Charles Chen Yidan

Conference co-host

Charles Chen Yidan is the founder of the Yidan Prize Foundation.

A native of Guangdong, Mr. Chen grew up in China. After completing a bachelor’s degree in applied chemistry at Shenzhen University, he went on to earn a master’s degree in economic law at Nanjing University and become a civil servant in Shenzhen, China. Not long afterwards, he joined four friends to launch a startup called Tencent, an internet-based technology and cultural enterprise founded in 1998 and headquartered in Shenzhen.

Mr. Chen and his partners soon saw the startup grow by leaps and bounds, capitalizing on the rapid growth of China’s information technology. Today, Tencent is China’s internet giant and a publicly listed company in Hong Kong.

After stepping down as Tencent’s chief administration officer in 2013, he became increasingly involved in philanthropic activities, including investing RMB 2 billion (US$306 million) in Wuhan College, a non-profit university in China.

Together with his Tencent partners, Mr. Chen established Tencent Charity Foundation with the mission of funding non-profit groups’ projects that encompass everything from education to disaster relief.

Mr. Chen has always been aware of how education can change one’s life for the better. It is this belief that forms the philosophical bedrock of his latest brainchild, the Yidan Prize, through which he hopes to create a better world through education.

The world’s largest education award of its kind in monetary terms, the Yidan Prize aims to empower the change makers in education, build a global community of education leaders and, ultimately, create long-lasting, enlightening impacts on mankind as a whole.

“I feel extremely lucky to have caught the fast train of the internet and have made some money that can more than satisfy my basic needs. Somehow, the powers that be decided to pass on these resources to me. They just happened to fall in my hands for a while, and I ought to put them to good use. I’m grateful to have the opportunity to do so,” Mr. Chen says.
Morton Schapiro began his term as the 16th president of Northwestern University on September 1, 2009. He is a professor of economics in Northwestern’s Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and also holds appointments in the Kellogg School of Management and the School of Education and Social Policy.

Schapiro is among the nation’s leading authorities on the economics of higher education, with particular expertise in the area of college financing and affordability and on trends in educational costs and student aid. He has testified before U.S. Senate and House committees on economic and educational issues and is widely quoted in the national media on those issues.


He has received research grants and contracts from the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, the World Bank, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, the College Board, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and other groups to study the economics of higher education and related topics. In 2010 he was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 2017 he was elected to the National Academy of Education.
Professor Larry Hedges is chairman of the department of statistics, Board of Trustees Professor of Statistics; Education and Social Policy; Psychology; and Medical Social Sciences, and faculty fellow of the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University.

Hedges is one of the most influential applied statisticians in the world. His work in educational policy allows policymakers, educators and the general public to see the evidence for “what works” in the field of education, and makes it possible to take a scientific approach to improving education for future generations.

Hedges has authored or co-authored ten books and numerous journal articles, including the seminal “Statistical Methods for Meta-Analysis” (with I. Olkin, Elsevier, 1985) and “The Handbook of Research Synthesis and Meta-Analysis” (with H. Cooper and J. Valentine, Russell Sage, 2009).

He is an elected member of the National Academy of Education and is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Statistical Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Educational Research Association. He co-founded the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness and served as its first President. The Society established the annual Hedges Lecture in his honor in 2016. Professor Hedges was nominated by President Barack Obama to the Board of Directors of the National Board for Education Sciences, was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in June 2012, and was elected chair of the board in 2016.

He was elected “Statistician of the Year” by the Chicago chapter of the American Statistical Association for 2013–14. In 2018, he became the third American to be elected an honorary member of the European Association of Methodology.
Anant Agarwal

*Yidan Prize Laureate for Education Development 2018*

Professor Anant Agarwal is the founder and CEO of edX, an online learning destination founded by Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Anant taught the first edX course on circuits and electronics from MIT, which drew 155,000 students from 162 countries.

Agarwal founded edX in 2012 with the aim to provide access to high quality education at scale, to learners around the world, regardless of geographic location, financial resources, prior academic qualifications, gender, race or other demographics. The platform currently offers over 2,000 online courses from more than 130 leading institutions to over 17.6 million people.

Agarwal has been recognized with numerous awards and distinctions, including the Maurice Wilkes prize for computer architecture, and MIT’s Smullin and Jamieson prizes for teaching. He is also the 2016 recipient of the Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize for Higher Education, which recognized his work in advancing the MOOC movement. Additionally, he is the recipient of the Padma Shri award, one of the highest civilian awards in the Republic of India. He holds a Guinness World Record for the largest microphone array, and is an author of the textbook “Foundations of Analog and Digital Electronic Circuits.”

Scientific American selected his work on organic computing as one of 10 World-Changing Ideas in 2011, and he was named in Forbes’ list of top 15 education innovators in 2012. A pioneer in computer architecture, Agarwal is a member of the National Academy of Engineering, a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a fellow of the ACM.

He hacks on WebSim, an online circuits laboratory, in his spare time. Agarwal holds a Ph.D. from Stanford and a bachelor’s from IIT Madras.
Wendy Kopp

Keynote speaker of the Yidan Prize Conference Series, The Americas

Wendy Kopp is CEO and co-founder of Teach For All, a global network of independent organizations that are developing collective leadership to ensure all children have the opportunity to fulfill their potential.

Kopp founded Teach For America in 1989 to marshal the energy of her generation against educational inequity in the United States. Today, close to 7,000 Teach For America corps members -- outstanding recent college graduates and professionals of all academic disciplines -- are in the midst of two-year teaching commitments in 53 urban and rural regions, and Teach For America has proven to be an unparalleled source of long-term leadership for expanding opportunity for children. After leading Teach For America’s growth and development for 24 years, in 2013, Kopp transitioned out of the role of CEO. Today, she remains an active member of Teach For America’s board.

Currently, the Teach For All network is comprised of partner organizations in 48 countries on six continents, including its founding partners Teach For America and the U.K.’s Teach First.

Kopp has been recognized as one of Time Magazine’s 100 Most Influential People and is the recipient of numerous honorary degrees and awards for public service. She is the author of “A Chance to Make History: What Works and What Doesn’t in Providing an Excellent Education for All” (2011) and “One Day, All Children: The Unlikely Triumph of Teach For America and What I Learned Along the Way” (2000). She holds a bachelor’s degree from Princeton University, where she participated in the undergraduate program of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.
Additional conference speakers

**Jon Baron**  
*Vice President of Evidence-Based Policy, Arnold Ventures*

As vice president of evidence-based policy, Jon Baron directs the strategic investments in research at Arnold Ventures, aimed at increasing the body of evidence-based social programs. Previously, Baron served as the President of the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, a nonprofit, non-partisan group that lobbied federal policymakers to enact evidence-based reforms of social programs. Twice, Baron was nominated by the U.S. President and confirmed by the Senate to serve on the National Board for Education Sciences. He served as the president of the board in the last year of his term. He has held several government positions, including counsel to the House of Representatives Committee on Small Business. He received a law degree from Yale University.

**Pamela Buckley**  
*Research Associate, Institute of Behavioral Science at the University of Colorado, Boulder*

Pamela Buckley works as a research associate in the Institute of Behavioral Science at the University of Colorado, Boulder. She is also the co-director of Blueprints for Healthy Young Development, an online database of evidence-based youth development programs designed to promote healthy child and adolescent development. At the Institute of Behavioral Sciences, Buckley’s research focuses on educational evaluation, policy analysis, and research design analysis. Her research interest is improving opportunities for disadvantaged youth. Buckley received her Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of Denver in 2003, and she previously worked as a school psychologist.

**John Q. Easton**  
*Senior Fellow, University of Chicago Consortium on School Research*

John Q. Easton serves as a senior fellow in the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. His primary research interests are secondary education and school organization, focusing on Chicago Public Schools as a sample and model. He has been affiliated with the University of Chicago Consortium since 1990 and served as its executive director from 2002 to 2009. Easton also served as the vice president of programs at the Spencer Foundation in Chicago, an organization which seeks to improve education through research. Easton also has experience working in the federal government, as he served as the director of the Institute of Education Sciences within the U.S. Department of Education. He received his Ph.D. in education from the University of Chicago in 1980.
David Figlio  
*Dean of the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University; Orrington Lunt Professor of Education and Social Policy and of Economics; IPR Fellow*

David Figlio is an IPR education economist who conducts research on a wide range of education and health policy issues from school accountability and standards to welfare policy and policy design. His current research projects involve studying the interrelationship between health and education, the ways in which parents confer advantage and disadvantage to their children, and the role of educational institutions in affecting these relationships; higher education policies and practices such as online education and educational staffing; K-12 education policies such as school accountability, school choice, and teacher tenure; and early childhood health and education policies such as early interventions for autism spectrum disorders. He is also leading a National Science Foundation-sponsored national network to facilitate the use of matched administrative datasets to inform and evaluate education policy. Figlio's work has been published in numerous leading journals, including the American Economic Review, Journal of Public Economics, Journal of Law and Economics, and Journal of Human Resources. Organizations supporting his research include the National Science Foundation, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Education, and Health and Human Services, as well as the Annie E. Casey, Smith Richardson, and Spencer foundations, among others. Figlio joined Northwestern in 2008 from the University of Florida, where he was the Knight-Ridder Professor of Economics.

Jim Flanagan  
*Chief Operating & Strategy Officer of the International Society for Technology in Education*

Jim Flanagan is has overall responsibility for the operational and support functions at ISTE, including finance, marketing, human resources, technology and project management. He also supports development of the organization-wide strategy, performance management and general outreach. Before joining ISTE, he owned and operated Flanagan Education Services, a consulting firm that helped schools and education companies identify and implement best practices to enhance teaching, personalize learning and improve management practices. Previously, Flanagan held roles as the CIO and director of research, assessment and evaluation for the St. Louis Public Schools and served on the Chicago Board of Education.

Herbert Ginsburg  
*Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Education at Columbia University*

The Jacob H. Schiff Foundations Professor of Psychology & Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, Herbert Ginsburg has conducted research on the development of mathematical thinking, with particular attention to young children, disadvantaged populations, and cultural similarities and differences. He is
currently developing materials designed to help teachers and parents engage in mathematical book reading with their children.

Jonathan Holloway  
*Provost and Professor of History at Northwestern University*

Jonathan Holloway is provost of Northwestern University and professor of history. Holloway specializes on post-emancipation U.S. history with a focus on social and intellectual history. Before moving to Northwestern, Holloway was the dean of Yale College and the Edmund S. Morgan Professor of African American Studies, History, and American Studies at Yale. Holloway serves on boards of the Chicago Botanic Society, Illinois Humanities, the National Humanities Alliance, the Society for United States Intellectual History, and the Organization of American Historians.

Kirabo Jackson  
*Professor of Human Development and Social Policy; IPR Fellow*

Kirabo Jackson is a labor economist who studies education and social policy issues. He has analyzed several important aspects of education policy such as the importance of public school funding on student outcomes through adulthood, the effects of college-preparatory programs on students’ college and labor market outcomes, the effects of educational tracking on students’ academic achievement, and the effects of single-sex education on students’ academic performance. The bulk of Jackson’s work, however, has focused on better understanding teacher labor markets: His extensive work on teachers analyzes the role of peer learning in teacher effectiveness, how student demographics directly affect the distribution of teacher quality across schools, how a teacher’s effectiveness depends on the schooling context within which they operate, how best to measure teacher quality, and other related topics.

Jackson’s scholarly articles have appeared in leading economics journals such as the Quarterly Journal of Economics, American Economic Journal, Journal of Labor Economics, The Review of Economics and Statistics, and The Journal of Human Resources. His research has been featured in a number of major media outlets, and his work has been supported by the National Science Foundation, Spencer Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Smith Richardson Foundation, and other organizations.

Krista Marks  
*CEO & Co-Founder of Woot Math*

Despite holding multiple U.S. patents, Krista Marks is known for having created Woot Math, a technology startup that aims to enhance the teaching of math. Before that, she founded Kerpoof, an online educational
platform designed to stimulate children’s creativity, which was later acquired by Disney. Marks has won many awards, including the Kids at Play Interactive (KAPI) award for “Emerging Pioneer” at the 2011 International Consumer Electronics Show.

**David Myers**  
*President and Chief Executive Officer, American Institutes for Research*

David Myers is a leading education researcher and president of the American Institutes for Research. His areas of expertise include the design, implementation and analysis of experimental studies on educational programs. He has studied a range of educational issues, including school vouchers, adult literacy programs, and racial disparities in secondary education. Myers joined the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in 2006 as senior vice president and director of the education, human development, and the workforce division. Prior to joining the AIR, he served as the senior vice president and chief strategy officer at Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. Myers received his Ph.D. in Sociology from Washington State University in 1980.

**Neal Finkelstein**  
*Co-director of WestEd’s Innovation Studies program*

WestEd’s Innovation Studies program helps educators and policymakers find promising ideas, understand how they work, put them into action and evaluate the results. Among Neal Finkelstein’s responsibilities are developing research and evaluation designs that study the impact of program implementation in K–12 public schools, ensuring that evaluation designs feature high standards of evidence. Prior to joining WestEd, Finkelstein worked on large-scale program evaluations and policy analyses encompassing K–12 and higher education, and the bridge between them. Nasir has also been an integral member of the UC Berkeley Resident Faculty Program where faculty integrate themselves into student life and provide support for students by living alongside them in the residence halls. In this role, she worked with Resident Faculty colleagues to promote academic achievement and to create an inclusive and comfortable community that encourages personal growth and development. She strives to integrate her scholarly work with her commitment to community and engaged scholarship.

**Ruth Curran Neild**  
*Former Director, Philadelphia Education Research Consortium*

Ruth Neild was the director of the Philadelphia Education Research Consortium (PERC) from 2017 until February of this year. The PERC is housed within Research for Action, a nonprofit education research organization based in Philadelphia. As director of the PERC, Neild worked to bridge education research and practice, as the mission of the consortium is to work with the Philadelphia public schools to conduct research.
on local education questions. Her research interests are secondary education and teacher qualifications and assessments. Before coming to the PERC, Neild held senior leadership positions in the Institute of Education Sciences within the United States Department of Education. She received her Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1999.

**Nichole Pinkard**  
*Associate Professor, Learning Sciences*

Nichole Pinkard is associate professor in the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University and faculty director of the Office of Community Education Partnerships. She is the founder of Digital Youth Network (DYN) and L3, a social learning platform that connects youth’s learning opportunities across school, home, community and beyond. Through collaborations with city agencies (e.g. YOUmedia with the Chicago Public Library, and City of Learning with Chicago Mayor Rahm Emmanuel), Pinkard and DYN’s work has ignited new models for reimagining, visualizing and documenting learning across spaces through the creation of existence proofs in urban contexts.

Pinkard received a 2010 Common Sense Media Award for Outstanding Commitment to Creativity and Youth, the Jan Hawkins Award for Early Career Contributions to Humanistic Research and Scholarship in Learning Technologies and an National Science Foundation Early CAREER Fellowship.

**Diane Schanzenbach**  
*Director and Faculty Fellow, Institute for Policy Research; Margaret Walker Alexander Professor of Human Development and Social Policy*

Dr. Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach is director of the Institute for Policy Research and the Margaret Walker Alexander Professor in the School of Education and Social Policy. She is also a research associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research. Schanzenbach is a labor economist who studies policies aimed at improving the lives of children in poverty, including education, health and income support policies. Her recent work has focused on tracing the impact of major public policies such as SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program) and early childhood education on children’s long-term outcomes. Schanzenbach was elected to the National Academy of Education in 2019. Schanzenbach was formerly director of the Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, an economic policy initiative that promotes policies to enhance broad-based economic growth. She has testified before both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives on her research.

**Barbara Schneider**  
*Distinguished Professor of Education and Sociology at Michigan State University*
Barbara Schneider currently holds the John A. Hannah University Distinguished Professor in the College of Education and the Department of Sociology at Michigan State University. Her research focuses on how the social contexts of schools and families influence the academic and social well-being of adolescents as they move into adulthood. Schneider has also played a significant role in the development of research methods for the real-time measurement of learning experiences, having published 15 books and over 100 articles on the topic.

**Judith Scott-Clayton**

*Associate Professor of Economics and Education at Columbia University*

An economics and education professor at Columbia University, Judith Scott-Clayton is specialized on the intersection between labor economics and higher education policy, having published on student loans, community colleges and financial aid. She is also an active member of the Community College Research Center and the National Bureau of Economic Research.

**Emily Tanner-Smith**

*Associate Dean for Research, University of Oregon College of Education*

Emily Tanner-Smith is an associate professor and the associate dean for research in the College of Education at the University of Oregon. Her research focuses on the prevention and treatment of behavioral and mental health problems in youth, specifically substance abuse, delinquency, mental health and academic problems. Tanner-Smith also holds an appointment in the Prevention Sciences Institute at the University of Oregon and has received the Nan Tobler Award from the Society for Prevention Research in honor of her contributions to the field. Within the Prevention Sciences Institute, she runs the Applied Research Methods and Statistics Lab, which works to prevent and treat behavioral and mental health problems using innovative statistical methods. She received her Ph.D. in sociology from Vanderbilt University in 2009.

**Elizabeth Tipton**

*MS Program Director; Associate Professor of Statistics*

Elizabeth Tipton is an associate professor of statistics at Northwestern University. Her research focuses on the development of statistical methods and tools for making “causal generalizations.” With regards to large randomized trials, Tipton is interested in developing methods to improve their generalizability and external validity, particularly in education and psychology. To date, Tipton’s research has been funded by the National Science Foundation, the Institute for Education Sciences, the Spencer Foundation and the Raikes Foundation.
Jeffrey Valentine
Program Coordinator, College of Education and Human Development, University of Louisville

Jeff Valentine is an associate professor and program coordinator in the department of counseling and human development within the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Louisville. His area of expertise is meta-analytics, and he works to improve meta-analytic techniques and applying them to educational policy issues as well as other social issues. He serves on the Board of the Elementary School Journal and the Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness. He received his Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Missouri, Columbia in 2001.