

## **Dr Nancy Hoffman**

Jobs for the Future, Boston, Massachusetts

‘Building a Better “Pathways to Careers” System in the US’

Thursday 15 November, 2012, 12:25pm – 1:30pm

Taskforce Offices, Weston House, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 246 High Holborn, WC1V 7EX

### **Abstract**

This informal talk will focus on the dilemmas and challenges of building a better system of pathways in the US that transition a wide range of young people into middle skill jobs. In the US, fewer than 40% of young people arrive in their mid twenties with a postsecondary credential. And many with credentials are under or unemployed. I am the co-lead of the Pathways to Prosperity Network, a six state initiative to create structured options for young people leading to careers with high demand in the labor market. Challenges in the US include engaging employers, helping students and teachers learn about the world of work, and overcoming the stigma still attached to vocational education. The US has a history of tracking low performing and low-income students into low quality vocational education. To avoid this problem, those concerned with equitable outcomes have in the last decade proclaimed “college for all” as the goal. The country urgently needs other options as well as a strong message to youth that adults support their transition to productive careers. The project draws on lessons from the best vocational education systems outside the US, but it is not easy to adapt these successful practices to a US context. Along with talking about my work, I would like to engage with the audience since I believe many of the dilemmas faced by the US are similar to those in the UK, and I hope to learn from the conversation.

### **Biography**

Nancy Hoffman works on state policy, higher education, and the transition to postsecondary education. She has been deeply engaged in JFF's work to develop early college high schools and to expand opportunities for college-level work in high school to a wide range of students. She writes and speaks on the topic of college and career preparation, and is an editor of two JFF books: *Double the Numbers: Increasing Postsecondary Credentials for Underrepresented Youth*; and *Minding the Gap: Why Integrating High School with College Makes Sense and How to Do It*, both published by the Harvard Education Press.

Dr. Hoffman also works as a consultant for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and has been engaged in its 17-country study of vocational education and training, "Learning for Jobs." Her most recent book is *Schooling in the Workplace: How Six of the World's best Vocational Education Systems Prepare Young People for Jobs and Life* (Harvard Education Press 2011), a look at what the United States might learn from countries that have strong secondary and postsecondary career pathways serving the majority of young people. Dr. Hoffman has held posts as academic services dean at Harvard Graduate School of Education and program officer at the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education.

**The seminar is free to attend and takes place in central London. To reserve a place, please email: [James.Dawkins@educationandemployers.org](mailto:James.Dawkins@educationandemployers.org). Click [here](#) for more information.**