Speakers’ Biography

**Steve Kappler** is the Assistant Vice President and Head of Postsecondary Strategy, Career and College Readiness at ACT, Inc. He is a frequent presenter and panelist at conferences around the country. He has more than 22 years of hands-on experience with important trends affecting the future of education. Steve recently took responsibility for setting ACT’s vision and strategy for the Postsecondary market. He previously managed market research and strategy for our Education Division and directed the publication of major ACT reports, including our annual report on the Condition of College and Career Readiness. Before joining ACT in 2007, Steve spent 16 years consulting with colleges and universities and developed the first comprehensive study of teen lifestyles and attitudes about college admissions.

**Margaret Ashida** manages the STEMx™ coalition of state STEM networks committed to accelerating the growth of the policies, practices and relationships needed to prepare U.S. students to compete and succeed in the nation’s STEM-driven economy. Operated by BattelleEd, a venture of Battelle, STEMx is connecting education with business and other stakeholders to improve student success, better prepare STEM educators, and mobilize regional and statewide communities toward collective impact. The growing network currently includes 18 states, the District of Columbia and the Territory of Guam. Previously, Margaret led the incubation of the Empire State STEM Learning Network at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and the State University of New York System. Before joining the non-profit sector, Margaret held executive positions at IBM in global workforce management, university relations, and e-business marketing with service on global and national innovation initiative teams. She started her career in Silicon Valley at the Xerox Corporation and ROLM.

Margaret served on the NYS Education Department (NYSED) Leadership Team for Next Generation Science Standards development and on a 2012 Career and Technical Education Advisory Panel. She co-chaired the 2012 Summer STEM Institute of the NYS STEM Education Collaborative of the state’s professional associations of teachers. She is also Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of LEAP (Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics Inc.); a Trustee Emeritus of the Anita Borg Institute for Women and Technology; founding co-chair of the Workforce Alliance of the National Center for Women and IT (NCWIT); and past chair of the MentorNet Advisory Board. Margaret holds a B.A. from the University of Rochester and an M.B.A. from the Stanford Graduate School of Business. She resides in Latham, New York.
Karen Kidwell is the Director of the Division of Program Standards in the Office of Next Generation Learners at the Kentucky Department of Education. The Division of Program Standards houses 3 branches: School Readiness, Academic Core, and Coordinated School Health. Karen is also Project Manager for Kentucky’s system of Leadership Networks, a comprehensive professional learning system designed to build district capacity around the implementation of academic standards (specifically, the new Common Core Standards in ELA and Mathematics and the Next Generation Science Standards) within the context of highly effective teaching, learning, and assessment practices in response to Kentucky’s college and career readiness agenda—Unbridled Learning.

Karen earned her BS in Elementary Education and Mathematics from the University of Louisville (1986) and her MA in Education from Georgetown College (1993). Between 2006 and 2008 she completed The Executive Leadership Program for Educators at Harvard University as a member of the Kentucky Department of Education team.