the experiences and needs of marginalized groups. It is that understanding and commitment that make her an ideal candidate. We are confident that she will make valuable contributions to this board.

We thank you for your leadership as you work to launch this historic Cradle-to-Career Data system to help more students reach their college and career goals. If you have any questions or want to discuss our support further, you can reach Diana Amaya at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Helen Iris Torres  
Executive Director & CEO  
Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE)

Diana Amaya  
Director of Programs  
Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE)

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
576**

**Name**

Sara Arce

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Marisa Johnson

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Dear Cradle-to-Career Governing Board Members:

On behalf of the Campaign for College Opportunity, I write to express our strong support for Marisa Johnson's candidacy to serve on the Cradle-to-Career System Community Engagement Advisory Board. The Community Engagement Advisory Board is critical to ensuring that California's efforts to enact and implement policy solutions to increase college preparation, access, attainment, and connections to our workforce are informed by comprehensive data that is accessible to California's diverse population. This necessitates the appointment of qualified individuals to the Cradle-to-Career Data System's Advisory Boards who reflect the diverse students we serve across the state and have demonstrated impact in implementing policy solutions across diverse student populations with an ability to understand their unique needs and challenges.

The Community Engagement Advisory Board ensures access to the data system is equitable and supports evidence-based decision-making by providing strong feedback loops in the system's development. This 16-member board should continue to consist of diverse appointees from across the state – representing individuals from various sectors, including research organization staff, advocacy organization staff, practitioners, students, and community organization staff.

With these criteria in mind, we strongly support the appointment of Marisa Johnson, Senior Manager of Policy Impact at the Campaign for College Opportunity, to the Community Engagement Advisory Board. Marisa has a demonstrated commitment to improving educational access and quality for California's students and will bring valuable experience to this board. Marisa led and attended 12 Listening Tour events around the state on behalf of the Campaign for College Opportunity last year. This listening tour was conducted to connect with education, business, and professional leaders in each region of the state. The information collected will inform the work of the Campaign for College Opportunity for the coming years and allow us to work toward the specific needs of California's students. Her direct experience with the communities who will benefit from and utilize the data system makes her an ideal candidate.

Advisory board members have proven to be critical in shaping a successful Cradle-to-Career Data System, helping ensure that the data tools provide actionable information and that the public can use these tools to support evidence-based decision making. It is vital that the individuals appointed to each of these boards have direct experience with the communities who will benefit from and utilize the data system once launched. Marisa is especially equipped to provide this feedback to the Advisory Board; in her current role she engages with practitioners and students across the state on critical student success policy reforms like community college equitable placement and completion and transfer. She is an expert in these areas, providing them with resources to help implement policy, while also receiving critical feedback about policy implementation challenges to

inform the Campaign's future policy work. Her expertise in these areas is further demonstrated through her leadership of the Equitable Placement and Completion Coalition, where she debriefs and collaborates with students, practitioners, and higher education advocates. Marisa's demonstrated commitment to improving educational access and quality for California's students, coupled with her valuable experience and deep connections across various statewide student, faculty, advocacy, and practitioner groups, makes her an excellent candidate for the Community Engagement Advisory Board.

I am confident that Marisa's professional background and commitment to student success make her a strong candidate and will provide a valuable voice to the Community Engagement Advisory Board. Thank you for your leadership as you work to launch this historic Cradle-to-Career Data System to help more students reach their college and career goals. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our support further, please reach out to Valerie Johnson at

████████████████████.

Thank you for your leadership,  
Sara Arce  
Vice President of Policy and Advocacy  
The Campaign for College Opportunity



**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
580**

**Name**

Ruth Sosa Martinez

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Marisa Johnson

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Dear Selection for Advisory Boards Committee,

I am writing this letter to express Young Invincibles' support for Marisa Johnson in her application for the 2024 Cradle-to-Career Community Engagement Advisory Board. Marisa is an alum from Young Invincibles' Young Advocates Program who has consistently demonstrated her commitment to advancing policies and practices to create a more equitable higher education system. Through her work with Young Invincibles, Marisa exercised her notable skills in consumer education and resource sharing across the state. Her contributions and dedication to providing adequate and reliable resources have had a significant and positive impact on community members, students, and colleagues.

Marisa is a remarkable individual whose dedication to supporting others has been evident during her time in our young advocates program, and even after. Throughout the program, Marisa worked alongside a team of young leaders to develop and upkeep a website catered to providing young Californians with reliable and up-to-date information on COVID-19 vaccines. As one of the top program participants in her cohort, Marisa consistently provided support to her peers and made herself accessible to those with less experience or expertise.

In addition to her accessibility, Marisa possesses an impressive ability to identify the needs of communities and provide tailored resources that address those needs. Even after her time in our programs, Marisa has supported young invincibles by helping our team develop digestible consumer education resources accessible to young, low-income, Californians from marginalized communities. She has assisted our team in crafting 1-pagers and infographics that broke down comprehensive information to make them accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds. Her commitment to equity has ensured that these resources could bridge the gap between complex information and everyday Californians, empowering them with the knowledge needed to make informed decisions about retirement, health coverage, and student debt. Through her efforts, Marisa continues to play a pivotal role in promoting inclusivity and understanding in consumer education.

Marisa is an invaluable asset to our community. Her dedication to education equity combined with her ability to reach diverse communities across the state, will make her a great asset to the C2C Community Engagement Advisory Board. I am confident that her contributions will continue to push forward equitable change and support the success of the Cradle-to-Career data system.

Thank you for considering Young Invincibles support for Marisa Johnson. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,  
Ruth Sosa Martinez  
Engagement Manager

## 2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 585

### Name

Denise Luna

### Email

[REDACTED]

### Name of Advisory Board Applicant

Marisa Johnson

### To which Advisory Board are they applying?

Community Engagement

### Share your support here:

Dear Cradle-to-Career Governing Board Members:

On behalf of the California Higher Education Equity Coalition, we thank you for your leadership in selecting immensely diverse advisory board members to the Cradle-to-Career System Data & Tools Advisory Board and the Community Engagement Advisory Board. As leading organizations focused on educational opportunity and racial equity, we are proud to see several of our coalition members selected as state leaders to ensure that California has a laser focus on higher education access, success, and the closure of racial and socioeconomic equity gaps.

We would like to thank you for the thoughtful selection of a number of our Coalition members and express our continued support for their confirmation to their respective Advisory Boards:

#### Community Engagement Advisory Board

- Marisa Johnson – The Campaign for College Opportunity
- Emmanuel (Manny) Rodriguez – The Institute for College Access and Success
- Dar'rell Jones – BLU Educational Foundation

#### Data & Tools Advisory Board

- Dr. Ellie Bruecker - The Institute for College Access and Success

Advisory board members play a pivotal role in shaping a successful Cradle-to-Career System. Their contributions are instrumental in ensuring that the data tools provide actionable information and that the public can use these tools to support evidence-based decision making. The individuals we are recommending have and will continue to demonstrate a commitment to improving educational access and quality for California's students and will bring that valuable experience to these boards.

Thank you for your continued leadership as you work to launch this historic data system, which will undoubtedly help more students reach their college and career goals. We look forward to the groundbreaking work that the Cradle-to-Career System Data & Tools Advisory Board and the Community Engagement Advisory Board will embark on. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our support further, please reach out to Valerie Johnson, Legislative Affairs Manager at the Campaign for College Opportunity at [REDACTED]

Thank you for your consideration,

The California Higher Education Equity Coalition

Su Jin Jez, Executive Director, California Competes

## **2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 585**

Zima Creason, Executive Director, California EDGE Coalition

Jessie Ryan, President, Campaign for College Opportunity

Denise Luna, Director of Higher Education Policy, The Education Trust West

Jessica Thompson, Vice President, The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)

Sbeydeh Viveros-Walton, Director of Higher Education, Public Advocates

## 2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 587

### Name

Denise Luna

### Email

[REDACTED]

### Name of Advisory Board Applicant

Dar'rell Jones

### To which Advisory Board are they applying?

Community Engagement

### Share your support here:

Dear Cradle-to-Career Governing Board Members:

On behalf of the California Higher Education Equity Coalition, we thank you for your leadership in selecting immensely diverse advisory board members to the Cradle-to-Career System Data & Tools Advisory Board and the Community Engagement Advisory Board. As leading organizations focused on educational opportunity and racial equity, we are proud to see several of our coalition members selected as state leaders to ensure that California has a laser focus on higher education access, success, and the closure of racial and socioeconomic equity gaps.

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- Marisa Johnson – The Campaign for College Opportunity
- Emmanuel (Manny) Rodriguez – The Institute for College Access and Success
- Dar'rell Jones – BLU Educational Foundation

#### Data & Tools Advisory Board

- Dr. Ellie Bruecker - The Institute for College Access and Success

Advisory board members play a pivotal role in shaping a successful Cradle-to-Career System. Their contributions are instrumental in ensuring that the data tools provide actionable information and that the public can use these tools to support evidence-based decision making. The individuals we are recommending have and will continue to demonstrate a commitment to improving educational access and quality for California's students and will bring that valuable experience to these boards.

Thank you for your continued leadership as you work to launch this historic data system, which will undoubtedly help more students reach their college and career goals. We look forward to the groundbreaking work that the Cradle-to-Career System Data & Tools Advisory Board and the Community Engagement Advisory Board will embark on. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our support further, please reach out to Valerie Johnson, Legislative Affairs Manager at the Campaign for College Opportunity at [REDACTED]

Thank you for your consideration,

The California Higher Education Equity Coalition

Su Jin Jez, Executive Director, California Competes

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 587**

Zima Creason, Executive Director, California EDGE Coalition

Jessie Ryan, President, Campaign for College Opportunity

Denise Luna, Director of Higher Education Policy, The Education Trust—West

Jessica Thompson, Vice President, The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)

Sbeydeh Viveros-Walton, Director of Higher Education, Public Advocates

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
448**

**Name**

Lori Mattson

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Rachell Owen-Reinwald

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Rachell Owen-Reinwald's application for the open advisory board seat on the California Cradle-to-Career (C2C) Data System Community Engagement Advisory Board. I have had the privilege of working closely with Rachell for 5 years at the State Treasurer's Office, where she has consistently demonstrated a profound commitment to enhancing education, economic, and health outcomes for individuals and communities.

Rachell has an extensive background that aligns seamlessly with the mission of C2C. Her experience spans several critical areas, including her work on the ScholarShare Investment Board (SIB) college savings program, the launch and implementation of CalKids, and her role as a pension counselor for the State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS). These roles have equipped her with a deep understanding of the education-to-employment pipeline and the importance of financial literacy and wellness in achieving strategic outcomes.

In her capacity as a program manager for the CalKids program, Rachell has demonstrated her ability to support community engagement with analytical data sets and practical tools. She has developed and managed dashboards that provide actionable insights and resources that guide students and educators in navigating college and financial aid applications. Her role in financial literacy programs has also underscored her commitment to making complex information understandable and useful to diverse community members.

Moreover, Rachell's tenure as a pension counselor for CalSTRS highlights her proficiency in addressing community member needs and concerns. Her experience as an ambassador to various groups has given her a nuanced perspective on the issues faced by K-12, community colleges, university stakeholders, and those involved in teacher training. This experience makes her an ideal candidate to contribute meaningfully to the Advisory Board's goals.

Rachell is also highly skilled in communicating complex educational issues in a relatable and accessible manner. Her ability to engage with community members, solicit input, and work collaboratively toward common solutions is exemplary. She is committed to dedicating the necessary time to review materials, participate actively in meetings, and share her valuable lived experiences for the benefit of the Advisory Board.

I am confident that Rachell's strategic insights and unwavering dedication to improving education, economic, and health outcomes will make her an invaluable asset to the C2C Data System Community Engagement Advisory Board. I wholeheartedly support her application and strongly recommend her for this position.

Thank you for considering Rachell for this important role. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Lori Mattson

Pensions and Benefits Specialist for CalPERS and CalSTRS Pension Boards  
Office of the CA State Treasurer, Fiona Ma, CPA

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
450**

**Name**

Michael Hanson

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Rachell Owen-Reinwald

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

May 17, 2024

I write to lend my full support to Rachell Owen-Reinwald's candidacy for a position on the Community Engagement Advisory Board for the California Cradle-to-Career Data System. As a seasoned advocate for public education and a consultant deeply immersed in the intricacies of educational policy, I recognize in Rachell a rare blend of passion, expertise, and a steadfast commitment to educational equity.

Rachell's professional journey, particularly her pivotal role in developing and implementing California's Children Savings Account Program (CalKIDS), underscores her capacity to drive systemic change that uplifts marginalized communities. Her tireless advocacy for equitable access to higher educational opportunities further accentuate her dedication to fostering inclusive pathways to success.

Of particular note is Rachell's profound understanding of the intersection between financial wellness and educational attainment. In an era where socioeconomic barriers disproportionately hinder the academic aspirations of historically underserved students, Rachell's insights are invaluable. Her nuanced grasp of financial mechanisms and their potential to alleviate educational inequities positions her as a catalyst for transformative change.

Equally commendable is Rachell's recognition of the pivotal role that data and measurables play in shaping educational outcomes. Her advocacy for evidence-based decision-making aligns seamlessly with the driving principles of the California Cradle-to-Career Data System, promising to bring thoroughness and effectiveness to the Board's discussions.

In summation, Rachell Owen-Reinwald's candidacy embodies the ethos of educational excellence, equity, and innovation that underpins the California Cradle-to-Career Data System. Her professional acumen, advocacy efforts, and

unwavering commitment to student success make her an exemplary candidate for the Board.

Thank you for considering Rachell's candidacy. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require additional information or testimonials.

Michael E. Hanson

Superintendent Advisor to Local Educational Agencies  
Sacramento Office of Education

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
545**

**Name**

Loraine Park

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Ileri Mier Y Teran

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Ileri is a seasoned higher education and grantmaking professional with a deep personal and professional commitment to data quality and access as a lever for driving systems change. In particular as it related to California's longitudinal data system--she understand the potential impact of the system for postsecondary students (current and aspiring) and their families and immigrant communities. Ileri oversees the **Basic Needs Initiative (BNI)** at **ECMC Foundation**. One of this initiative's strategies is to strengthen states' ability to use these systems. With her knowledge of higher education, data systems, immigrant community experiences and her connections within philanthropy and other states' data systems, Ileri would definitely be a strong addition to the **Community Engagement Advisory Board** and would strengthen the system that is being built in California.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate from contracting me at [REDACTED].

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
546**

**Name**

Miguel Leon

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Ileri Rivas Mier Y Teran

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Data and Tools

**Share your support here:**

It's with great pleasure that I write in support of Ileri's application to join your data and tools advisory board. I've had the pleasure of calling Ileri a colleague in the philanthropic sector and a friend for about two years now. In the time that I've known her, one of the things that has stood out to me is her truly genuine commitment to affecting positive social change. Her personal and professional experience is the exact background needed in the foundation world and in roles like this advisory board. A lot of the progress we've made on our goals as an organization has been influenced by conversations that I've had with Ileri. Her thought partnership has been critical to our thinking and our work. For the past year and a half I've co-chaired Southern California Latinx in Philanthropy and we asked Ileri to join our steering committee because the experience that she has in program design and development, in fund development and community engagement are things that we knew would help us grow as an organization. Thanks to her help and support we are stronger and more established than ever. At her own organization, ECMC Foundation, I know that Ileri has played a pivotal role in their most recent refresh which includes rigorous monitoring and evaluation components set in place to measure impact. Given this work, It doesn't surprise me that she would seek the opportunity to join your data and tools advisory board. Ileri is an amazing professional and an even more amazing human being. I whole heartedly endorse her candidacy and highly encourage you to bring her on board, I guarantee that you will benefit greatly from her participation in your endeavors. I'm happy to elaborate further if need be. Feel free to reach out to me at the email listed above or at [REDACTED]. Thanks!

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
549**

**Name**

Stephanie Sowl

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Ileri Rivas Mier y Teran

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Ileri has deep knowledge of postsecondary students - particularly those needing basic needs support and immigrants. She also has connections with other states that have robust data systems (e.g., Texas, Kentucky) that could be useful in this work. Ileri believes in community organizing and tries to become as connected as possible to the people around her. She's also unafraid to voice concerns and speak out for equity and justice. I recommend Ileri to the Community Engagement Advisory Board.

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 552**

**Name**

Debbie Raucher

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Ileri Rivas Mier y Teran

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Ileri Rivas Mier y Teran would be a strong addition to the Community Engagement committee. I have known Ileri through her work with ECMC and their Basic Needs Initiative. She would bring a strong knowledge in particular of the needs of underserved students including immigrant communities and students experiencing basic needs insecurity. In my work with Ileri, she was responsible for convening a group of ECMC grantees and I found her to be an excellent communicator, well organized, and someone with a good understanding of current educational issues and the needs of the field. She is also a lovely person who is easy to get along with and a pleasure to work with.

I strongly encourage you to approve Ileri's application to join this committee.

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
558**

**Name**

Kathleen Johnson

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Ileri Rivas Mier Y Teran

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to enthusiastically endorse Ileri Rivas Mier Y Teran for a position on the Community Engagement Advisory Board. Ileri brings a wealth of valuable experience and insight that would greatly benefit your team. Her proficiency in utilizing data systems, coupled with her extensive background in supporting community engagement grants and initiatives, uniquely positions her to contribute effectively to your endeavors. Moreover, Ileri's deep understanding of the immigrant community's needs and her knowledge of the higher education system underscore her commitment to fostering inclusive and informed decision-making processes. I have no doubt that her passion for leveraging data to drive impactful outcomes will make her an invaluable asset to your advisory board.

Sincerely,  
Kathleen Johnson

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
561**

**Name**

Ali Miller

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Ileri Rivas Mier y Teran

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Ileri Rivas Mier y Teran's candidacy for the C2C Community Advisory Board. As a Learning and Evaluation Officer at ECMC Foundation, I have had the privilege of working closely with Ileri through her leadership of the Foundation's Basic Needs Initiative (BNI). Her commitment to leveraging data to enhance postsecondary education makes her well suited for this effort.

Ileri has a deep understanding of the intricacies of statewide data systems and one of the BNI strategies is centrally focused on states' ability to use these systems to better support learners. Ileri knows that longitudinal data systems are not just about numbers; they are about people. Her perspective will be especially helpful in ensuring that the system is designed with an eye towards equity and accessibility, as she deeply understand the the impact data systems have on postsecondary students, their families and immigrant communities. Further, her ability to navigate the complexities of higher education and data systems, paired with her extensive network in philanthropy and knowledge of other states' data initiatives, position her as an invaluable asset.

Lastly, Ileri's leadership skills and ability to connect with community members will ensure she can foster dialogue, collaboration and feedback loops with data users, as well as ensure data is not only available but accessible to all stakeholders. I highly recommend her for this role and am confident that her contributions will be impactful!



**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 564**

**Name**

Rashida Crutchfield

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Ileri Rivas Mier y Teran

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Data and Tools

**Share your support here:**

I am very pleased and honored to write in support of Ileri Rivas Mier y Teran in her candidacy for the California Cradle-to-Career (C2C) Community Engagement Advisory Board. I am the Executive Director for the Center for Equitable Higher Education (CEHE), which studies and promotes food, housing, and economic justice. I met Ileri in my role as Principal Investigator of a study of California State University programmatic responses to student basic need insecurity that was funded by the ECMC Foundation. She replaced our previous program officer and quickly became an outstanding leader and thought partner in the important work of addressing housing and food security for students in higher education. I immediately found her to be profoundly informed, passionate, and a skilled leader and advocate in this arena. I was eager to welcome her as an advisor and thought partner for this project, and to invite her for collaboration well beyond the scope of our funded work with ECMC. She has a history of practice and fund leadership on multiple external and internal research projects and contributes regularly to scholarship and practice development.

ECMC broadly, and Ileri specifically, has made commitments to stewardship of developments of clear strategies to respond to windows of opportunity and addressing gaps for students. She has supported CEHE in our endeavors to develop data that informs strategies to support student success through addressing basic need insecurity. As such, she is well suited to support the shaping of California's longitudinal data system with a focus on its impact on postsecondary students and their families, inclusive of representation across many student populations. She genuinely understands the value of statewide data systems, which is one of the reasons why she has been so committed to strengthening California's ability to use these systems as the first area of grantmaking focus for the Basic Needs Initiative strategy. This board appointment will enable her to utilize her knowledge of higher education, data systems, immigrant community experiences, and her leadership with philanthropy and other states' data systems to support this transformative work in California.

Though the state has made investments in the development of student/resident progress in education, there is much more to do with partners from a wide variety of partners. Including philanthropic representation, particularly with Ileri as an expert in this field, is critical to the building of a multifaceted plan of action and implementation. Ileri stands out as a leader in the effort to support the needs of student in higher education. I strongly encourage the committee to select her as an advisory board member to ensure her critical input in your groundbreaking work. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
566**

**Name**

Sarah Belnick

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Ileri Rivas Meir y Teran

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Data and Tools

**Share your support here:**

I fully support Ileri's nomination for the Data & Tools advisory board. As Ileri's direct supervisor, I have experienced firsthand how she is able to be both a strategic and analytical thinker and how she enjoys the process of developing projects from concept through to implementation. Through her experience developing and leading the current iteration of our Basic Needs Initiative at ECMC Foundation and her past experience working at Dream.US, Ileri will be able to think about the impact of the longitudinal data system on some of our most marginalized students, including students who are experiencing basic needs insecurity and students from immigrant communities. I am confident that she will be able to use her knowledge of higher education, data systems, immigrant community experiences and her connections with philanthropy (both local and national) and other states' data systems to support what is being built in California.

## 2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 591

### Name

Teresa Nuno

### Email

[REDACTED]

### Name of Advisory Board Applicant

Ileri Rivas Mier y Teran

### To which Advisory Board are they applying?

Community Engagement

### Share your support here:

Dear Members of the C2C Community Engagement Committee,

I am writing to recommend Ms. Ileri Rivas Mier y Teran for a position on the C2C Community Engagement Committee. I have had the pleasure of collaborating closely with Ileri for several years since she was selected by members of the Southern California Latinx in Philanthropy (SCLP) Steering Committee. For decades, I have worked across public/private and philanthropic sectors on education, health, public policy and community building initiatives, most recently, as Senior Advisor to LA County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis and Chief of Programs and Planning for First 5 LA. I strongly believe that community and economic wellbeing goes hand in hand with cradle to career investments.

In her role on the SCLP Steering Committee, Ileri has been instrumental in expanding our engagement with communities and major networks to leverage financial and nonfinancial resources across public/private nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. These resources support a range of educational activities which help mitigate the impact of socioeconomic inequities in under-resourced communities of color.

I am particularly impressed with Ileri's commitment to empowering individuals and communities. Throughout her work with SCLP, she has consistently ensured that our efforts contribute to systems change. For example, she is currently supporting the implementation of SCLP's Advancing Equity and Solidarity Through the Power of Data initiative. This three-part series is designed to leverage community learning to inform policy, education, and advocacy efforts. In her current role as a Program Officer with the ECMC Foundation, this focus on empowerment continues. She currently oversees the Basic Needs Initiative (BNI) for which she ensures that strengthening states' ability to use systems improvement as a funding strategy is included. Ileri is also a frequent speaker at conferences and forums focused on postsecondary education funders, demonstrating her expertise in the field.

I am confident that Ileri's skills and experience would be an asset to the C2C Community Engagement Committee. Her deep knowledge of the higher education landscape, particularly the challenges faced by underrepresented populations and under-resourced communities, is key to the committee's work. Additionally, her experience in community engagement, partnership building, and cross-sector collaboration will be instrumental in achieving the committee's goals.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Teresa Nuno

[REDACTED]

## 2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 586

### Name

Denise Luna

### Email

[REDACTED]

### Name of Advisory Board Applicant

Emmanuel (Manny) Rodriguez

### To which Advisory Board are they applying?

Community Engagement

### Share your support here:

Dear Cradle-to-Career Governing Board Members:

On behalf of the California Higher Education Equity Coalition, we thank you for your leadership in selecting immensely diverse advisory board members to the Cradle-to-Career System Data & Tools Advisory Board and the Community Engagement Advisory Board. As leading organizations focused on educational opportunity and racial equity, we are proud to see several of our coalition members selected as state leaders to ensure that California has a laser focus on higher education access, success, and the closure of racial and socioeconomic equity gaps.

We would like to thank you for the thoughtful selection of a number of our Coalition members and express our continued support for their confirmation to their respective Advisory Boards:

#### Community Engagement Advisory Board

- Marisa Johnson – The Campaign for College Opportunity
- Emmanuel (Manny) Rodriguez – The Institute for College Access and Success
- Dar'rell Jones – BLU Educational Foundation

#### Data & Tools Advisory Board

- Dr. Ellie Bruecker - The Institute for College Access and Success

Advisory board members play a pivotal role in shaping a successful Cradle-to-Career System. Their contributions are instrumental in ensuring that the data tools provide actionable information and that the public can use these tools to support evidence-based decision making. The individuals we are recommending have and will continue to demonstrate a commitment to improving educational access and quality for California's students and will bring that valuable experience to these boards.

Thank you for your continued leadership as you work to launch this historic data system, which will undoubtedly help more students reach their college and career goals. We look forward to the groundbreaking work that the Cradle-to-Career System Data & Tools Advisory Board and the Community Engagement Advisory Board will embark on. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our support further, please reach out to Valerie Johnson, Legislative Affairs Manager at the Campaign for College Opportunity at [REDACTED]

Thank you for your consideration,

The California Higher Education Equity Coalition

Su Jin Jez, Executive Director, California Competes

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 586**

Zima Creason, Executive Director, California EDGE Coalition

Jessie Ryan, President, Campaign for College Opportunity

Denise Luna, Director of Higher Education Policy, The Education Trust West

Jessica Thompson, Vice President, The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)

Sbeydeh Viveros-Walton, Director of Higher Education, Public Advocates

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
537**

**Name**

Miguel Navarrete

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Natalia Gonzalez

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Natalia Gonzalez as a candidate for the Community Engagement Advisory Board. Natalia, who serves as the Community Engagement and Partnership Representative for the Riverside County Office of Education, is an exemplary fit for this role.

As a lifelong resident of the eastern Coachella Valley and a member of the Inland Empire, Natalia possesses a deep understanding of the unique needs and challenges faced by our community—an area that is often underrepresented. Her background in education and community engagement makes her a strong advocate for our region.

Natalia's journey from growing up in Coachella to earning her undergraduate degree from UCLA, returning to serve her community, and advancing her expertise with a master's degree in Communications is commendable. Currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Organizational Leadership and Change at USC, she is well-equipped to bring insightful perspectives and dedicated advocacy to the Advisory Board.

I firmly believe that Natalia Gonzalez's inclusion on the Community Engagement Advisory Board will provide a much-needed voice for the Inland Empire, ensuring that our community's needs and aspirations are effectively represented.

Sincerely,

Miguel Navarrete

Special Projects Assistant

Governor's Office of Planning and Research

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
538**

**Name**

Sandra Campos

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Natalia Gonzalez

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing to support Natalia Gonzalez for the Community Engagement Advisory Board. Natalia, who serves as the Community Engagement and Partnership Representative for the Riverside County Office of Education, is a lifelong resident of the eastern Coachella Valley and a dedicated advocate for the Inland Empire.

As an educator with over 20 years of experience and having worked closely with Natalia, I can attest to her commitment to our community. She embodies the spirit of giving back and understands our unique needs. Her education from UCLA, master's in Communications, and current doctoral studies at USC in Organizational Leadership and Change further qualify her to represent our interests effectively.

Natalia Gonzalez would be a valuable asset to the Advisory Board, bringing a much-needed voice for our community.

Sincerely,

Sandra Campos

Cesar Chavez Elementary 2nd Grade Teacher

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
557**

**Name**

Avisinia Rodriguez

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Natalia Gonzalez

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Natalia is an outstanding member of the community. She is ethical, intelligent, and kind she will do great being part of the community engagement advisory board. She is committed to the community by being active and various parts of the Riverside County and beyond.



**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
574**

**Name**

Myra Sanchez

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Natalia Gonzalez

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to enthusiastically support Natalia Gonzalez for the Community Engagement Advisory Board position. I was Natalia's kindergarten teacher and have had the pleasure of witnessing firsthand her journey through educational roadmap. I now I have the privilege to work alongside her as an educated professional and get to see her dedication to fostering community involvement and advancing initiatives that promote education, inclusivity, and social cohesion.

Natalia possesses well balanced skills and experiences that make her exceptionally suitable for this position. Not only does she have the drive and motivation to serve our community, but she has empathy, and a strong commitment to improving our community. She consistently demonstrates leadership by taking initiative on projects, knowing when to delegate, communicating effectively, and by working collaboratively with her peers.

I have no doubt that Natalia will bring valuable insights, a fresh perspective, and an unwavering perspective to your Advisory Board. Her unique blend of skills will undoubtedly contribute to the board's overall progress and effectiveness in meeting the needs of students and the community.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly recommend Natalia Gonzalez for consideration to serve on your Advisory Board. She possesses the commitment needed to succeed in this role and I have no doubt that she will make significant contributions to the board.

Please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] if you need additional information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Myra Sanchez

## 2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 593

### Name

Stephanie Virgen

### Email

[REDACTED]

### Name of Advisory Board Applicant

Natalia Gonzalez

### To which Advisory Board are they applying?

Community Engagement

### Share your support here:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to support Natalia's application for the California Community Engagement Advisory Board. Natalia has been a pivotal figure at the Riverside County Office of Education, helping lead external affairs efforts across 23 school districts with remarkable success.

Her leadership has fostered strong, collaborative relationships that have greatly benefited our students and communities. Natalia's initiatives have enhanced educational opportunities and support services, reflecting her deep commitment to community development.

Natalia has also improved internal communication and collaboration, ensuring all stakeholders are engaged and informed. Her vision and dedication make her an ideal candidate for the C2C Advisory Board.

I strongly endorse Natalia's application and believe she will be a valuable asset to the Advisory Board.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Virgen  
City of Coachella  
Mayor Pro-Tem

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 519**

**Name**

Erik Heinrich

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Louie Meletlidis

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

During my 7 years as Director of Technology and Interim Chief Technology Officer with San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), I had the opportunity to work with Louie, and get to know him personally. Louie was an important resource provided by Microsoft to support technology programs that were being rolled out across the 110+ schools and administrative sites. A school District like SFUSD has an incredibly diverse population of students, teachers, faculty and District administrators. Louie was a favorite among the many staff with whom he engaged due to his personable approach, listening to the needs and perspectives of individuals, and taking care to adhere to policies and guidelines.

I have also come to know Louie outside of our engagement at SFUSD, maintaining a casual friendship over the many years since that time. I know Louie to be a dedicated husband and father to a special needs child. His experience navigated complex politics and often challenging resource limitations in schools systems as they relate to special needs students, few people have the breadth and depth of experience as Louie to engage with schools and the many stakeholders involved with them.

I strongly encourage the Cradle-to-Career Board to consider Louie Meletlidis for the Community Engagement Advisory Board.

Regards,

Erik S. Heinrich

[REDACTED]

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 544**

**Name**

Meredith Curry Nuñez

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

William Mock

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

6/17/2024

To the C2C Advisory Board Review Committee:

I recommend William Mock for the Cradle-to-Career Data System (C2C) Advisory Board. William's extensive education and technology background and leadership experience make him an excellent Community Engagement candidate for the advisory board, particularly in ideating new and novel solutions to scale family engagement and education effectively. As a first-generation college student who focused his studies on understanding California communities and as a 15-year education practitioner with for- and non-profit experience, William has seen first-hand what can happen when data is leveraged to make programmatic and community-wide impact. He is an excellent candidate for so many reasons, including:

Eight (8) years of project management experience efficiently engaging stakeholders,  
Technical and education experience accomplishing strategic goals with limited resources,  
A deep understanding of college admissions and first-gen experiences, and  
Experience with strategic development, implementation, and data management.

As the Director of Social Enterprise and Partnerships at Students Rising Above (SRA), William spearheaded the development of new tools for advisors that revolutionized data sourcing. A prime example is the Job Board, a collaborative effort that not only saved advisor time but also led to a remarkable 110% increase in student applications and a staggering 220% increase in applications submitted compared to previous years. These achievements are a testament to his ability to deliver tangible results. I am confident that he will bring the same level of dedication and innovation to the Community Engagement Advisory Board, contributing to the development of groundbreaking solutions to enhance user engagement, retention, and satisfaction with the C2C platform across diverse Californian communities.

William also co-founded Pillar Learning LLC, where he led the creation of the IoT device Codi and its accompanying educational content platform for parents, achieving a 60% month-over-month user retention rate with young students across 40,000+ devices. The Pillar team successfully pursued traditional and non-traditional investments, taking the product from concept to market in nine months with a hardware product and iOS/Android apps, later featured as a record-setting deal on ABC's Shark Tank. His role at iDistinguish Consulting and as Chief Academic Officer at AIC Education involved supporting the transition of Beijing Kaiwen Academy to an AP/IB curriculum and creating new student engagement and retention processes for over 50,000 students at New Oriental Education & Tech Group (NYSE:EDU). This work demonstrates his ability to

implement large-scale educational strategies and quality control measures while collaborating with local, provincial, and national governments in the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore, as well as private educational institutions and families.

William's direct teaching experience at KIPP DC Connect Academy, where he integrated data management systems to track kindergarten student progress in early education, instilled a deep respect for data and the practitioners and educators tasked with collecting it. With over a decade of working with high school and college students, William directly worked within many levels of the TK16 system and understands it from both a practitioner's and researcher's perspectives. Additionally, William holds an MA degree from Stanford's Graduate School of Education, where his thesis focused on educational technology and program evaluation, as well as a BA from UC Berkeley in East Asian Languages and Cultures, with a focus on education, demonstrating a deep commitment to understanding the Californian educational landscape.

William Mock's diverse experience in education, technology, and strategic implementation aligns perfectly with the goals of the Cradle-to-Career Data System. He wants to put data in the community's hands (access) but also sees the importance of education so they know how to use it (success). William's involvement will enhance the quality and effectiveness of the system and ensure that it meets the needs of its users through innovative and secure solutions. His appointment to the Community Engagement Advisory Board will leverage his expertise to drive the success of the C2C initiative.

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
516**

**Name**

Denise Robb

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Sabrina Raphael

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Gentlepersons:

Thank you for allowing me an opportunity to share my strong support for Sabrina Raphael to join your board. I've known Ms. Raphael for decades and we have served on committees together and worked on social justice issues. I have watched with admiration as she completed various degrees. She has a passion for learning and changing the world. She finished community college and continued her journey eventually receiving an MBA, while working full-time. I had a similar trajectory completing my AA at community college, my BA, my MA and finally my Ph.D. all while holding down a full-time job and raising a child. So I really appreciate people like Sabrina who understand the challenges that many of us face.

After her course with Idealist.org she created the "Never Too Late Project." This non-profit offers workshops and coaching for students who are working, have families or have special needs and assists them in reaching their educational and career goals. She now volunteers with the Junior League of San Francisco, offering monthly professional development workshops and career advising. She also works with Dress for Success and SMART helping fundraise and assisting people who need some help to achieve their professional goals.

Sabrina will be a wonderful addition to the Cradle to Career Community Engagement Board. I am a professor at a Los Angeles Community College (Pierce College) and she and I are both concerned that most of our students never transfer or graduate. This board position aligns well with her passion and I highly recommend her for this position.

Sabrina is one of the most driven, intelligent, compassionate and beautiful people I know. I highly recommend her for this position.

If you have more questions please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or my cell [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Denise Robb, Ph.D.

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
518**

**Name**

Becke Aller

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Sabrina Raphael

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Sabrina Raphael knows firsthand the struggles of the working-class person seeking higher education and a career. She worked full time while attending first Berkeley City College, then did the same attending the University of San Francisco for her BS in Business Administration. Finally while working full-time as an office manager she completed her MBA at Sonoma State University.

She is very community-minded, volunteering her time to art museums, Junior League, Dress for Success, and many public-facing cultural events.

Sabrina genuinely loves people and enjoys helping others achieve their goals; she is a real team player who is also self-motivated to find solutions and answers.

Sabrina has a lot of experience planning large events, speaking to large groups, and interviewing people in front of large audiences.

She is very committed to helping students and the community live their best lives and realize their goals.

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
529**

**Name**

Larry Brewster

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Sabrina Raphael

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

It is an honor to recommend Sabrina Raphael as a member of the CA Cradle to Career Community Engagement Board. As Dean/Professor Emeritus at the University of San Francisco, I rank Sabrina in the top 1% of students I've worked with during my 40+ years in higher education. Sabrina always exhibits the leadership qualities, teaching and mentoring skills, and character in and outside of class that warrants recruitment onto the Board.

Sabrina was by far the more active and constructive student in her cohort at the University of San Francisco. She is a natural leader, always eager to initiate discussion and debate on the ethical theories and topics in each of the class sessions. In addition to her leadership in class, Sabrina rallied her colleagues to develop and launch a student organization entitled, "USF Business Networking Association." It was intended to serve working adult students with at least a year of professional work experience. Sabrina was the force behind this worthy start-up.

Sabrina has given of herself in service to others. She is a gifted professional, and a kind, caring, compassionate person of integrity and keen intellect. I believe she is a perfect fit for service on this important Board.

Warm regards,

Larry Brewster,  
Emeritus Professor/Dean



**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
530**

**Name**

CHRISTOPHER WISEMAN

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Sabrina Raphael

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Sabrina Raphael's candidacy to join the California Cradle-to-Career Community Engagement Advisory Board . I have had the distinct pleasure of working closely with Sabrina during her tenure as the co-share of the raffle committee for Bouquets to Art, which benefits the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Her leadership in this role demonstrated not only her exceptional organizational skills and creativity, but also her profound commitment to art, education and sustainable development.

Sabrina's passion for higher education is evident in every project she undertakes. She has consistently advocated for integrating educational initiatives into our community events, emphasizing the importance of lifelong learning and environmental stewardship. Under her leadership, the raffle committee introduced educational components that engaged participants in meaningful discussions.

Her dedication to education extends beyond raising money. Sabrina has been actively involved in mentoring young people, guiding them towards academic excellence and instilling in them a sense of responsibility towards the environment with her leadership in Dress for Success, another organization she has shared with me. Her ability to connect with individuals of all ages and backgrounds highlights her exceptional interpersonal skills and her unwavering commitment to fostering educational growth.

Sabrina's academic background and continuous pursuit of knowledge make her an ideal candidate for the California Cradle-to-Career Community Engagement Advisory Board. She brings a wealth of knowledge, innovative ideas, and a passionate drive to implement educational programs that align with the mission.

I am confident that Sabrina's contributions will significantly benefit the advisory board. Her proven track record of successful project management, coupled with her passion for higher education, the arts, and sustainability, will be invaluable assets to your team. I wholeheartedly support Sabrina Raphael's application and believe that her involvement will greatly advance strategic objectives and goals.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information or if there is anything else I can provide to support Sabrina's candidacy.

Thank you for considering her application.

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 539**

**Name**

Janelle Greenlee

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Sabrina Raphael

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

June 13, 2024

California Cradle-to-Career Community Engagement Board  
400 R Street  
Sacramento, California 95811

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in strong support of my former colleague, Sabrina Raphael, for the California Cradle-to-Career Community Engagement Board position.

I have had the pleasure of serving with Sabrina on the Junior Leagues of California State Public Affairs Committee (CalSPAC) and believe that experience at CalSPAC positions her perfectly for the California Cradle-to-Career Community Engagement Board. Her service on CalSPAC's Education Policy Subcommittee demonstrates a deep understanding of the current educational landscape and the challenges faced by students, particularly those transitioning from community college. This knowledge, combined with her personal experience navigating the transfer process herself, allows her to see these issues from both a policy and practical standpoint.

Further strengthening her candidacy is the Never Too Late Project, which she founded. This initiative directly addresses the gap in support for transfer students, showcasing her commitment to translating policy into action. Through this project, she's gained valuable experience in developing and implementing programs that empower students to succeed. In short, Sabrina possesses the right blend of policy expertise, personal experience, and on-the-ground initiative to be a valuable asset to the California Cradle-to-Career Community Engagement Board.

I urge you to give Sabrina Raphael serious consideration. She is a highly motivated and results-oriented individual who will undoubtedly contribute significantly to the California Cradle-to-Career Community Engagement Board.

Sincerely,

Janelle Greenlee  
Executive Vice President  
Junior League of San Jose

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
543**

**Name**

Leslie Gambon

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Sabrina Raphael

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Dear CA C2C Advisory Board Nominations Committee -

I am writing in support for Sabrina Raphael's nomination to your Community Engagement Advisory Board. I know Sabrina from the Metropolitan Club of San Francisco. Sabrina is a dedicated and energetic Member of the Club's activities committee. In this capacity she has reinvigorated the offerings at the Club through her effort to host constantly great programs. Her creativity shines through also in the diversity of new types of activities that she has organized. I know she is truly passionate about helping others through education and has a talent for career guidance. Your mission as an organization aligns with Sabrina's desire to support others as well as her knowledge base. I hope you strongly consider her for a role on your Board.

Sincerely,

Leslie Gambon

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
550**

**Name**

Carol Walton

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Sabrina Raphael

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

June 18, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for Sabrina Raphael's candidacy for a board position at California Cradle to Career. Sabrina participated in the 10th cohort of the Idealist Action Incubator at Idealist.org. Our program helps participants to take the first step with their ideas for community action. I can confidently attest to Sabrina's dedication and leadership abilities, which she displayed during her time in the program.

Throughout her time in our program, Sabrina consistently demonstrated a high level of commitment and a proactive approach to launching her initiative, the Never Too Late Project. She was fully engaged in our weekly workshop discussions and often provided sound guidance and encouragement to her peers.

She met with one of our program coaches to strategize the planning and execution of her initiative. During her sessions, she diligently followed through with the next steps she needed to take. While our program helps participants take their first step to making their ideas a reality, Sabrina consistently moved forward in her planning and went beyond the first step. She demonstrated remarkable organizational skills, tenacity to overcome obstacles, and the ability to think about the bigger picture while working on current steps.

Sabrina demonstrated solid project management skills, an innovative approach to problem-solving, motivation to other program participants, and true dedication and care for the community she seeks to support with her project. Sabrina will be a valuable person to have as a Community Engagement Advisory Board member at your organization.

Thank you for considering Sabrina Raphael for this vital role. I wholeheartedly support her candidacy and can provide any additional information if needed. Please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Carol Walton

Program Manager

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
559**

**Name**

Robin Giustina

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Sabrina Raphael

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Dear Community Engagement,

Sabrina Raphael is a real go getter. I am on the board of the San Francisco Symphony League acting as VP of Education for the last two years. Ever since I met Sabrina, she has instigated ideas like an infusion of fresh energy into the League.

Here are some of my thoughts about Sabrina:

She attracts other motivated individuals that are young and vibrant.

She exhibits an innovative intelligence.

She shows up consistently.

She adds a positive and supportive element to every meeting and event.

She commands respect as well as conviviality in the group.

I would say that Sabrina Raphael has been a joy to work with. I have a feeling that she will go very far and would be benefit Cradle to Career.

Sincerely,

Robin Leddy Giustina

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
569**

**Name**

Polly Gardner

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Sabrina Raphael

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing in support of Sabrina's application for Community Engagement Advisory Board for Cradle to Career Data System. I have known Sabrina for the past year with her volunteerism with the San Francisco Symphony. Her involvement has been incredible in just a short time, recruiting many new members, supporting our fund raisers including our Dia de Los Muertos and getting involved in our middle and high school educational programs (Music for Families and Youth Orchestra). She has a tireless passion for the arts, attending many Symphony, Opera and ballet concerts. She serves on our Board and Chair committee, her main objective this past year was getting audiences back to the Symphony Hall to attend the variety of concerts. Sabrina is incredibly dedicated to commitments she makes, always focused on learning better and creative ways to improve. Our Board members thoroughly enjoy her enthusiasm and care. I appreciate her attention to detail and encouraging our members to try new avenues. In fact her presence is so valued, she was elected Membership Chair for the next 2 years. I highly recommend Sabrina for this position! She comes with passion, care, laughter and will work tirelessly for your organization.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer my support for Sabrina.

Warm regards,

Polly Gardner

President of San Francisco League of the San Francisco Symphony

## 2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 594

### Name

Kalla Vieaux

### Email

[REDACTED]

### Name of Advisory Board Applicant

Sabrina Raphael

### To which Advisory Board are they applying?

Community Engagement

### Share your support here:

Hello,

I am writing to recommend Sabrina Raphael to the Community Engagement board position. I have had the honor of working with Sabrina through multiple organizations, including Dress for Success, Eastern Star, the Junior League of San Francisco, The San Francisco Fine Arts Auxiliary and The Metropolitan Club.

Sabrina always brings high energy and a get-it-done attitude to any tasks she takes on. Her own enthusiasm and engagement in all activities inspires other members to also give their best- her attitude is contagious!

I am sure Sabrina would be a wonderful addition to your organization.

Thank you for your time,  
Kalla Vieaux



**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 515**

**Name**

Marcia Russell

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Cristine Chopra

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

I strongly support Dr. Cristine Chopra to serve on the Community Engagement Advisory Board for California Cradle to Career. Dr. Chopra serves as the Executive Director for the Santa Cruz County College and Career Collaborative and has decades of experience supporting college and career awareness and post-secondary success in California. She is a liaison with multiple community partners both locally and state-wide and therefore is very well aware of the needs and benefits of comprehensive systems to support students' lifelong success. Feel free to reach out to me to assure you that Dr. Chopra is the Advisory Board member you should select.

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
526**

**Name**

Terrence Willett

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Cristine Chopra

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

I have worked with Dr. Chopra since 2016 when she became the Executive Director for the Santa Cruz County College and Career Collaborative (S5C), [REDACTED] I had been working with the collaborative since it started around 2007 where I initially provided support in my role as director of research for CalPASS and later became a direct user as dean of research at Cabrillo College. Dr. Chopra has been an excellent leader for our area with accomplishments including highlighting critical issues such as meeting A-G requirements, convening math faculty from across segments, guiding the development of a county data dashboard that includes intersegmental transitions, and fostering a county wide K-12 equity grading professional development effort. She is engaged at the state level as well keeping apprised of developments in policy and practice to share with our local community. She is also highly responsible and a valued contributor to meetings whether as a facilitator or attendee. I am confident that Dr. Chopra would be a knowledgeable, productive, and insightful member of this advisory board and I highly recommend her.

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
411**

**Name**

Alexis Takagi

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Carrie Casto

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to recommend Carrie Casto to serve on the Cradle to Career Community and Outreach Advisory Board. I met Carrie when we became cohort classmates at Santa Clara University's School of Education and Counseling Psychology two years ago and continue to be inspired by her leadership, intentionality, and commitment to social justice and equity.

During this time, I have had the opportunity to observe and learn more about her work as principal of Santa Clara Adult Education where she spearheads educational programs and activities, advises students, monitors budgets, and facilitates critical operations.

I have observed firsthand how Carrie goes above and beyond to ensure that every student feels supported, valued, and empowered in their educational journey. She consistently demonstrates empathy, patience, and a willingness to listen, which creates a nurturing and inclusive learning environment. Furthermore, Carrie actively engages with students to understand their unique challenges, interests, and goals. She consistently takes the time to mentor and guide them not only academically but also in personal growth and development. This personalized approach fosters a strong bond of trust and respect between her and their students, leading to improved academic performance and overall well-being.

Carrie's genuine compassion and commitment to students' success make her a valuable asset to Cradle to Career's mission and larger vision to make education more accessible. She is a true ambassador for the communities that she serves, including students of color and students' parents, and can acutely identify the gaps in feedback loops with data users and propose evidence-based and actionable solutions. Her deep understanding of the challenges faced by these students enables her to champion and leverage data to implement initiatives for the betterment of the larger community, ensuring inclusivity and equity in every aspect of our work at C2C. Moreover, Carrie's expertise extends beyond championing equity in adult education, recognizing that education is a critical component of community empowerment. Her advocacy for accessible and equitable adult education programs not only benefits individual learners, but also contributes to a more equitable society by addressing systemic barriers to education and opportunity. Her commitment to this work aligns with C2C's mission to create diverse educational pathways.



**officers**

**president** Parvin Ahmadi **president-elect** Rafael Plascencia **vice president** Daryl F. Camp, Ed.D.

**vice president for legislative action** Gina Potter, Ed.D. **past president** Erin M. Simon, Ed.D. **executive director** Edgar Zazueta, Ed.D.

June 14, 2024

Cradle-to-Career  
Selection for Advisory Boards Committee  
400 R St, Suite 304  
Sacramento, CA 95811

**RE: Recommendation of Thoibi Rublaitus to Community Engagement Advisory Board**

On behalf of more than 18,000 education leaders in our state, the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) takes great pleasure in recommending Dr. Thoibi Rublaitus to the Cradle-to-Career (C2C) Community Engagement Advisory Board. Dr. Rublaitus is a distinguished educator and administrator in the state of California and is currently serving as the Principal of Adult Education for the Corona-Norco Unified School District.

While her office is in Riverside County, Dr. Rublaitus has supported teachers and administrators throughout the state and is recognized as a connector and resource among her peers. In her leadership as ACSA's Adult Education Council President for the last two years, Dr. Rublaitus has led numerous professional development sessions at multiple ACSA events, facilitated thoughtful discussions with state agencies and adult education leaders, and provided critical implementation expertise regarding statewide policy proposals. Most impressively, Dr. Rublaitus continuously draws upon her expertise with English Learners and newcomers to advance initiatives that are best for students.

As a member of the C2C Community Engagement Advisory Board, Dr. Rublaitus would be particularly primed to offer her expertise on the Board's charge to create strong feedback loops with data users to support evidence-based decision making, analytical capacity, and equitable access to actionable information. Adult education opens doors and provides lifelong educational opportunities, and Dr. Rublaitus' knowledgebase and skill set leave her uniquely qualified to help build a statewide longitudinal data system that provides tools to help students reach their goals and delivers information and workforce outcomes.

California would be well served by Dr. Rublaitus' participation on the C2C Community Engagement Advisory Board, and I encourage your consideration of her appointment.

Sincerely,

Dr. Edgar Zazueta  
ACSA Executive Director

Cc: Thoibi Rublaitus, Principal, Adult Education, Corona Norco USD  
Ben Chida, Senior Policy Advisor for Cradle to Career, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

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**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
521**

**Name**

Beth Cutter

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Thoibi Rublaitus

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Hello,

I am writing in support of Dr. Thoibi Rubliatus for a role on the Community Engagement Advisory Board for the Cradle-to-Career Data System. Dr. Rubliatus has extensive experience in adult education, including K12 Adult School experience as a teacher and administrator, and as a Community College instructor.

Dr. Rubliatus is highly professional, offers thoughtful perspectives and opinions, and has outstanding follow-through as a professional. Currently she holds leadership roles in Association of California School Administrators and the California Adult Education Administrators Association and in these roles she contributes a great deal. She would be an asset to this new Advisory Board.

Thank you,

Beth Cutter

Director, Castro Valley Adult and Career Education

California Council for Adult Education, Legislative Advocacy Chair

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 542**

**Name**

Serette Kaminski

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Thoibi Rublaitus

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

On behalf of more than 18,000 education leaders in our state, the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) takes great pleasure in recommending Dr. Thoibi Rublaitus to the Cradle-to-Career (C2C) Community Engagement Advisory Board. Dr. Rublaitus is a distinguished educator and administrator in the state of California and is currently serving as the Principal of Adult Education for the Corona-Norco Unified School District.

While her office is in Riverside County, Dr. Rublaitus has supported teachers and administrators throughout the state and is recognized as a connector and resource among her peers. In her leadership as ACSA's Adult Education Council President for the last two years, Dr. Rublaitus has led numerous professional development sessions at multiple ACSA events, facilitated thoughtful discussions with state agencies and adult education leaders, and provided critical implementation expertise regarding statewide policy proposals. Most impressively, Dr. Rublaitus continuously draws upon her expertise with English Learners and newcomers to advance initiatives that are best for students.

As a member of the C2C Community Engagement Advisory Board, Dr. Rublaitus would be particularly primed to offer her expertise on the Board's charge to create strong feedback loops with data users to support evidence-based decision making, analytical capacity, and equitable access to actionable information. Adult education opens doors and provides lifelong educational opportunities, and Dr. Rublaitus' knowledgebase and skill set leave her uniquely qualified to help build a statewide longitudinal data system that provides tools to help students reach their goals and delivers information and workforce outcomes.

California would be well served by Dr. Rublaitus' participation on the C2C Community Engagement Advisory Board, and I encourage your consideration of her appointment.

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
525**

**Name**

Beth Cutter

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Larriann Torrez

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Hello,

Dr. Larriann Torrez would be a wonderful addition to the Cradle-to-Career Community Engagement Advisory Board. Larriann has extensive experience in adult education, spanning decades and including many leadership roles. Dr. Torrez is keenly aware of the importance of a comprehensive data system and would add value through her experience in K12 Adult Education. She is an exceptionally clear communicator, maintains all professional commitments, and thinks critically about all issues she's presented with. Further, she builds very positive relationships with peers and colleagues and is highly respected in the field. Dr. Torrez would be an asset to this Advisory Board.

Thank you,  
Beth Cutter  
Director, Castro Valley Adult and Career Education  
Legislative Advocacy Chair, California Council for Adult Education

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
535**

**Name**

Thatcher Weldon

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Larriann Torrez

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Dr. Larriann Torrez's application to become a member of the Community Engagement Advisory Board at Cradle-to-Career (C2C). Dr. Torrez is an exceptional candidate whose expertise, experience, and unwavering commitment to community engagement make her an ideal fit for this important role.

Dr. Torrez is the Director of Porterville Adult School, where she has consistently demonstrated outstanding leadership and advocacy for adult education students. Her role involves not only overseeing the school's operations but also championing the needs and interests of adult learners who often face unique challenges in their educational journeys.

In her current role, Dr. Torrez has demonstrated outstanding leadership in fostering collaborative partnerships between educational institutions, community organizations, and local stakeholders. Her ability to build and nurture these relationships has significantly contributed to the success of numerous community initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes and supporting underserved populations.

Dr. Torrez's dedication to community engagement is evident in her proactive approach to identifying and addressing the needs of diverse communities. She has spearheaded several outreach programs that have not only increased access to educational resources but also empowered community members to take an active role in shaping their educational experiences. Her work has been instrumental in creating inclusive environments where all individuals, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to thrive.

Moreover, Dr. Torrez is known for her exceptional communication skills and her ability to inspire and motivate others. She is a thoughtful listener who values diverse perspectives and encourages open dialogue. Her collaborative spirit and commitment to equity make her an invaluable asset to any team.

I have no doubt that Dr. Torrez will bring the same level of dedication, insight, and passion to the Community Engagement Advisory Board at C2C. Her proven track record of success in community engagement, coupled with her unwavering commitment to social justice, make her an outstanding candidate for this role.

Thank you for considering Dr. Larriann Torrez for the Community Engagement Advisory Board. I am confident that she will make significant contributions to the board's work and help advance C2C's mission of supporting cradle-to-career success for all individuals.



Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information or have any questions regarding Dr. Torrez's qualifications.

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
540**

**Name**

Dr. Paul De La Cerda

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Dr. Larriann Torrez

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Dr. Larriann Torrez's application to join the C2C Community Engagement Advisory Board. As a valued member of our community and a dedicated advocate for equitable community development, Dr. Torrez possesses the skills, experience, and passion needed to make significant contributions to your board.

In her past and current professional and leadership roles, Dr. Torrez has consistently demonstrated a commitment to fostering inclusive community engagement and driving initiatives that address the needs of underrepresented populations. Her work has been instrumental in cradle-to-career initiatives, which have had a positive and lasting impact on our rural communities in California.

Dr. Torrez brings a unique perspective to community engagement, informed by her extensive background in K-12 and adult education. This perspective, combined with her ability to collaborate effectively with diverse stakeholders, makes Dr. Torrez an ideal candidate for the C2C Community Engagement Advisory Board. Additionally, Dr. Torrez has a strong track record of supporting rural communities and working closely with adult education programs and community colleges to create pathways for lifelong learning and economic development. She has successfully partnered with institutions such as Kern Community College District, Kern Adult Education Consortium, and Sequoia Adult Education Consortium to provide accessible educational opportunities and workforce development programs for rural residents.

In addition to her professional accomplishments, Dr. Torrez is also deeply involved in volunteer work, community service, and educational leadership roles. Her dedication to improving our community is evident in her ability to engage and inspire others towards collective action, whether through spearheading local initiatives or mentoring emerging leaders.

I am confident that Dr. Torrez's expertise and passion for community engagement will be a valuable asset to the C2C Community Engagement Advisory Board. She will bring innovative ideas, strategic thinking, and a collaborative spirit to the board, helping to advance its mission and objectives.

Thank you for considering Dr. Torrez's application. I wholeheartedly support her candidacy and believe that she will make a meaningful contribution to the C2C Community Engagement Advisory Board. Please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul Nelson De La Cerda, EdD, MBA

CLOVER AGENCY  
Principal & Founder

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
571**

**Name**

Zeb Welborn

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Renay Mehta

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter of support for Renay Sehgal Mehta's application to serve on the California Cradle-to-Career Data System Advisory Board. As President of the Chino Valley Chamber of Commerce, I have had the pleasure of working with Renay and witnessing her contributions to our community and her impact on workforce development and economic growth.

Renay serves as the Director of Workforce Development at the Chino Valley Chamber of Commerce, where her leadership and dedication have been instrumental in advancing our mission. Her role in the Upskill Chino Valley initiative has been transformative, securing substantial funding and creating significant opportunities for local job seekers and businesses. Under her guidance, this initiative has facilitated over 300 career placements through more than nine job fairs, supporting thousands of job seekers in our region.

Her innovative approach to program development and her ability to forge strategic partnerships have been pivotal in enhancing our financial stability and expanding our influence throughout San Bernardino County. Renay's efforts in securing over \$75,000 in on-the-job training funds and various county resources and grants have contributed to business expansion and community development.

Renay's work has not gone unnoticed. She was honored as the Staff Member of the Year by the Western Association of Chamber Executives and recognized as the 2023 Women of the Year by Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez. Her accomplishments extend to writing and securing numerous grants, including the HIRE Grant and the IREN Grant, which support justice-involved individuals and create quality jobs in our region's energy sector, respectively.

Renay's passion for building bridges within our community, creating strategic partnerships, and fostering diverse synergies aligns perfectly with the values and goals of the California Cradle-to-Career Data System. She will be a strong voice and will represent the Inland Empire region. Her commitment to continuous learning and leadership development is evident from her graduation from the U.S. Chamber's 2022 Business Leads Fellowship and Talent Pipeline Management Programs.

Renay's dedication to professional excellence and community service makes her an outstanding candidate for the Advisory Board. Her ability to drive meaningful change and support community development will undoubtedly contribute to the success of the California Cradle-to-Career Data System.

I wholeheartedly endorse Renay Sehgal Mehta for this position and am confident that her expertise and passion will make a significant impact on the Advisory Board.

Sincerely,

Zeb W. Welborn  
President, Chino Valley Chamber of Commerce

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry # 562**

**Name**

Bernell Nevil

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Suzan Amiri

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

To whom it may concern,

I would like to offer my recommendation of support for Suzan Amiri to be appointed to the Community Engagement Advisory Board for California Cradle-to-Career Data System. I have known Suzan since her junior year at Santa Clara University. I served as her supervisor in her role as a Student Inclusion Educator (SIE) in the Office for Multicultural Learning from January 2024 to June 2024. The very first interaction I had with Suzan is what inspired me to reach out to her when we had a vacancy in our office. Suzan was facilitating a conversation for a quarterly diversity forum where student hold space to discuss diversity related issues that are affecting them with university administrators. Suzan was leading a conversation about adopting a more inclusive designation for students of Middle Eastern or Arab backgrounds. The term that she was suggesting, SWANA (Southwestern Asian and North African), was new to me, but she came prepared with information and research as to why this term was more inclusive than the current term we use, MENA (Middle Eastern and North African). It was clear from this initial meeting that Suzan was someone who valued inclusion and making sure everyone felt valued.

As a student staff member in my office, Suzan knew she had limited time since she started during her senior year. She used this time wisely and dove right in to create programming and content for our office. Suzan effectively blended her role as co-president of the MENA student organization and Student Inclusion Educator to educate others and advocate for change about various social justice issues. Given the complex state of the world with the violent tensions between Israel and Hamas, Suzan was thrust into a position of having to be the voice of student needs around campus. Suzan was particularly attentive to how other campus communities were responding to student demonstrations and occupations. The Palestinian students on campus were definitely looking for more support from the university administration, so Suzan wanted to be intentional about how they acted to ensure they would be heard. Suzan worked with dozens of other students to organize a day-long teach in called "All Out for Gaza" where they brought in faculty guest speakers, had alumni share testimonials, showcased artists through spoken word/music, and provided access to educational resources about decades of conflict in the Middle East. The event was peaceful and almost every member of the president's cabinet spent a significant amount of time there. Some folks were initially concerned because they thought that what was happening at Columbia and UCLA would happen here. Suzan made it clear that this was intended to be a space for education and there were established ground rules for the event. The teach-in went so well that it won the Event of the Year award from our Center for Student Involvement. Suzan's work on this teach-in was also a big factor in our decision to award her the Student Leadership Award at our MENA Recognition Ceremony for graduating students.

Even though I have only known Suzan for about a year and a half, I have seen her work for great change at SCU. It was an

absolute joy and privilege to supervise her and to see her work firsthand. She has a very inclusive mindset and is always advocating for marginalized individuals. During her exit interview from our office, she was still suggesting other ideas that we could adopt moving forward that specifically outreached to first generation students to provide more financial literacy and opportunities. Suzan has a proven track record of advocacy and I don't see it stopping with her graduation. Suzan is taking a gap year as she studies for the LSAT and prepares to apply to law school. She is someone I truly believe will go forth and change the world with her passion, dedication, and fierce commitment to doing what is right and just. I fully support Suzan being appointed to the Community Engagement Advisory Board as her perspective would be so valuable as an Afghan first generation college student. I would be happy to speak with you if you have any further questions. You can reach me at my work email address [REDACTED].

Keep moving forward,

Bernell Nevil

Associate Director, Office for Multicultural Learning

**2024 Advisory Board Letters of Support : Entry #  
556**

**Name**

Stephanie Tom

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Name of Advisory Board Applicant**

Maulik Dhalak

**To which Advisory Board are they applying?**

Community Engagement

**Share your support here:**

Maulik Dhakal is a successful student ambassador who works hard to build more inclusive systems that ensure our future generations are integrated into statewide policy efforts. I was impressed by his initiative reaching out to me via Linked In to support his non-profit. Since then, we have formed a partnership working to give students and California's underserved communities a voice. I have seen his dedication firsthand through his initiative to create a Student Ambassador Program for CalKIDS, the statewide college savings account initiative. He can effectively communicate with stakeholders, especially students; policymakers at all levels; as well as out-of-state and international experts to investigate best practices. He is hard-working and driven to build a California for All and I wholeheartedly recommend him to serve on this board.