



STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER BIOS

Juana Cala' has been performing and teaching Flamenco in the United States and Europe for more than 35 years. She has been a resident Spanish Dance Professor in various Universities across the United States and has been a lead Teaching Artist for Flamenco Vivo for 13 years. Juana began her experience with children with Autism and other populations at Family Residences and Essential Enterprises. She has pioneered programs in the NYC District 75 schools, continually developing strategies and programs for these populations.

Madeline Calandrillo is a New York City-based applied theater practitioner, teaching artist, and theatre-maker with ADHD and dyslexia. As Director of Education of New York City Children's Theater, she is drawn to creating accessible and diverse theatrical experiences for young people and their families. Madeline has created Arts Education curriculum for various organizations and non-profits in New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Jersey. She is a teaching artist for CO/LAB Theatre Group. Madeline received her Masters in Applied Theatre from the City University of New York, where her thesis project investigated how an immersive theatrical experience could help the language learning and community building of early learners in Spanish Dual Language and General Education classrooms. From her thesis, Madeline co-founded the Upper Manhattan-based multi-lingual theater company Jugando N Play. Madeline has presented at numerous conferences, including the Arts for All Abilities Consortium, the 2023 TYA/USA National Festival & Conference, The Annual Applied Theatre and Racial Justice Conference, The Texas Educational Theatre Association, and The American Alliance for Theatre & Education (AATE). Madeline was invited to the 2023 Young IDEA LAB in Iceland, (IDEA 9th World Congress: celebrating drama in the changing world) as a representative from the United States.

Paula Heitman is the Executive Director at Marquis Studios, a non-profit, Arts Education organization. For 25 years, Paula has devoted her career to enriching the lives of children in New York City. Paula worked as a teaching artist while earning her Master of Arts in Educational Theater at New York University. After graduating NYU, Paula worked for the New York City Department of Education as a high school Drama teacher before moving into the

non-profit world managing Arts programs for organizations such as TADA!, Urban Arts Partnership (fka Working Playground), DreamYard and others. Paula then served as the Executive Director at Breakthrough NY, an academic enrichment program for motivated middle school students from low-income families. Most recently, Paula ran Families First, a non-profit, early childhood center. Paula has extensive experience as a program manager, grant writer, development director, strategic planner and event manager. Paul's career has centered on serving marginalized student populations, including students attending under-resourced public schools and students with disabilities. Paula believes deeply in supporting all students and providing equal opportunities to experience the Arts. Paula lives in Brooklyn with her husband, daughter, son and a trio of two dogs and a cat.

Elise May is an independent Teaching Artist/Arts Administrator, educator, actor, singer, writer and storyteller who has performed and taught in the U.S. and internationally. She works with actors, school districts, libraries and corporations on communication skills, community development and developing educational programs using Theater Arts for vocal empowerment. Elise has developed and facilitates Storytime Theater, Expressive Elocution, Multicultural Voices, Creative Readers (an Arts Education inclusion program, winner of the 2017 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award) and more. In addition to serving on the Arts for All Abilities Consortium Steering Committee, Elise is on the board of Stage the Change: The Arts as a Social Voice, and an Advisory Board member for Books for Dessert, a literacy program for adults with disabilities. She has been a contributing writer for the *Teaching Artist Journal*, *Teaching Artist Guild Quarterly* and a contributing author of, *"In It Together – How Student, Family, and Community Partnerships Advance Engagement and Achievement in Diverse Classrooms"*. Elise has produced and moderated events including *The Magic of the Arts in Special Education*, *Spectrum of Hope: Nurturing Abilities, Creating Opportunities* and *... and Social Justice for All*, an arts and activism event. She is a teaching Artist with Tilles Center for the Performing Arts where she is part of the devising creative and performance team of *Branching Out*, an original sensory, immersive show for audiences on the autism spectrum. Elise is also Program Director for Theater for Dessert, a new Theater program for adults with intellectual disabilities.

Rachel McCaulsky is the Brooklyn South Borough Arts Director for the New York City Department of Education's Arts Office supporting arts programming and professional learning opportunities for Districts 17, 18, and 22. Previously, Ms. McCaulsky served as an assistant principal at P4Q, a District 75 school serving children diagnosed with severe to profound disabilities. In that role, she revamped the curriculum, instituting a team that adapted the material for diverse learners and infused Art connections into each content area through center-based learning. Ms. McCaulsky supported Arts programming, grant initiatives, and language acquisition programming for Multilingual Language Learners. Before becoming an

assistant principal, Ms. McCaulsky held roles at P396K as a Dance teacher, instructional coach, unit coordinator, and Arts coordinator. Ms. McCaulsky is a published author for the NYC Department of Education Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Dance, where her units of study infuse Dance with Social Studies, Science, and Literacy. Currently, Ms. McCaulsky is a doctoral candidate in the Russell Sage College Educational Leadership Program.

Alongside Ms. McCaulsky's educational assets, she has an extensive background in Dance. She has performed with notable companies such as Alvin Ailey II, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Ballet Hispanico, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, and Dallas Theater Center's *The Wiz*. Ms. McCaulsky also had the honor of dancing at the opening of the US Embassy in Berlin, Germany. She was the featured ballet dancer for Grammy Award winner Chrisette Michele in her music video *Super Chris*. Most recently, Ms. McCaulsky danced in the movie *Hal King* directed by Myron Davis, and is a principal dancer with Thomas/Ortiz Dance.

Maryann Polesinelli has been in the field of education for over 40 years commencing with the teaching of vocal technique and pedagogy at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music. She went on to have a career in opera, oratorio, operetta and recitals in the U.S.A., Canada, Europe, and Puerto Rico. While living in Europe, Ms. Polesinelli turned her attention to the teaching of English as a Foreign Language.

After returning to the U.S. in 1998, she began teaching ESL, Italian, Reading, and Writing for the NYCDOE, and created a *Musical Reading and Math Saturday Program*. Ms. Polesinelli recently retired as the Director of District 75 MLL/ELL Citywide Programs and is a doctoral candidate in Urban Education at the Graduate Center CUNY. She was invited to present at the 2019 WIDA (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment) Conference in Rhode Island, and to participate as an expert at the WIDA Alternate Can Do Descriptors Workshop in Clearwater, Florida, in November 2019.

Lindsay Tanner is Education Director at Theater For a New Audience. She is the former Senior Program Manager for the Everyday Arts for Special Education (EASE) program at Urban Arts Partnership. An educator, facilitator, theatre artist, and Arts manager focusing on participatory creative making and inclusive and responsive pedagogies, she has built K-12 expressive Arts programming for schools, Arts organizations, and therapeutic settings around the country. She was a graduate fellow for VSA Massachusetts (now Open Door Arts) and consulted for the Sesame Street in Communities initiative to build trauma-informed early childhood systems of care.

Lindsay holds an Ed.M. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a B.F.A. from NYU.

Barbara Tremblay began her journey in the NYC DOE as a paraprofessional. Since then she has held many roles in the Department of Education, including teacher, District Administrator, Assistant Principal and – for more than a decade – Principal of P721K in District 75. The Arts are a high priority area for her and play a vital role in supporting the school's mission – enabling young adults with developmental disabilities to utilize their talents, strengths and capabilities to live and work in the community. She seeks the very best teachers, curriculum, instructional methodologies and partnerships to meet the needs of all students and ensure they receive the highest quality instruction. P721K strives to create a culture where active participation and first-hand experiences are the means for students to reach new levels of learning. Ms. Tremblay accomplishes this through strategic planning, collaboration and open communication. She will always ask students and staff alike, "Where are you going?" as a catchphrase to provide an open dialogue about her student's future and ensuring they are set up for success. Barbara is a Cahn Fellow.

Stephen Yaffe is an Arts and Education consultant whose professional development (PD) work has been called “brave, visionary, smart” (Director of Education Programs, PBS). He has mentored classroom teachers, teaching artists and arts administrators in inclusive practices nationally, served as the VSA Teaching Artist Fellows coach and provided PD to those working in the field of disability on five continents. A founding member and Chair of the Arts for All Abilities Consortium, he is a recipient of the 2018 VSA NYC Arts Advocate of the Year and serves on the Arts Committee to the Panel for Educational Policy of the NYC Department of Education.