



## 2014 Nevada Children's Report Card Release Speaker Bios

**Kathleen Sandoval:** First Lady Kathleen Sandoval is a proud native Nevadan, having grown up in Reno and graduated from Wooster High School. She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology and speech pathology and audiology from California State University, Long Beach. She also holds a master's degree from the University of Nevada, Reno, where she completed her thesis on the whole-language approach for speech language pathology. Mrs. Sandoval has worked as a speech language pathologist focusing on traumatic brain injury, and as a rehabilitation program director for extended care facilities.

Mrs. Sandoval has dedicated her career to improving the lives of others. As Director of Operations at the Children's Cabinet in Reno, the largest non-profit organization in Northern Nevada, Mrs. Sandoval concentrates her efforts on reducing school truancy, evaluating mental health issues, supporting homeless, runaway and abused children, and on preventing family violence. As a youth advocate, she has been instrumental in implementing juvenile detention alternatives in Washoe County.

As Nevada's first lady, Mrs. Sandoval is a champion of literacy, early childhood education, children's mental health, food security for children and families and women's health initiatives. She chairs the Governor's Council on Food Security and annually hosts a Children's Mental Health Summit. Mrs. Sandoval serves as a reading ambassador for the Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge, as well as the Honorary Chair for the State of Nevada's "Read for the Record." In addition, Mrs. Sandoval is the Honorary Chair and spokeswoman for the Nevada Health Center's Mammovan, which provides healthcare support for underserved women. Mrs. Sandoval is a proud recipient of both the Women in Leadership Award and the Health Care Hero award.

The First Lady is privileged to have the many responsibilities with which the people of Nevada have entrusted her. The job she considers most important however, is her job as a wife and a mother, and she considers her family her number one priority. The Governor and Mrs. Sandoval were married in 1990 and have three children aged 9, 17, and 18.

**Dianna Walters:** Dianna Walters joined First Focus in 2014 as a Senior Policy Advisor and Co-Director of the State Policy Advocacy and Reform Center (SPARC), a national resource center for state-based

advocates aimed at improving outcomes for children and families involved with the child welfare system by building the capacity of and connections between state child welfare advocates.

Dianna received a BA in Social and Behavioral Sciences from the University of Southern Maine and a MS in Public Policy and Management with the Muskie School of Public Service. It is in Maine where Dianna spent over a decade engaged in child welfare reform efforts in partnership with the Youth and Community Engagement Team at the Muskie School of Public Service in Portland. She also spent six years engaged in direct service for homeless and at-risk youth with New Beginnings in Lewiston, Maine.

Dianna relocated to Missouri in 2011 to serve as a member of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative's policy team where she framed and disseminated messages about adolescent brain development and implications for child welfare, contributing to a shift in the perspectives and approaches of key stakeholders across a variety of sectors. Through her work with the Jim Casey Initiative, she co-managed a multi-state policy campaign to extend foster care beyond age 18 and advance youth engagement policies and practices. Dianna has worked on a variety of national and state foster care policy issues such as older youth permanency, education, psychotropic medications, trauma-informed services, and supporting healthy adolescent development. Dianna has been published on topics such as conducting transition planning with young people in foster care, permanency for older youth, and the importance of maintaining biological family connections.

Dianna currently serves as a board member of Camp to Belong International, a program that reunites siblings separated by foster care.

**Sheila James:** Sheila James is the Public Health Advisor for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Regional Health Administrator, Region IX in San Francisco. The Office of the Regional Health Administrator is within the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary of Health (OASH). Sheila supports 6 program offices by coordinating and overseeing special projects in the Office of the Regional Health Administrator, with particular emphasis on Let's Move Cities, Towns and Counties and Central Valley Outreach, a new initiative in which she is providing technical assistance to public health departments and community based organizations in the San Joaquin Valley of California – an area of the state plagued by low resources and high need.

Sheila is passionate about health promotion, disease prevention and eliminating health disparities and creating health equity for all Americans. Prior to accepting the position as Public Health Advisor, Sheila managed the Regional Resource Network Program, a project that assisted AIDS Service Organizations throughout Region IX build their capacity to serve their constituents.

She is a former Broadcast Engineer and Civil Litigation Paralegal and holds a Bachelor of Science in Paralegal Studies from Humphreys College in Stockton, CA.

Sheila is an avid walker and walks her health promotion talk by routinely walking 6-7 miles most days of the week.

**Joselyn Cousins:** Joselyn Cousins joined the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco in April 2013 as a regional manager in the Community Development Department covering Arizona, Nevada and Utah. In this role she partners with financial institutions, community- based organizations and government agencies to address pressing community development needs impacting low-income neighborhoods and households. This outcome is achieved by providing technical assistance and training on successful initiatives and programs which include affordable housing, healthy communities, asset building, small business development and access to financial services.

Joselyn has an extensive background in community development in the private and public sectors. Prior to joining the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Joselyn was the vice president of community development for United Way of Southern Nevada where she directed and managed the community impact team in developing strategies to address local issues in the areas of education, financial stability and health. She has many years of banking experience working as a Community Reinvestment Officer for both small and large financial institutions in Nevada. Joselyn earned her Bachelor's degree in Administration from California State University, San Bernardino.