

California Blue Ribbon Commission On Early Childhood Education

Presenter Biographies July 27 Hearing

Dr. Jose Fierro, President/CEO, Cerritos Community College District

Dr. Jose Fierro was appointed the President/Superintendent of the Cerritos Community College District effective July 6, 2015. As president and superintendent of Cerritos College, Dr. Fierro has been very supportive of campus initiatives to ensure students meet their educational goals. He works tirelessly to strengthen and maintain connections between the college, unified school districts and communities it serves. His long-term goals are to work with all of the college's stakeholders to develop a long-term vision for the institution. This vision would be centered on student success and academic excellence that could eventually lead to Cerritos becoming an Aspen Award-winning institution.

Dr. Fierro earned his D.V.M. from the University of Applied Sciences in Bogotá, Colombia; his M.S. in Leadership and Management of Educational Programs from Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; and his Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership from Northcentral University in Prescott, Arizona.

Zurich Lewis, President, Board of Trustees, Cerritos College

Zurich was elected to the Cerritos College Board in 2014 to Trustee Area 7 representing the cities of La Mirada, Norwalk, Cerritos, Santa Fe Springs, and Unincorporated Whittier. He currently serves as President of the Board. Zurich is the first Cuban-American on the Board and also the youngest trustee in history. Zurich is a lifelong resident of La Mirada and has served his community through his church, Meals on Wheels, as a Youth Tennis Coach, as a Community Services Commissioner, and currently as President of the Rotary Club. He graduated from Biola University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and is currently a Juris Doctorate candidate at Trinity Law School. Zurich works as a law clerk for the Law Office of Lewis & Lewis based in La Mirada.

As trustee, Zurich fights for strengthening access, transfer rates, and dual enrollment programs to keep Cerritos College great for our community.

Sandra Marks, Dean of Health Occupations, Cerritos College

Sandy Marks is the Instructional Dean of Health Occupations at Cerritos College. As Dean of Health Occupations, Dean Marks oversees a number of health allied programs, including the Child Development program and the Child Development Center. Prior to her appointment in 2012, Dean Marks served as department chair for Medical Assisting, the faculty senate from 1997 to 2012, and the curriculum committee on Medical Assisting for the State of California. Prior to academia, Dean Marks had a successful career as a registered nurse on a hospital surgical floor, coronary care unit, radiation therapy clinic, and Assistant Director of Nursing.

Dean Marks earned her bachelor's degree in nursing, with a minor in management from Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; her master's degree in Health Care Administration from CSU Long Beach; and a master's degree in Nursing from CSU Dominguez Hills.

Kristin Schumacher, Policy Analyst, California Budget & Policy Center

Kristin Schumacher joined the Budget Center as a policy analyst in 2013. Prior to joining the Budget Center, she taught public policy and public administration courses in the School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado Denver and held research positions with the University and the Feminist Majority Foundation. She also worked in fundraising and development with the Colorado AIDS Project in Denver. She received a Ph.D. in public affairs from the University of Colorado Denver and a master's degree in social work with an emphasis in policy and administration from the University of Texas, Austin.

Dr. Ross A. Thompson, Ph.D.,

Ross A. Thompson is Distinguished Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Davis, where he directs the Social and Emotional Development Lab. Thompson is an internationally-recognized authority on the psychological development of young children, parent-child relationships, and the applications of developmental science to public policy problems such as early childhood mental health, child poverty, early education, and the development of school readiness. His work integrates understanding of the developing brain with early experiences in both typical and at-risk children, and he consults extensively to legislative committees, public agencies, and private foundations. He has published five books, several best-selling textbooks, and over 250 papers related to his work.

Thompson is President of the Board of Directors of Zero to Three, a national nonprofit devoted to the healthy development of young children and their families. He is on the Executive Committee of the Center for Poverty Research at the University of California, serves on the boards of the National Institute for Early Education Research and the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, and was a founding member of the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. He was a primary author of the California Preschool Learning Foundations for Social-Emotional Development and History-Social Science, and he has consulted extensively with education authorities throughout the country on early learning and school readiness. He received the Ann Brown Award for Excellence in Developmental Research in 2007, the University of California, Davis Distinguished Scholarly Public Service Award in 2011, and the Urie Bronfenbrenner Award for Lifetime Contribution to Developmental Psychology in the Service of Science and Society from the American Psychological Association in 2017.