

# National Blue Ribbon Schools U.S. Department of Education 2015 Terrel H. Bell Awardees Video *Conversations* Transcript



## ***Introductions***

Irma Trosclair, [South Crowley Elementary School](#), Crowley, LA : My name is Irma Trosclair. I'm currently the principal of South Crowley Elementary, Crowley, Louisiana, Acadia Parish School District. Our children come from very disadvantaged backgrounds, extremely high poverty, a good number of them come from very disadvantaged home settings, home environments, a high crime area. Originally, the school culture was one of very low expectations, not only of the children but also of educators themselves.

James Heater, [Esther F. Garrison School of Visual and Performing Arts](#), Savannah, GA: I'm James Heater, I'm the principal of Esther F. Garrison School of Visual and Performing Arts in Savannah, Georgia. One of the biggest challenges that I had to take into the school was to making certain that we were able to go on a common mission, a common vision, for our school. I had moved in on April 8, 2013, as the fourth principal in three years in that school.

Heidi Smith, [Frank L. Huff Elementary School](#), Mountain View, CA: My name is Heidi Smith. I'm the principal of Huff Elementary School in Silicon Valley California, in Mountain View. I'm the proud principal of 580 kiddos where 37 countries are represented on my campus daily. The biggest challenge is having a wide range of abilities in one classroom. And I think that's the model for our nation, probably. And the challenge is moving them all from the point that they enter your doors, whether it's your school or your classroom, and truly differentiating for every child every day.

Edna Coia, [Francis J. Varieur Elementary School](#), Pawtucket, RI: My name is Edna Coia; I am the principal of Francis J. Varieur School. This is an urban school in the city of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Seventy-five percent of my students are free and reduced lunch and that is a great challenge.

Jon Cerny, [Bancroft-Rosalie Elementary School](#), Bancroft, NE: My name is Dr. Jon Cerny, and I am superintendent and elementary principal at Bancroft-Rosalie School in Bancroft, Nebraska. One thing interesting about our district is that we have approximately 20% of our students who option enroll in from other school districts, primarily from schools on the Omaha Indian

Reservation. And what we find is that students who option in in the elementary school years are typically one to two years behind where our students are at. So we have had to put systems in place to try to accelerate those students and get them caught up with their peers.

**Janell Uerkwitz, [Murdock Elementary School](#), Lafayette, IN:** My name is Janell Uerkwitz. I'm the Principal of Murdock Elementary School in Lafayette, Indiana, we are a K through 4 facility, our poverty level ranges from 89 to 96 percent, and our student mobility is 50 percent, almost every year.

**Rosalba De Hoyos, [Achieve Early College High School](#), McAllen, TX:** I'm Dr. Rosalba De Hoyos and I am the principal at Achieve Early College High School in McAllen, Texas. Our building is really 13 portables that are sitting on a college campus. And with the inclement weather in Texas, we have to face the hot sun and the rainy days, yet we use it as a leverage to exemplify that no matter what challenges you're facing, when you have a solid plan in front of you and you have those supports around you, the committed students, you will be able to accomplish anything you set your mind to.