

## **Bio: Jessie Ryan, Executive Vice President of The Campaign for College Opportunity**

Jessie Ryan grew up in the Central Valley and was raised by a struggling single mother. While life was often challenging, Jessie's mother taught her that being economically disadvantaged did not mean a lifetime of disadvantage. She instilled the belief in Jessie that through education and civic participation individuals could vastly improve their quality of life. It was her mother's strong sense of civic service and empathy for others that inspired Jessie to seek a college education, something her mother had always dreamed of doing, and devote much of her professional life to making it possible for others to follow their same college dream.

As the Executive Vice President for the Campaign for College Opportunity, Jessie leads the organization's advocacy and policy efforts to increase the number of California students accessing higher education, impact the rate that students succeed in reaching their educational goals, and close racial equity gaps. A proud product of California's Community Colleges and California State University System, over the past decade, Jessie shepherded efforts to simplify the transfer pathway (SB1440 & AB 928) from community colleges to four-year universities. She has also successfully led efforts to expand enrollment funding for the CSU and UC as well as efforts to reform remedial education at community colleges (AB 705).

Most passionate about educational opportunity, leadership development, and elevating California's Central Valley, before joining the Campaign Jessie served as a Circuit Rider for the Great Valley Center's Community-based Assistance Programs (CAPs) working to support activities and organizations that promote the economic, social, and environmental well-being of California's Great Central Valley. Acting as a technical advisor on local issues throughout the 21-county region, Jessie provided extensive outreach and capacity building services to rural and underserved communities.

In December 2017, Jessie was elected president of the Sacramento City Unified School District, Board of Education, where her "Safe Haven School District" policy was lifted-up by Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson as a state and national model. From 2014-2020, as a board member, she was humbled to represent some of the poorest, most diverse neighborhoods in the state's Capitol and dedicated herself to ensuring that all students would have a pathway out of poverty through public education.

Jessie graduated from Emerge California, a political leadership training program designed to identify, educate, and inspire Democratic women who want to pursue a career in politics at the local and state level. Jessie was a graduate of the Women's Policy Institute, a program offered by the Women's Foundation of California and created to increase the number of women leaders in California who are actively involved in shaping and implementing policies that affect the health and well-being of women and girls. She was a fellow in the Institute for Developing Emerging Area Leaders (IDEAL) program, which is dedicated to engaging a diverse group of valley stakeholders in strengthening effective public policy decision-making. Jessie was also selected to represent the valley in the Pew Partnership's LeadershipPlenty – a program that teaches participants civic skills such as taking action, managing conflict, building partnerships, and engaging diverse communities in creating long-term positive community change. In 2018, she was named the 2018 "Woman of Inspiration" by the Sacramento Kings. In 2019 she was selected to participate in the Public Education Leadership Program (PELP) at Harvard.

She attended Sacramento City College, was the recipient of a Kelly Broadcasting scholarship, and holds her bachelor's degree from San Francisco State University and her Master of Arts degree from Saint

Mary's College of California. In her free time she enjoys traveling with her husband, Arsenio Mataka, Senior Advisor on Climate and Health Equity with the Biden administration and their two children.