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State Collaborative on Reforming Education

MANY THANKS TO SUMMIT PARTNERS:



NISWONGER

FOUNDATION



TSBA
Tennessee School Boards Association

S C  R E
State Collaborative on Reforming Education

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www.tnscore.org




SOUTHEAST REGIONAL RURAL EDUCATION SUMMIT

July 19-20, 2011
Lipscomb University
Nashville, Tennessee

SPREAD THE WORD ON RURAL EDUCATION WHILE AT THE SUMMIT!

The wireless information for the event is:

SSID: LUStudentNet Username: EduSummit Password: Educate

 Follow SCORE at twitter.com/Score4Schools
Tweet your own updates with your mobile device on the event with the hashtag **#ruralsummit**

 Follow SCORE at facebook.com/Score4Schools

Check in on Foursquare by searching for Rural Summit

Social media provides us with powerful new tools to share the important work that we are doing with those who need to hear it the most. Imagine that you weren't able to come to the Rural Summit but you really wanted to. It is important to share what you see and hear with your social network so we can all amplify the impact of this event.

Follow these easy steps to start sharing and amplifying the impact that you can make on solving the problems that face rural communities:

- Tweet what you think is interesting! If you have twitter on your mobile phone or laptop use the hashtag **#ruralsummit** in your updates (hashtags are an easy way to organize information online). The folks at home will be watching for this hashtag. Consider tweeting great quotes you hear or pictures of you and your colleagues at the summit.
- Ask questions or make comments that the whole summit can see. We are going to be displaying tweets from attendees of the summit and all the folks at home who wanted to attend but weren't able. Again use the hashtag **#ruralsummit** to see your question or comment on the big screen!
- If you use FourSquare, check in to the event labeled "Rural Summit" and share where you are and what you are learning with all your friends!
- If you have any questions don't hesitate to find a SCORE staff member and they will be more than happy to help you amplify the impact of the Rural Summit with social media!

Follow these other Rural Summit partners:

Tennessee School Boards Association:

www.facebook.com/TennesseeSchoolBoardsAssociation
www.twitter.com/TSBA_OnTheHill

Southern Regional Education Board:

www.twitter.com/educationalan



Welcome to the Southeast Regional Rural Education Summit, hosted by the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) in partnership with the Ayers Foundation, the Niswonger Foundation, the Rural School and Community Trust, and the Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA).

The connection between a quality education and a vibrant, sustainable economy has never been clearer. Every year, one out of every four students nationally fails to graduate from high school, and of those graduates, less than half graduate with the skills necessary for college or the workforce. In rural communities, jobs that have historically been held by workers with limited education are being lost to changes in production technology, overseas competition, and changing consumer demand. Indeed, unemployment rates for those without at least a high school education are much higher than unemployment rates for those with a bachelor's degree or higher. Overall, the South is home to half of the country's rural adults who have not completed high school, and the majority of the lowest performing rural school districts are concentrated in the region.

In the midst of this context, Tennessee has undergone significant changes over the last two years to transform the state into a national leader for education reform. State and local leaders from both parties have come together to make a substantial commitment to ensuring that every Tennessean graduates from high school prepared for the global economy. In order to reach our educational goals and maintain the economic vibrancy of our state, it is clear that we must focus on our rural communities, which educate one-third of all public school students in Tennessee.

Since SCORE was founded in 2009, we have traveled throughout the state, in part, to identify those policies and practices that are enabling districts to make significant gains in student achievement. While we have witnessed many innovative practices in our rural communities - including targeting compensation to those teachers that are providing their students with excellent instruction and forming robust partnerships between K-12 and the postsecondary community to ensure that all students have the supports they need to be successful in employment and postsecondary pathways - we have also heard from you that the sharing of these best practices is limited. We feel an imperative to uncover and highlight best practices in rural education from throughout the state and the Southeast.

The topics and themes that run throughout the two-day summit are a response to the myriad conversations we have had with rural educators and administrators, policymakers, and other partners on what they need to transform our state's rural schools and make them #1 in the Southeast within five years. Throughout the summit, you will have the opportunity to interact with regional and national speakers and resource experts who can aid our communities in meeting this goal. We hope that you will be able to gain some of the tools and insight you need to ensure that our state remains economically vibrant and globally competitive.

With warmest regards,

**SOUTHEAST REGIONAL RURAL EDUCATION SUMMIT
@ LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY**

Tuesday, July 19

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. | Registration | <i>Collins Auditorium</i> |
| 9:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. | Welcome <i>Dr. Bill Frist</i> Chairman, State Collaborative on Reforming Education U.S. Senate (1994-2006) <i>Dr. Candice McQueen</i> Dean, College of Education, Lipscomb University | <i>Collins Auditorium</i> |
| 9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. | Rural Education in Tennessee <i>Jamie Woodson</i> President and CEO, State Collaborative on Reforming Education Tennessee State Senator (1998-2011) <i>Kevin Huffman</i> Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Education <i>Bill Hagerty</i> Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development <i>Dr. Bill Frist</i> Chairman, State Collaborative on Reforming Education (Moderator) | <i>Collins Auditorium</i> |
| 10:45 a.m. - 11:45 p.m. | Rural Education in the Southeast <i>John White</i> Deputy Assistant Secretary for Rural Outreach, U.S. Department of Education <i>Michael Marshall</i> Alternate Federal Co-Chairman, Delta Regional Authority <i>Dr. Doris Williams</i> Executive Director and Director of Capacity Building Program, Rural School and Community Trust <i>Ted Abernathy</i> Executive Director, Southern Growth Policies Board <i>Cory Linton</i> Co-Founder, School Improvement Network <i>Tom Pittman</i> President, Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi <i>Alan Richard</i> Director of Communications, Southern Regional Education Board (Moderator) | <i>Collins Auditorium</i> |
| 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Lunch | <i>Allen Auditorium</i> |
| 1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. | Concurrent Breakout Sessions Turning Around Low-performing Schools (Room 363) <i>Dr. Pat Ashley</i> Executive Director, District and School Transformation, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction <i>Mark Willoughby</i> Director of Schools, DeKalb County Schools <i>Dr. Shannon Grooms</i> Principal, Grassy Fork Elementary, Coker County School System <i>Scott Warren</i> Director of State Initiatives, Southern Regional Education Board (Facilitator) | <i>Ezell</i> |



1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions (cont.)

Ezell

Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and Training (Room 211)

Dr. Gina Kunz
National Center for Research on Rural Education

Dr. Candice McQueen
Dean, College of Education, Lipscomb University

Dr. Virginia Foley
Educational Leadership and Policy, East Tennessee State University

Robbie Mitchell
Director, Northeast Professional Development Center

Shani Dowell
Executive Director, Teach For America Nashville

Dr. Tammy Grissom
Executive Director, Tennessee School Boards Association (Facilitator)

Middle Grades Education (Room 138)

Dr. Gene Bottoms
Senior Vice President, Southern Regional Education Board

Joseph Fisher
Assistant Commissioner, Division of College & Career Readiness, Tennessee Department of Education

Ashley Buckelew
Higher Achievement Summer School at the University of West Alabama and Indian Springs School

Laurie Brown
Higher Achievement Summer School at the University of West Alabama and Indian Springs School

Randall Bennett
Deputy Executive Director & General Counsel, Tennessee School Boards Association (Facilitator)

Improving Rural Education Through Community Development (Room 301)

Dr. Lionel "Bo" Beaulieu
Director, Southern Rural Development Center

Lisa Hankins
Director, REDI (Regional Economic Development Initiative)

Jan McKeel
Executive Director, South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance

Dreama Gentry
Director, Externally Sponsored Programs, Berea College

Brad Smith
Chief of Staff, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (Facilitator)

2:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.

Panel of Breakthrough Rural Educators

Allen Auditorium

Crissy Haslam
First Lady of Tennessee

Mark Willoughby
Director of Schools, DeKalb County Schools

Dr. Dale Lynch
Superintendent, Hamblen County Schools

Barbara Hallums
e4TN Teacher of the Year

Carmen Andrews
GEAR UP Coordinator, Meigs County Schools

Linda Irwin
Director of School Partnerships, Niswonger Foundation (Moderator)

4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Using Technology to Enhance Rural Education

Collins Auditorium

Dr. Myk Garn
Director of Educational Technology, Southern Regional Education Board

Series of concurrent breakout sessions:

Ezell

National and International Context of Online Learning (Room 136)

Dr. Allison Powell
Vice President, International Association for K-12 Online Learning

Kentucky's "Snow-bound" Pilot (Room 109)

David Cook

Director of Innovation and Partner Engagement, Kentucky Department of Education

Marty Park

Regional Services Director, Office of Knowledge, Information and Data Systems, Kentucky Department of Education

Northeast Tennessee College and Career Ready Consortium (Doris Swang Chapel)

Linda Irwin
Director of School Partnerships, Niswonger Foundation

District Perspective on Online Education (Room 363)

Dr. Kathleen Airhart
Director of Schools, Putnam County Schools

Sharon Anderson
Virtual Learning Coordinator

Using Technology for Teacher Professional Development and Instructional Support (Room 301)

Dr. Thomas Farmer
Penn State

Student Perspective on Online Education (Room 138)

Dr. Wendy Oliver
Director, e4TN

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Reception

Governor's Residence

Wednesday, July 20

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. | Breakfast | <i>Allen Auditorium</i> |
| 9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. | College-Readiness and Completion in Rural Education <i>Dave Spence</i> President, Southern Regional Education Board <i>John Morgan</i> Chancellor, Tennessee Board of Regents <i>Chuck English</i> Director, Tennessee Appalachian Center for Higher Education <i>Joe Barker</i> Executive Director, Southwest Tennessee Development District <i>Vivian Franklin</i> Director of College and Career Counseling, Niswonger Foundation <i>Krissy DeAlejandro</i> Executive Director, tnAchieves <i>Susan Rhodes</i> College Access Counselor, Ayers Foundation <i>Bob Obrohta</i> Executive Director, Tennessee College Access and Success Network (Moderator) | <i>Allen Auditorium</i> |
| 10:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. | Concurrent Breakout sessions Administrator Success in Rural Schools (Room 363) <i>Dr. Pamela Scott</i> Educational Leadership and Policy, East Tennessee State University <i>Dr. Eric Glover</i> Educational Leadership and Policy, East Tennessee State University <i>Dr. Autumn Tooms</i> Director, Center for Educational Leadership, University of Tennessee Knoxville <i>Dr. Kathy O'Neill</i> Learning Centered Leadership Program, Southern Regional Education Board (Facilitator) Early Childhood Education (Room 136) <i>Ralph Smith</i> Executive Vice President, Annie E. Casey Foundation <i>Dr. Cathy Grace</i> Director of Early Childhood Development, Children's Defense Fund <i>Dr. Tammy Mann</i> President and CEO, Campagna Center <i>Barbara Lunnemann</i> Regional Early Childhood Expert, Save the Children <i>Sarah Belanger</i> Regional Early Childhood Expert, Save the Children <i>Dr. Lynne Vernon-Feagans</i> University of North Carolina School of Education <i>Bobbi Lussier</i> Assistant Commissioner, Division of School Readiness and School Learning, Tennessee Department of Education <i>Dr. Doris Williams</i> Executive Director and Director of Capacity Building Program, Rural School and Community Trust (Facilitator) | <i>Ezell</i> |



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|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. | Lunch | <i>Allen Auditorium</i> |
| 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. | Strategies for Improving High School Graduation and College Completion Rates (Room 301) <i>Bonnie Gordon</i> Partners for Postsecondary Success <i>Steve Gass</i> Tennessee State Agricultural Education Supervisor and Tennessee FFA Advisor <i>Vivian Franklin</i> Director of College and Career Counseling, Niswonger Foundation <i>Susan Rhodes</i> College Access Counselor, Ayers Foundation <i>Joan Lord</i> Vice President, Southern Regional Education Board (Facilitator) Family Engagement Strategies (Room 138) <i>Dr. Gina Kunz</i> National Center for Research on Rural Education <i>Karen Davis</i> President, Tennessee PTA <i>Beverly Raimondo</i> Director, Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership, Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence <i>Penny Thompson</i> Co-Director, Wilson County Parents as Teachers <i>Denise McMillan</i> Co-Director, Wilson County Parents as Teachers <i>Anne Foster</i> Executive Director, Parents for Public Schools (Facilitator) | <i>Allen Auditorium</i> |
| 2:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. | Federal Policy Implications for Rural Schools <i>Noelle Ellerson</i> Assistant Director, Policy Analysis and Advocacy, American Association of School Administrators <i>Robert Mahaffey</i> Director of Communications and Marketing, Rural School and Community Trust Philanthropy and Business in Rural Education <i>Scott Niswonger</i> Niswonger Foundation <i>Jon Ayers</i> Ayers Foundation <i>Randy Boyd</i> tnAchieves <i>Gary Funk</i> Center for Midwestern Initiatives, Rural School and Community Trust <i>Jamie Woodson</i> President and CEO, State Collaborative on Reforming Education (Moderator) Thank You and Closing Remarks <i>Jamie Woodson</i> President and CEO, State Collaborative on Reforming Education | <i>Allen Auditorium</i> |



RURAL SUMMIT BREAKOUT SESSION NARRATIVES



Day 1-A

Turning Around Low-Performing Schools

Successfully turning around underperforming schools is a crucial strategy to improving a school district's overall performance and contributing to the health of local economies. In this session, participants will explore ways to provide educators with the supports they need to undergo turnaround work, use data to target and support struggling students, and involve community partners to accelerate reform plans.

Resource experts: Dr. Pat Ashley, Executive Director, District and School Transformation, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; Mark Willoughby, Director of Schools, DeKalb County Schools; Dr. Shannon Grooms, Principal, Grassy Fork Elementary, Cocke County School System

Facilitator: Scott Warren, Director of State Initiatives, Southern Regional Education Board

Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and Training

Teacher success is a critical component to ensuring the success of all schools, including those in rural communities. In this session, participants will learn strategies for managing human capital and continually supporting teachers to improve student learning outcomes.

Resource experts: Dr. Gina Kunz, National Center for Research on Rural Education; Dr. Candice McQueen, Dean, College of Education, Lipscomb University; Dr. Virginia Foley, Educational Leadership and Policy, East Tennessee State University; Robbie Mitchell, Director, Northeast Professional Development Center; Shani Dowell, Executive Director, Teach For America Nashville

Facilitator: Dr. Tammy Grissom, Executive Director, Tennessee School Boards Association

Middle Grades Education

Helping students successfully master the middle grades is a critical component of narrowing achievement gaps and improving high school and college completion rates. Participants will explore ways to smooth the transition from middle school to high school and help students set themselves up for postsecondary and employment pathways.

Resource Experts: Dr. Gene Bottoms, Senior Vice President, Southern Regional Education Board; Joseph Fisher, Assistant Commissioner, Division of College and Career Readiness, Tennessee Department of Education; Ashley Buckelew, Higher Achievement Summer School at the University of West Alabama and Indian Springs School; Laurie Brown, Higher Achievement Summer School at the University of West Alabama

Facilitator: Randall Bennett, Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel, Tennessee School Boards Association

Improving Rural Education Through Community Development

Strengthening the educational system while supporting students and other community members to continue their education beyond high school is a critical component to maintaining the economic vibrancy of our communities. In this session, participants will explore ways to improve the economic development of their communities through education strategies.

Resource Experts: Dr. Lionel “Bo” Beaulieu, Southern Rural Development Center; Lisa Hankins, Director, REDI (Regional Economic Development Initiative); Jan McKeel, Executive Director South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance; Dreama Gentry, Director, Externally Sponsored Programs, Berea College

Facilitator: Brad Smith, Chief of Staff, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development

Day 1-B

Using Technology to Enhance Rural Education

After hearing a speech that details the national context for using technology in education, participants will have the opportunity to pick from a variety of breakout sessions that will highlight a different aspect and application of technology to enhance student achievement:

National and International Context of Online Learning

Dr. Allison Powell from the International Association for K-12 Online Learning will provide a national and global view of online education, existing policy barriers, future trends, and ways that online education can bolster traditional education.

Kentucky’s “Snow-bound” Pilot

David Cook and Marty Park from the Kentucky Department of Education will address how their state is using distance technology to continue to provide instruction to students who attend school in four districts that close school an average of 20 days each year due to inclement weather.

Northeast Tennessee College and Career Ready Consortium

Linda Irwin from the Niswonger Foundation will address how her organization is using distance learning as one of its strategies to increase the access to rigorous coursework for students in 15 rural districts in Northeast Tennessee.

District Perspective on Online Education

Dr. Kathleen Airhart and Sharon Anderson will discuss Putnam County Schools’ VITAL program—Virtual Instruction to Accentuate Learning—and the policy barriers her system faces as it works to expand their model to 20 counties in the state.

Using Technology for Teacher Professional Development and Instructional Support

Dr. Thomas Farmer will discuss how the National Research Center on Rural Education Support used technology to provide direct real-time guidance in literacy instruction for struggling learners in kindergarten and first grade; to provide professional development training to rural middle grade teachers through online modules and video-conferencing; and to support AP distance learning classes by providing training and support to local-school based facilitators.

Student Perspective on Online Education

e4TN Director Dr. Wendy Oliver will discuss the ways that online and blended learning can be implemented in a district to enhance a student’s traditional education environment. She will be joined by a student panel, composed of students who take both traditional and online courses, which will share their experiences with the organization.

Day 2

Administrator Success in Rural Schools

District and school leaders play a vital role in setting the direction for successful schools. Participants will explore ways to support the development of effective teachers, implement effective organizational processes, and adapt to changing policy and political environments in their districts.

Resource Experts: Dr. Pamela Scott, Educational Leadership and Policy, East Tennessee State University; Dr. Eric Glover, Educational Leadership and Policy, East Tennessee State University; Dr. Autumn Tooms, Director, Center for Educational Leadership, University of Tennessee Knoxville

Facilitator: Dr. Kathy O’Neill, Learning Centered Leadership Program, Southern Regional Education Board

Early Childhood Education

Ensuring that students are prepared for school and are reading on grade level by the end of fourth grade is a critical component to setting students up for success in high school and beyond. In this session, participants will explore strategies for increasing reading proficiency among students in the early grades and engaging parents and communities in this goal.

Resource Experts: Ralph Smith, Executive Vice President, Annie E. Casey Foundation; Dr. Cathy Grace, Director of Early Childhood Development, Children’s Defense Fund; Dr. Tammy Mann, President and CEO, Campagna Center, Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute, United Negro College Fund; Barbara Lunnemann, Regional Early Childhood Expert, Save the Children; Sarah Belanger, Regional Early Childhood Expert, Save the Children; Dr. Lynne Vernon-Feagans, University of North Carolina School of Education; Bobbi Lussier, Assistant Commissioner, Division of School Readiness and School Learning, Tennessee Department of Education

Facilitator: Dr. Doris Williams, Executive Director and Director of Capacity Building Program, Rural School and Community Trust

Strategies for Improving High School Graduation and College Completion Rates

Successfully increasing high school and college completion rates is a critical component to strengthening local economies, in rural areas as much as it is in other areas. Participants will explore ways to foster a culture of high school and college completion and take the necessary steps to smooth the transition from secondary school to postsecondary and employment pathways for students and their families.

Resource Experts: Bonnie Gordon, Partners for Postsecondary Success; Steve Gass, Tennessee State Agricultural Education Supervisor and Tennessee FFA Advisor; Vivian Franklin, Director of College and Career Counseling, Niswonger Foundation; Susan Rhodes, College Access Counselor, Ayers Foundation

Facilitator: Joan Lord, Vice President, Southern Regional Education Board

Family Engagement Strategies

Successfully engaging parents and other family members in the education of their children is a critical component to driving and sustaining student achievement that takes a concerted strategy involving parents, teachers, school administrators, and other members of the community at large. Participants will explore what constitutes successful family engagement and how to form sustainable connections that will benefit children throughout their educational careers.

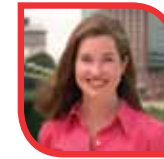
Resource Experts: Dr. Gina Kunz, National Center for Research on Rural Education; Karen Davis, President, Tennessee PTA; Beverly Raimondo, Director, Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership, Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence; Penny Thompson, Co-Director, Wilson County Parents as Teachers ; Denise McMillan, Co-Director, Wilson County Parents as Teachers

Facilitator: Anne Foster, Executive Director, Parents for Public Schools

RURAL SUMMIT SPEAKER BIOS



Dr. Bill Frist is a nationally recognized heart and lung transplant surgeon and former U.S. Senate Majority Leader. Frist rose to the Majority Leader position having served fewer years in Congress than any person in history. He served on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committee, responsible for writing all education legislation, and was chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Policy on education. Dr. Frist graduated from Princeton University, Harvard Medical School, and completed his transplant fellowship at Stanford. Board certified in two specialties, he founded the Vanderbilt Multiorgan Transplant Center, performing more than 150 heart and lung transplants and authoring more than 100 peer-reviewed medical articles, 300 newspaper articles, and seven books. As a university professor, he has taught at Princeton, Vanderbilt Medical School, and Vanderbilt Business School. Dr. Frist served 14 years on the board of Princeton University. Dr. Frist founded SCORE, of which he currently serves as chairman, in 2009, noting the inextricable connection between educational attainment and health outcomes.



Jamie Woodson is the President and CEO of the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) and has been a leading figure in spearheading Tennessee's education reform efforts. Prior to leading SCORE, Woodson served for over 12 years in the Tennessee General Assembly in both the House and Senate. As Chairman of the Senate Education Committee and later as Senate Speaker Pro Tempore, she was a key leader in Tennessee's First to the Top legislation, sponsored the overhaul of Tennessee's K-12 education funding formula, and led the expansion of Tennessee's public charter schools. In 2011, Woodson co-sponsored the state's tenure reform legislation, an effort aimed at improving teacher effectiveness by making the granting of tenure a more meaningful process. Woodson currently chairs Tennessee's First to the Top Advisory Council, a panel of national and state education experts that provides strategic guidance on implementation of the state's landmark Race to the Top reform. Woodson, an attorney, received a Bachelor of Arts, and Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.



Ted Abernathy serves as the Executive Director of the Southern Growth Policies Board, a public policy think tank that develops economic development policies for 13 Southern states. Abernathy's experience in economic development spans nearly three decades. Most recently he served as Executive Vice President and COO for the Research Triangle Regional Partnership, a private non-profit economic development organization. Abernathy received his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, his Master's from Johns Hopkins University, and graduated from the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma. He is also an Eisenhower Fellow.



Jon Ayers is the founding partner of ProAccura, a corporation that focuses its business on assessing information and IT network security issues for community-based banks and credit unions, and serves as the current president and CEO. He started his career in banking with FirstBank in Lexington, Tennessee 20 years ago. His professional roles in banking have included consumer and commercial lending, branch management, credit/financial analysis roles, and various senior oversight roles. Ayers attended the University of Memphis, holds a bachelor's degree in finance from Middle Tennessee State University, and is a graduate of the Southeastern School of Banking and the Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University. He also serves on many not-for-profit and for-profit boards.



Joe Barker is the Executive Director of the Southwest Tennessee Development District in Jackson, Tennessee. SWTDD is a regional planning and economic development organization that serves eight counties. Barker has a diverse background in public service in both state and local government. He has served as Mayor of Savannah, Tennessee and of Hardin County, Tennessee. When Phil Bredesen was elected Governor of Tennessee in 2002, he appointed Barker to the position of Assistant Commissioner of the state Department of Economic and Community Development. Barker represented the Governor on the Appalachian Regional Commission, Delta Regional Authority, and the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Authority. Barker serves on numerous state and national economic development boards and is a frequent speaker on rural economic development strategies and initiatives.



Randal Boyd is the Chairman, CEO, majority shareholder, and founder of Radio Systems Corporation. Prior to starting RSC in 1991, Boyd founded Saco, Inc., a farm supply distribution company in 1983, and was its President until 1999 when he sold it to Saco's management team. Prior to founding Saco, Mr. Boyd held several positions at Fi-Shock, Inc., a manufacturer of electric fencing equipment, including Director of International Sales and Vice President of Sales. He is currently on the Board of Directors of EDP BioTech, a bio-science company doing cancer and DNA research, and of Clayton Bank Corp. He is also on the Board of several non-profit organizations, including tnAchieves. He received a degree from the University of Tennessee in Industrial Management and a master's degree in liberal studies from Oklahoma University.



Krissy DeAlejandro is the Executive Director for tnAchieves, a college access, last dollar scholarship program designed to provide an opportunity for Tennessee public high school graduates to receive \$3,000 annually for community college tuition. Volunteers provide funding for scholarships and serve as mentors to students to eliminate the barriers of post-secondary education. The program's recipients volunteer their time and energy by giving back eight hours of community service per semester they receive funding. The program is currently operating in 16 counties in the state.



Noelle Ellerson is the Assistant Director for Policy Analysis and Advocacy for the American Association of School Administrators where she focuses on legislative and policy analysis as it relates to the role of the federal government in education and advocacy for public education. She formerly worked for The College Board as a Legislative Associate and taught high school special education. Ellerson holds a bachelor's degree in political science and elementary/special education from Nazareth College, and a master's of public policy in education administration and policy studies from the State University of New York at Albany.



Chuck English is the Director of the Tennessee Appalachian Center for Higher Education Program (TnACHE), a partnership of post-secondary and higher-education institutions and K-12 schools in counties of Appalachian Tennessee deemed distressed or at-risk by the Appalachian Regional Commission to increase the low educational attainment of the region's citizens. English has more than 18 years of education and experience in working with students and educators in formal and informal educational settings. His work ranges from serving as an elementary school educator to working as a college instructor of computer science and physical science. English currently serves as the Associate Director of SouthEast Educational, Inc, which administers TnACHE. He holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's in science education from West Virginia University.



Gary Funk is currently working with The Rural School and Community Trust to coordinate its new Center for Midwestern Initiatives, an effort dedicated to promoting place-based education, building philanthropic assets for rural schools, and working with colleges and universities to prepare outstanding rural educators. Prior to his role with The Trust, Funk was with the Community Foundation of the Ozarks for 11 years, where he served as President and C.E.O. During his tenure, the Foundation increased its asset base from \$25 million to more than \$180 million and built a public service network that includes 43 rural community affiliates, nearly 400 non-profit agencies, and 97 school districts. The Foundation's Rural Schools Partnership has become a model for integrating public education, economic development, and philanthropy. Originally a fourth grade teacher, Funk spent 20 years in education as a classroom teacher, professor, and administrator before joining the Community Foundation of the Ozarks.



Dr. Myk Garn is the Director of Educational Technology for the Southern Regional Education Board, a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that works with 16 member states to improve public pre-K-12 and higher education. Before joining SREB in 2008, Garn held several positions related to using technology to enhance student educational achievement, including serving as the executive director of Kentucky Virtual Campus, vice-president of eLearning and senior advisor for distance education for the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, and chief academic officer for Kentucky Virtual University. He also served as the director of distance learning for the University System of Georgia Board of Regents. Garn holds a bachelor's degree from the Brooks Institute of Photography, a master's degree in educational system design from Michigan State University, and a Ph.D in education policy and evaluation from the University of Kentucky.



William F. Hagerty, IV serves as Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development. As head of the state agency primarily responsible for job creation, Hagerty is charged by Governor Bill Haslam to develop strategies which help make Tennessee the No. 1 place in the Southeast for high quality jobs. Prior to joining ECD, Hagerty founded Hagerty Peterson, LLC, a merchant bank and private equity firm from which he is currently taking a leave of absence. Hagerty has also served as CFO, COO, CEO, and Chairman of a variety of domestic and international firms, including CyMed, NEW Customer Services Company, Sound Advice, Powerway, Inc. and ALAM, Ltd. Hagerty attended Vanderbilt University where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a degree in economics. He also attended Vanderbilt University Law School where he was a Wilson Scholar and associate editor of the Law Review. He resides in Nashville, Tennessee.



Crissy Haslam is the First Lady of Tennessee and has served on various community boards and commissions, and she currently serves as chair of the Tennessee Executive Residence Foundation and Commission. As First Lady, Haslam aims to help raise literacy rates in Tennessee through supporting parental involvement in their children's education. In the past, she worked at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville as the assistant director of admissions and in the College of Liberal Arts. Haslam earned an undergraduate degree in finance and marketing from Emory University and a master of science degree in education in the program of College Student Personnel at UT Knoxville.



Kevin Huffman is the Tennessee Department of Education Commissioner. Before assuming this post in 2011, Huffman served as the Executive Vice President of Public Affairs for Teach For America, managing the organization's strategic growth from 1,000 teachers in 13 regions, to over 8,000 teachers in more than 40 sites across the country. Before joining Teach For America's staff, Huffman was an associate at Hogan & Hartson in Washington, D.C. He is a graduate of Swarthmore College and New York University School of Law. Huffman was a 1992 Teach For America corps member, and taught bilingual first and second grades in Houston.



Linda Irwin is the Assistant Director in charge of School Projects at The Niswonger Foundation, which was founded in 2001 to create opportunities for individual and community growth through educational programs, scholarships, and other charitable activities. Before assuming this role, Irwin was an educator in the Maryville City School System for 33 years, where she served as a teacher, school counselor, and, for 12 years, as a school administrator. As principal, Irwin led the state in year-to-year gains in student academic performance and was recognized as one of the top elementary schools in Tennessee. She is currently the Past-President of the Tennessee Principals Association. Irwin holds a bachelor's degree from East Tennessee State University and a master's degree from Tusculum College.



Cory Linton is Vice President of Business Development for School Improvement Network which provides 24/7 online professional development for over 700,000 teachers nationwide. Cory and his three brothers are nationally recognized advocates for teachers receiving high quality professional development whenever and wherever they need it. A protégé of his school teacher parents, Blanch and John Linton who founded School Improvement Network in the early 1990s, Cory is chief business development leader and is heavily involved in technology planning, research and product development. Earlier, Cory worked in marketing at Microsoft, as the Executive Communications Manager for Microsoft's \$3 Billion Windows Server Division. Prior to that, Cory was a Senior Product Manager for the Tablet PC, and appeared on stage many times with Bill Gates to promote its early stage adoption. Linton received his MBA from Columbia Business School, is married to Lisa, and has five children that love to learn on the latest digital devices.



Robert Mahaffey is director of communications and marketing for the Rural School and Community Trust, the premier national advocacy organization dedicated to helping rural schools and communities grow better together. Mahaffey has held a variety of positions in communications and external relations at New American Schools, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare. In 2011, he was elected as president of Organizations Concerned about Rural Education, a national coalition of education, agriculture, community development, technology, and utility organizations with common concern for the economic future of rural America. Mahaffey holds a bachelor's degree in political science and English from Brigham Young University and a master's degree in management from the University of Maryland.



Michael G. Marshall was appointed by President Barack Obama in April 2010 to serve as Alternate Federal Co-Chairman of the Delta Regional Authority (DRA). Prior to joining the Obama Administration, he served as Mayor of Sikeston, MO, from 2003 to 2009. Mr. Marshall is the former President of First State Bank & Trust, Inc. and served on the Board of Commissioners of the Southeast Missouri Regional Port Authority for 13 years. While serving as the Mayor of Sikeston, he established the Sikeston Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority for both commercial and residential property, along with initiating the revitalization efforts for downtown Sikeston. He also served as the director of the Joint Transportation Commission of Sikeston's I-55 Northern Interchange Project. Mr. Marshall has extensive background in farm management, and was a past president of the Sikeston Jaycees and Sikeston Area Chamber of Commerce. In 2009, Marshall was recognized as Citizen of the Year by the Sikeston Area Chamber of Commerce. Marshall received his Bachelor's degree from Westminster College. He is also a graduate of the Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University.



Dr. Candice McQueen is the Dean of the College of Education at Lipscomb University. In only three years as dean, she has tripled the size of the graduate school, started a new Ed.D. program, brought in millions of grant dollars to the college, started off-campus and online programs, and has partnered with the community in a variety of school improvement projects, Hispanic initiatives, and innovative professional development partnerships including the Cameron Transformation Partnership with MNPS and LEAD Academy. Before coming to Lipscomb, Dr. McQueen taught in both private and public elementary and middle schools where she was awarded multiple awards for both her teaching and the curriculum design of new magnet schools. Dr. McQueen has a bachelor's degree from Lipscomb, a master's degree in educational administration from Vanderbilt, and a Ph.D from the University of Texas.



John Morgan is the Chancellor of the Tennessee Board of Regents which is composed of 46 campuses, more than 200,000 students, and 15,000 full-time employees. In this capacity, Morgan is responsible for carrying out the reforms outlined in the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010, which has attracted national attention as a catalyst for transformational change. Morgan's public service career dates back to 1976, when he entered state government as a research assistant for the Legislative Fiscal Review Committee. Before joining the Board of Regents, Morgan served as Deputy to the Governor. Prior to that, he served as Comptroller of the Treasury for Tennessee. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science and history from Austin Peay State University.



Scott M. Niswonger is the founder of Landair Transport and Forward Air Corporation (FWRD). These two companies, which provide high service-level truckload operations and contract services to the air cargo industry and other time definite shippers, have combined annual revenues of over \$600 million. Niswonger is very involved in community and civic affairs. He actively supports economic development in the region by promoting his philosophy of "Learn, Earn, and Return." He is the founder and president of the Niswonger Foundation, which he established in 2001 to create opportunities for individual and regional growth through educational programs, scholarships, and other charitable activities. Niswonger is a graduate of the Aviation Technology Program at Purdue University and received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Tusculum College. He was awarded a doctorate of technology degree from Purdue University and an honorary doctorate from Tusculum College.



Bob Obrohta is the Executive Director of the Tennessee College Access and Success Network where he directs a statewide membership-based college access network with the vision of removing higher education barriers, promoting college persistence, and increasing postsecondary completion rates for all Tennesseans. Before joining the network, Obrohta has served in a number of college access positions at the Oasis Center, the Ayers Foundation, Vanderbilt University, and Beloit College. He has also served as the vice president for education for the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce. Obrohta received his bachelor's degree from the University of St. Francis and his master's in higher education administration from Teachers College, Columbia University.



Tom Pittman is the president of the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi which focuses on education, health, and young people to impact communities in eight counties in the state by connecting people who care with causes that matter. Statewide, he serves on the boards of the Mississippi Economic Council, the Public Education Forum, and Kids Count. Nationally, he is vice-chairman of the Digital Opportunity Trust USA. Previously, he served as a charter board member of the North Mississippi Health Foundation and DeSoto Health and Wellness Center. He is past secretary of the Mississippi Association of Grantmakers and past president of the Mississippi Press Association. He is owner of the DeSoto Times-Tribune newspaper.



Alan Richard is the Director of Communications for the Southern Regional Education Board, a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that works with 16 member states to improve public pre-K-12 and higher education. Before joining SREB, Richard was a staff writer at Education Week where he covered the South and rural America. A South Carolina native and graduate of the University of South Carolina, Richard is working on a book about continued racial segregation in the nation's schools and serves on the boards of directors for two non-profit organizations: the Rural School and Community Trust, and Parents for Public Schools.



Dave Spence is the president of the Southern Regional Education Board, a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that works with 16 member states to improve public pre-K-12 and higher education. Prior to becoming president in 2005, Spence served as the executive vice chancellor and chief academic officer of the California State University system. His career has also included positions as executive director of the Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, executive vice chancellor for the University System of Georgia, and executive vice chancellor and vice chancellor for academic programs at the State University System of Florida. In the mid-1980s, he served as vice president for educational policies at SREB, working directly with the SREB Commission for Educational Quality to develop the South's first formal goals for improving education.



John White is the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Rural Outreach within the Office of Communications and Outreach at the U.S. Department of Education. He oversees day-to-day communication and outreach to rural schools, colleges, other stakeholders, and the media covering issues related to education in rural areas. He represents the Secretary of Education on the White House Rural Council and is the Secretary's designee to the Interagency Coordinating Council for the Appalachian Regional Development Initiative (ARDI). President Obama created the new White House Rural Council by executive order in June 2011 to work across government to strengthen rural communities and promote economic growth. ARDI is designed to better deploy and coordinate federal resources in a targeted way to strengthen and diversify the Appalachian economy.



Dr. Doris Williams is the Executive Director and Director of Capacity Building for the Rural School and Community Trust, the premier national non-profit organization addressing the crucial relationship between good rural schools and thriving rural communities. Williams guides and oversees the organization's work with a network that has numbered more than 700 rural schools and communities in 35 states, strengthening their capacity to improve together and to make rural places good places to live, work, and learn. She has also been appointed by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to the Commission on Educational Equity and Excellence. Previously Assistant Dean and Associate Professor at the North Carolina Central University School of Education and Director of University-School Partnerships, Dr. Williams led the institution's teacher education program reform. Williams holds Ed. D and M. Ed degrees from North Carolina State University, and an AB degree from Duke University.