



OPPORTUNITY AMERICA

A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN CTE CHARTER SCHOOLS

Opportunity America convened a panel at the 2017 National Charter Schools Conference to discuss career and technical education charter schools. Policy experts, school administrators and an employer partner explored the promise of CTE charters and the challenges confronting charter educators launching CTE programs. In the audience: some 100 charter school educators from across the country.

MODERATOR Tamar Jacoby president, Opportunity America



"We're here to talk about the intersection of two educational worlds – CTE schools and charter schools. We think charter schools are uniquely positioned to deliver on the promise of career and technical education. They're less rule-bound. They're more flexible. It's often easier for them to partner with employers and create opportunities for work-based learning."

Michael Petrilli president, Thomas B. Fordham Institute

"The charter movement has traditionally said, 'Bachelor degree or bust.' But we as a country are not that good at getting low-income and working-class kids through college . . . The challenge now is that we don't have enough CTE – not enough offerings or seats. But getting to scale is something the charter school movement knows something about. We know how to start schools. We know how to grow networks of schools."



Kristin Kearns-Jordan chief executive officer, Urban Assembly, New York City



"The traditional district bureaucracy can make a CTE educator crazy. I know – I run a network of district schools. Red tape and state-level CTE rules get in the way of innovating and doing things for kids . . . Charter educators are used to breaking the rules – not having rules or navigating around rules or pretending they don't exist. That's going to be really healthy for CTE charters."

Tori Stephens-Shauger executive director and principal, ACE Leadership High School, Albuquerque, NM

"We cofounded our school with the Associated General Contractors of New Mexico and their members, and they shape every aspect of what we do. They help us design curriculum. They provide professional development for teachers. They evaluate our students' projects. They help me understand the industry and what it needs – so I know what I'm aiming for and can prepare kids for the industry."



Yves Samake executive chef, Ritz Carlton Hotels



"As an employer, I do this for business reasons. I have a shortage of cooks. Partnering with a school is one of the best ways I have to find cooks . . . Personally, I came up this way, doing what the French call a stage, on-site in a kitchen – and it made me who I am. It taught me to always aim higher and want to get better. That's the opportunity we want to give these students."



Opportunity America is a Washington-based nonprofit promoting economic mobility – work, skills, careers, ownership and entrepreneurship for poor and working Americans. The organization's principal activities are research, policy development, dissemination of policy ideas and working to build consensus around policy proposals.