



**Class XVII Education Session
December 2-4, 2009**

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENTS

JOHN 'J.B.' BUXTON

Founding Principal, Education Innovations Group

John B. (J.B.) Buxton is the founding principal of the Education Innovations Group, a consulting practice focused on state education strategies for PreK-12 and postsecondary education. The Group works with states and national and state-based foundations and advocacy organizations.

Prior to starting the Education Innovations Group, Buxton served as the Deputy State Superintendent of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. In this role, he reported directly to the State Board of Education and was responsible for all operations of the Department. Under his leadership, the department overhauled its district and school assistance program and intervened in 135 schools and six chronically low-performing districts; reorganized the agency to place priority on building the capacity of school districts; developed and rolled out a statewide principal and teacher standards and evaluation systems, a departmental performance management tool, a plan to overhaul the state's curriculum, assessment and accountability program, and a unique student identifier and data warehouse; and expanded significantly the *Learn and Earn* early college high schools initiative and *More at Four* prekindergarten program.

Before managing DPI, Buxton was senior education advisor to Gov. Mike Easley (N.C.), where he developed and managed the Governor's education agenda, including initiatives on prekindergarten education; high school reform and early college high schools; afterschool programs; international education; innovations in education funding; and connecting social services and public schools. Buxton has also served as legislative director for the N.C. State Board of Education, education policy advisor with the White House Domestic Policy Council under President Clinton, and director of policy and research for the Public School Forum of N.C. He began his career as a high school English teacher and coach.

BRENDA DIAL DEESE, PH.D.

Director for Student Services, Robeson County Public Schools

Dr. Brenda Dial Deese is Lumbee and a resident of Pembroke, North Carolina. She is Director for Student Services in the Public Schools of Robeson County and adjunct faculty at the University of North Carolina in the School of Education and the Counseling Department. She holds a Ph.D. in Counselor Education from North Carolina State University. She has earned licenses as a Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) and a North Carolina Licensed Professional Counselor (NCLPC). Her research grounded theory concerning Southeastern Indians' worldview and constructed a framework for cultural values, beliefs, and identity. Contributions and recurring connection to the Native community and public education resulting from her academia work is to provide application to theory through analysis, design, and implementation of programs and strategies. Partnering and collaboration are proven fundamental methodologies used to significantly decrease the dropout rate in the Public Schools of Robeson County. Currently, there are approximately eleven thousand five hundred (11, 500) American Indian students and thirty-three (33) tribal representations in the school system. Additionally, she has published articles concerning American Indians and education, as well as presented nationally, state and locally at conferences. She served as a member on the State Advisory Council on Indian Education and for the Higher Education Civic Education Study Commission – NC House of Representatives. She has a master's degree in School Counseling and a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education.

DEMIAN DELLINGER

Chief Operating Officer, KIPP North Carolina

Demian Dellinger is the Chief Operating Officer for KIPP North Carolina. KIPP schools are free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory public schools where underserved students develop the knowledge, skills, and character traits needed to succeed in top quality high schools, colleges, and the competitive world beyond. KIPP operates 3 schools on two campuses in North Carolina; a middle and high school in Gaston, North Carolina and a middle school in Charlotte, North Carolina.

SHARON L. FORNARO
Classroom Kindergarten Teacher, Green Hope Elementary School

Sharon Fornaro's 25 year teaching career includes positions in pre-school, kindergarten and first grade. She currently teaches kindergarten children at Green Hope Elementary School in the Wake County Public School System.

Sharon continually exhibits leadership in her work. Examples include Grade Level Chair, Student Support Team Representative, and School Improvement Team member. She spear-headed a kindergarten/first grade multiage program in which she taught for eleven years. Twice she assumed leadership roles instrumental in opening two new schools, both on the traditional and the year-round calendars. In 2007 Sharon joined the NC State Department of Instruction Power of Kindergarten Teacher Leaders, a group of 32 kindergarten teachers chosen to promote best practices in kindergarten classrooms throughout the state of North Carolina. This initiative trains its leaders in the practice and sharing of developmentally appropriate practices for young children.

Sharon received her Master's of Arts in Early Childhood Education from UAB in Birmingham, AL. She qualified as a National Board Certified Teacher in 1991, and then re-certified in 2009.

Sharon's honors include Morrisville Elementary School PTA Teacher of the Year in 1996 and 1997. She also won the Cary Chamber of Commerce Honor a Teacher award for Green Hope Elementary in 2008.

Memberships include the National Education Association, the North Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children and the North Carolina Association for Educators, where Sharon served as a school representative for four years.

MARK R. GARRETT
Principal, Avery County High School

Mark Garrett has served as principal of Avery County High School in Newland, North Carolina, since 2004. Prior to coming to Avery, he was principal of Valle Crucis Elementary School in Watauga County. He has also served as a high school assistant principal and middle school social studies teacher. He has worked for school systems in North Carolina and Tennessee.

During Mr. Garrett's tenure, Avery's dual enrollment program has grown from a handful of courses in 2004 to over 40 different dual enrollment and Huskins courses being taken by students this year, most of which are offered on the high school campus. The class of 2009 earned 2370 transfer credit hours with 115 (79%) of the seniors earning college credit. Twenty seven graduates earned more than one year of college transfer credit, and one student graduated with an Associate Degree in May and her high school diploma in June. The school received a NCASA Trailblazer Award for the program in 2008.

JOHN D. GOSSETT, Ed.D.
Vice President of Student Development, Mayland Community College

Dr. Gossett presently serves Mayland Community College as the Vice President of Student Development where he leads a team of professionals in serving students from matriculation through graduation. Dr. Gossett's 20-year educational career began in the classroom as a Business Administration instructor. He has also served Mayland as the Business Curriculum Department Chair, Assistant Vice President for Academic Services, Associate Vice President for Workforce Development, and most recently as Director of Research and Planning. He has served on numerous local, regional and statewide boards and committees in support of community college education and economic development initiatives. His professional interests include community and small business development, as well as leadership development for students.

Dr. Gossett holds a B.S. in Marketing from the University of Tennessee, an M.B.A. from Appalachian State University, and an Ed.D. in Adult and Community College Education from North Carolina State University.

CATHY LOWERY GRAHAM, Ph.D.
County Extension Director of Scotland County, North Carolina Cooperative Extension

Cathy Lowery Graham is presently employed with North Carolina Cooperative Extension as County Extension Director in Scotland County, NC.

Cathy has been involved in education throughout her career, even in previous positions as a middle school teacher and 4-H Youth Development Agent. She has known since she was a young girl that she wanted to work as an educator, because most of her notable role models were teachers, including her mother. She conducts educational programs and staff development workshops on grantsmanship, leadership, team building, and creative training techniques.

Her community service and volunteer roles include serving on both the Scotland and Robeson County Partnerships for Children, United Way of Robeson County, John Blue Cotton Festival, and as a foster parent for 4 siblings.

Cathy received a bachelor's degree in Biology-Education from The University of North Carolina at Pembroke, and a master's degree in Educational Administration from The Pennsylvania State University. Her doctorate degree is in Adult Education from North Carolina State University.

Other credentials include: Leadership North Carolina (Class XVI), North Carolina Rural Economic Development Institute graduate, National Extension Leadership Development graduate, Duke Nonprofit Management Certification, and Certified Human Patterns (psychometric instrument) administrator.

Cathy resides in Pembroke, North Carolina, with husband (Vince) and son (Peyton). She believes her most notable achievements are being a loving Christian, committed wife and nurturing mother.

ERIN M. HARVEY
Teacher, NorthEast Elementary School

Erin Harvey is a fifth grade teacher and AIG coordinator for NorthEast Elementary School. Ms. Harvey received her Bachelor of Sciences degree in Elementary Education from North Carolina A&T State University. She is presently enrolled at East Carolina University working toward her Master of School Administration degree. Originally from Greenville, NC, Ms. Harvey is a product of Pitt County Schools.

TERESA HELMLINGER RATCLIFF
Executive Director and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Extension, Engagement and Economic Development
North Carolina Industrial Extension Service

Terri Helmlinger Ratcliff is the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Extension, Engagement, and Economic Development and Executive Director of the Industrial Extension Service. She has been at IES since 1999.

Terry organizes and focuses IES efforts to achieve the highest standards of performance. She restructured IES to its current results-oriented organization.

In addition to her responsibilities at IES, Terri has a gubernatorial appointment to the NC Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors, where she sits as the engineering chair. She is also the vice chair of NIST's Manufacturing Extension Partnership National Advisory Board and is on the Steering Committee of the NC Chamber's Manufacturer's Council.

Terri has experience in both the public and private sectors. Most of her experience was at Carolina Power and Light Company (CP&L), where she worked in various capacities for 20 years.

At the time of her departure from CP&L, Terri was the director of Commercial/Industrial Market Development in Raleigh. In this position, she was responsible for directing growth strategies, product management, and new product development. She also held the positions of district manager, division engineering manager, and division marketing manager while at CP&L.

Terri has a B.S. in engineering operations (1978) from NC State University, an M.B.A. (1985) from Duke University, and a Ph.D. in Public Administration (2005) from NC State University.

She is a registered Professional Engineer in NC, and a past president of the National Society of Professional Engineers. Her honors include Fuqua Scholar - Duke Executive MBA, 1985; Distinguished New Engineer - National Society of Women Engineers, 1988; Young Engineer of the Year - Professional Engineers of North Carolina; 1995 graduate of Leadership South Carolina; and a 2001 graduate of Leadership North Carolina. She was named a Fellow of the National Society of Professional Engineers and awarded NC State University's Equity for Women Award in 2003. In 2004, she was featured in the book, "Changing Our World: The Stories of Women Engineers."

G. THOMAS HOULIHAN, M.ED., ED.D.
President and CEO, Institute for Breakthrough Performance

Dr. Tom Houlihan is President/CEO of his own firm specializing in organizational improvement and leadership in education. His clients include foundations, private industry and state and local school systems. He previously served as Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, serving in that national leadership role since 2001. Prior to serving CCSSO, Tom served as President/CEO of the North Carolina Partnership for Excellence.

Currently Tom serves on the NC State Board of Community Colleges (NC House appointee) and the Scholars Council at NC State University (Institute for Emerging Issues). In addition he is Chair of the Burroughs Wellcome Fund's SSEP Selection Committee for K12 math/science education awards.

Dr. Houlihan previously served as Senior Education Advisor to Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor of North Carolina. With a background as a teacher, high school principal and superintendent, Dr. Houlihan is the first educator in history to hold Cabinet level status in a North Carolina Governor's administration.

An author and frequent speaker/consultant, Dr. Houlihan was selected "Superintendent of the Year" in North Carolina and was one of four finalists for national "Superintendent of the Year." He has also been honored by his alma maters, Indiana University and North Carolina State University, as a distinguished alumni award winner for contributions to education. Dr. Houlihan has written three books, co-authored a Resource Kit on School Improvement, and published over 200 professional and news media articles.

Education: B.S.- History and Psychology, Indiana University; M.Ed.- Guidance and Personnel Services, North Carolina State University; Ed.D.- Administration and Curriculum, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

OLSON HUFF, M.D.

Pediatrician, Founding Medical Director of Mission Children's Hospital and Pediatric Consultant for Mission Hospital Healthcare Foundation

A native of Kentucky, Olson Huff has spent most of his professional life in North Carolina. He began the private practice of pediatrics in Charlotte after completing his residency in pediatrics at Charlotte Memorial Hospital (now Carolinas Medical Center.) He extended his interest in the development of children by additional studies at the Division of Disorders of Development and Learning at UNC in Chapel Hill. His career in pediatrics included roles with the state Developmental Evaluation Centers, the establishment of a comprehensive child development center which bears his name and is part of Mission Children's Hospital, and as the founding medical director of Mission Children's Hospital in Asheville.

He currently chairs the Committee of Federal Government Affairs of the American Academy of Pediatrics and is a member of several boards, including the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, the North Carolina Board of Advanced Health Programs and the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund Commission. He is Chairman of the Board of the Sixty Second Parent, a web based program that provides extensive information on children's health and development to a worldwide audience.

Retired from clinical practice in 2001, he is now a consultant to the Mission Healthcare Foundation at Mission Hospital in Asheville and with the Center for Health and Aging at the Mountain Area Health and Education Center.

He and his wife, Marylyn, live in Black Mountain and are the parents of three adult sons and four growing grandchildren.

TERRY JACKSON

School to Work Coordinator, Robeson Early College High School

Terry Jackson grew up in a small town located in the eastern part of rural North Carolina. This humble beginning in Lumberton, NC prepared him for the rewarding life that his father, a share crop farmer, had laid out for him. Early in life, he found himself immersed in the work ethics that were associated with a long day of harvesting tobacco, corn and soybeans, as a member of a family that was blessed with ten children. Upon graduation from high school, he attended Chowan College where he received his Associate's Degree in Clerical Administration. Then, he began his tenure at Pembroke State University while simultaneously working at West Point Stevens, where he was employed for 18 years in various capacities. He graduated from Pembroke State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Management. After 18 years of loyal service, West Point Stevens closed the facility where he was employed and that is when he began working for the Public Schools of Robeson County at Red Springs High School as a Career Development Specialist.

His entry level capacity in the school system was as an ILT teacher. After completing his initial three years, his certification as a Business Teacher was granted. Since then he has received certification as a Global Career Development Facilitator and participated in the following activities:

- High Schools That Work Team Member/Conference Attendee
- Assisted with maintaining a Business/Industry Partnership with the Public Schools of Robeson County called the Robeson County CareerReady Partnership
- Organizer for an annual county wide Ground Hog Shadows Day that involves around 400 students
- Organizer for an annual Aviation Careers Day in conjunction with the Lumberton Pilot's Association
- Facilitator for Apprenticeship & Internship placements
- Facilitator for implementation of Futures For Kids Project – Public Schools of Robeson County
- Facilitator for Health Opps Program sponsored by Southeastern Regional Medical Association (45 students – selected by an application process)
- Facilitator for model project with Career Portfolios

In 2005, he was recruited to be the School to Work Coordinator for the newly established Robeson Early College High School. In his current position, he is part of a comprehensive interview screening team to select students that apply to Early College. Other functions include: scheduling students for their high school classes, teaching the Career Management course, coordinating tours, interviews, job shadowing, and guest speakers for the Early College. All students at the Early College are required to participate in internship. As the facilitator of this process, he is responsible for monitoring all student Intern Portfolios that also consists of an oral presentation at the end of the course. While participating in the Career Management course, all students will complete a Career Portfolio.

In addition to his professional duties, his passion has been to extend his love of working with young people to his personal life. As a result of his desire to affect the lives of our youth, he currently coordinates a basketball league for his church. The response to this venture has really exceeded his expectations with a consistent enrollment of around 450 participates, and a Men's Basketball League with approximately 60 adults. Service to our community is also a very important component of what he would like to represent. He also coordinates, through his Sunday School Class, building ramps for those individuals that need this assistance.

MATTY LAZO-CHADDERTON

Director for Hispanic and Latino Affairs for President Pro Tempore, Marc Basnight

Matty Lazo-Chadderton is the Director for Hispanic and Latino Affairs for the President Pro Tempore, Senator Marc Basnight since 2001. Previously, she worked as the Hispanic Education Advocate for NC Justice Center, becoming a lobbyist to the NC General Assembly, on the Legislative Session of 1998.

Matty serves on the Burroughs Wellcome Student Science Enrichment Fund Advisory Board, Center for International Understanding Advisory Board, and the Public School Forum Board, Inter-Faith Food Shuttle, and U. S. Commission of Civil Rights' North Carolina Advisory Committee.

ALAN R. MABE, PH.D.

**Vice President for Academic Planning and University-School Programs
General Administration, University of North Carolina**

Alan Mabe serves as Vice President for Academic Planning and University-School Programs of the 16-university University of North Carolina. He joined UNC in 2002.

Mabe is responsible for University-wide academic planning. He works with the 16 campuses to help shape the future direction of academic programs. Mabe also oversees enrollment planning, academic accountability and assessment, and program implementation.

He staffs the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs of the Board of Governors. The Board of Governor's Licensure responsibilities and UNC's participation in the Academic Common Market are managed in the Division of Academic Planning. The Office of Institutional Research and Analysis also resides in Academic Planning.

In his role with the University-School Programs he works with the Council of Deans of the fifteen teacher education programs and the Center for School Leadership Development which provides programs to improve teacher recruitment and school leadership.

A native of Pilot Mountain, N.C., Mabe holds an undergraduate degree in Philosophy from Guilford College and earned master's and doctoral degrees from Syracuse University. He was a faculty member and administrator at Florida State from 1972-2002, where he served as Dean of Graduate Studies and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Mabe led the UNC initiative in online and distance education culminating with the establishment of the University of North Carolina Online in July 2007.

Mabe's teaching and publications are in the areas of ethics, social and political philosophy and legal philosophy.

THE HONORABLE HOWARD E. MANNING, JR.

Resident Superior Court Judge, District 10-B – Wake County

Howard Manning was elected to an 8 year term as Resident Superior Court Judge for District 10-B, Wake County on November 7, 2000. Prior to the election, he was appointed to this seat by Governor Jim Hunt in March of 1999 to fill a retirement vacancy. In June of 1988, Manning was appointed to serve as the Resident Superior Court Judge for District 10, Wake County by Governor Jim Martin and was elected to the seat in November 1988 for a 2 year term. At that time, Manning was the first republican candidate to be elected to the Superior Court Bench in North Carolina in the 20th Century. Manning has also served as a Special Superior Court Judge and was appointed to that position by Governor Jim Hunt in January of 1996 for a 5 year term.

Judge Manning's professional background includes practicing law with the Manning Fulton and Skinner Firm from 1972 – 1988 (Partner, 1974) and then again from 1991 – 1996. His emphasis was trial practices in civil and criminal cases through 1986 and then 1986 forward with an emphasis on complicated civil matters, personnel and employment law. From 1991 – 1996, Manning served as a Partner and Shareholder with an emphasis on complicated civil litigation, personnel and employment law and other related matters.

Judge Manning's experience in the Superior Court includes serving for a total of over 14 years. He was assigned to preside over terms of civil and /or criminal cases in 62 counties across the state and was assigned by the Chief Justice to preside over more than 12 Exceptional Civil Cases including the *Leandro* case, and the *Smith/Shaver Intangible Tax Refund* cases.

Judge Manning is a member of the NC Conference of Superior Court Judges, the American Bar Association, the NC Bar Association and the Wake County Bar Association.

He is married to the former Elizabeth Ponton, and they have 2 grown children. Judge Manning received a BA from UNC Chapel Hill and a JD from UNC Chapel Hill School of Law.

CYNTHIA G. MARSHALL
President, AT&T North Carolina

Cynthia Marshall is currently President, AT&T North Carolina, and directly responsible for the company's regulatory, legislative and community affairs activities in the state while overseeing AT&T's operations of 8,700 employees.

Cynthia has 28 years of experience in the telecommunications industry, joining Pacific Bell in July 1981. Since then she has held a variety of management positions in operations, human resources, network engineering and planning, and regulatory/external affairs.

She is active in civic affairs at all levels. Nationally, she serves on the Board of Governors of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies and the National Utilities Diversity Council. Within North Carolina, she serves on the General Assembly's Committee on Dropout Prevention, the Board of Trustees of UNC-Wilmington and on the Board of Directors for numerous organizations including the New Schools Project and the North Carolina Children's Home Society. Cynthia is also the first Vice Chair of the North Carolina Chamber.

Cynthia is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, where she attained degrees in business administration and human resources management. She and her husband, Kenneth Marshall, have four children.

M. RAY MCKINNIE, PH.D.
Administrator and Associate Dean, North Carolina Cooperative Extension, NC A&T University

Dr. M. Ray McKinnie is Administrator and Associate Dean for the North Carolina Cooperative extension Program at North Carolina A&T State University. He received his B.S. degree in Animal Science from North Carolina A&T State University in 1976 and hold the Master's and PhD degree, in Animal Science and Reproductive Physiology from The Ohio State University (1978) and North Carolina State University (1987), respectively. As an extension specialist and researcher, the vast percentage of his time was devoted to the development of technologies and resources information for use with the small and part-time farmers, and farmers with limited resources in North Carolina and the Southeast. His research and extension/outreach efforts focused on the areas of small-scale swine production, commercial rabbit production and small ruminant production, with an emphasis on meat goat production.

He has completed the International Extension Training Program sponsored by Michigan State University, the National Extension Leadership Development (NELD – Class V) Program conducted by The Ohio State University, and the Food Systems Leadership Institute program sponsored by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). In addition to his various publications, papers and presentations in the field of animal science, his research and extension interests have carried him to Brazil in 1996 and to South Africa in 1992 and 1996. While in South Africa, he assisted Fort Hare University in its efforts to develop a taught Master's Degree in Agricultural Economics – Rural Development.

CARMALETA LITTLEJOHN MONTEITH, PH.D.
School Design Coordinator, Cherokee Central Schools Board

Carmaleta Littlejohn Monteith, a member of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation, is an educational consultant currently serving as School Design Coordinator with the Cherokee Central Schools Board in Cherokee, NC. She received a BS from Western Carolina University and a M Ed and Ph D in American Studies from Emory University.

Prior to returning home to North Carolina in 1998, Dr. Monteith and her family lived in Atlanta, Georgia where she was employed as teacher and administrator at two large independent schools, The Lovett School and Marist School, respectively. In addition, she served as President of the Atlanta Area Association of Independent Schools and later, on the Board of the National Association of Independent Schools. At the state level, she served as a representative of the Governor on the Governor's Interstate Indian Council and on Georgia's Task Force on American Indian Concerns. Additional volunteer activities included serving on Atlanta's YWCA Board of Directors and the YMCA's Blue Ridge Assembly Board as a member at-large from Georgia. She is currently Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the YWCA Blue Ridge Assembly.

Current volunteer activities include serving as Chair of the Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority, Chair of the Tribal Internal Audit Committee, Vice-chair of the Board of Directors of the Oconaluftee Institute for Cultural Arts, President of the Richard Crowe Memorial Scholarship Fund for Graduate Studies, Advisory Board member of the Cherokee Boys and Girls Club, Cherokee Youth Council Advisory Committee, Advisory Board member to the Southwestern Community College Arts Committee, Advisory Board member of the Center for Math and Science Education at Western Carolina University, and National President of the North American Indian Women's Association.

JOHN ORT, PH.D.
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Extension, Engagement and Economic Development
Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
North Carolina State University

Dr. Jon F. Ort is Assistant Vice Chancellor for Extension, Engagement and Economic Development, and Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University as well as director of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. As Associate Dean, Dr. Ort participates in setting policy for the college's three divisions—Academic Programs, the Agricultural Research Service and the Cooperative Extension Service. As Extension Director, Dr. Ort provides leadership for statewide comprehensive programs in agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development and community and rural development. And, as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Extension, Engagement and Economic Development, he works collaboratively with his colleagues on campus to facilitate creation and implementation of new outreach opportunities for NC State University.

Dr. Ort is a native of Ohio with three degrees (B.S., M.S., and Ph.D.) from Ohio State University in Zoology and Poultry Nutrition, respectively. His professional career has been at NC State University where he has served as a faculty member in Poultry Science, Assistant Director for Academic Programs in the College, Director of the Agricultural Institute, Assistant Dean of the College and, since 1995, as Associate Dean and Extension Director. He was granted the additional title of Assistant Vice Chancellor for Extension, Engagement and Economic Development in 2002.

Dr. Ort currently serves on various boards and committees. At the regional level, he currently serves as Administrative Advisor and Executive Committee Member of the Program Leadership Network and Program Leadership Committee for the Southern Region. Dr. Ort previously served as chair of the Association of Southern Region Extension Directors (ASRED), as well as liaison to ECOP's Executive Committee and Budget and Legislative Committee. He also served as ECOP's Liaison to the International Committee on Organization and Policy (ICOP). At the national level, Dr. Ort serves on the Board on Agriculture Assembly's Policy Board of Directors. As a member of this board, he also serves as liaison to the Budget and Advocacy Committee, and the Department of Energy.

DWIGHT PEARSON, PH.D.
Director of Education Services and Superintendent of Schools, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Dwight Pearson currently serves as the Director of Education Services and Superintendent of Schools for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. With a background in educational research and policy analysis, he has been an educator for over 30 years.

Dr. Pearson's experiences are as diverse as teaching in a rural high school to providing educational leadership in several state agencies. He has worked in urban as well rural schools, and has served as a high school principal and at the university level.

Dr. Pearson is a current member of the North Carolina Commission on Raising Achievement and Closing Gaps. The Commission advises the State Board of Education on issues related to addressing achievement disparities. Before joining the staff of the Department of Health and Human Services, he served as Chief of the Achievement Gap Section at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Dr. Pearson earned a Ph.D. at North Carolina State University, an Ed.S. at Winthrop University, and both his M.A. and B.A. at the University of North Carolina-Pembroke.

EVA C. PHILLIPS
Education Consultant, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)

Eva C Phillips is an education consultant for the NC Department of Public Instruction. She has a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and a Master's degree in Elementary Education. She is in the process of pursuing a Doctoral degree in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She taught kindergarten in Lenoir and Johnston counties for 19 years before coming to the NC DPI. She is serving as the President Elect of the NC Association for the Education of Young Children and is the co-leader of the NC Power of K Teacher Leader Initiative. She is dedicated to providing support to teachers and administrators as they strive to provide the most appropriate and effective programs for young children in our state.

MARVIN R. PITTMAN
Community and Schools Consultant

Marvin R. Pittman was educated in eastern North Carolina. He graduated from both George Washington Carver High School in Pinetops, North Carolina and North Carolina Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount, North Carolina with a B.S. degree in Mathematics Education. He has completed graduate study at North Carolina State University, Raleigh, and North Carolina Central University in Durham, North Carolina.

Mr. Pittman has been a mathematics and science teacher, an assistant principal, principal, and Director of Instruction for the Wake County Public School System in Raleigh, North Carolina. He also worked as Executive Director for Middle and High School Curriculum for Durham Public Schools. In this role, Mr. Pittman supervised and evaluated middle and high school principals and was responsible for the middle and high school instructional programs. He has also served as Director of the Division of School Improvement and the Division of Middle Grades Education with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Mr. Pittman has also served as Senior Assistant to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, where he represented the State Superintendent on boards, commissions and meetings. Mr. Pittman most recently served as Community Liaison for Student Achievement with the North Carolina State Board of Education. In this role, Mr. Pittman worked directly with the Chairman of the State Board of Education in an effort to empower all community constituents to support schools and students strategically.

Mr. Pittman provided leadership in developing a cultural diversity training program for North Carolina public school educators. He served as co-chair of the Governor's Character Education Committee. He provided statewide leadership in the areas of developing the Student Accountability Standards (promotion standards), closing student achievement gaps and designing and implementing assistance programs for struggling schools across North Carolina. Mr. Pittman gives talks on these topics across the state and nation.

Mr. Pittman is a Deacon at Compassionate Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C. where he serves as Adult Sunday School Teacher, Director of the Baptist Training Union and Chairman of the Education Committee for the Support of Parents and Students. He is married to Earnestine Dancy Pittman, who is a retired Assistant Principal with Wake County Schools. He has two daughters, Ebony, who is an attorney in Raleigh, N.C. and Marva, a teacher in Greensboro, North Carolina.

KAREN W. PONDER
Past President, North Carolina Partnership for Children, Smart Start

Karen W. Ponder is an early childhood consultant and is the former President of Smart Start, which she helped to create and implemented for almost 15 years. During her presidency, Smart Start's National Technical Assistance Center was created to assist other states in developing comprehensive early childhood efforts.

Karen has been involved in all aspects of early care and education, as a teacher, preschool director, board member, teacher trainer and policy maker. Formerly she worked for the NC Division of Child Development overseeing programs for children with special needs and was also a partner in Childhood Enrichment Associates where she trained teachers throughout the southeast. She has delivered numerous seminars and workshops, has made presentations to seven state legislatures and the National Governors Association), has testified before three US Congressional Committees and the National Summit on America's Children.

Karen graduated Summa Cum Laude from North Carolina State University and completed studies at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. She was selected as a fellow in the inaugural class of the national Early Childhood Policy Forum. She served on the Governing Boards of the United Way of North Carolina and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). She is a recipient of the James and Carolyn Hunt Early Childhood Award for her leadership, commitment and actions on behalf of the young children of North Carolina. Governor Mike Easley conferred upon her the Order of the Longleaf Pine, the highest civilian honor in North Carolina. Upon her retirement from Smart Start, the Karen W. Ponder Leadership Award was created and will be given annually to a community early childhood leader. Recently she was invited to serve on the Scholars Council at NC State University to provide content for a public interactive policy space in the new James B. Hunt, Jr. Library.

Karen and her husband have two children and five grandchildren.

SCOTT RALLS, PH.D.
President, North Carolina Community College System

Dr. Scott Ralls has served as the President of the North Carolina Community College System, which is the third largest statewide community college system in the United States, since May of 2008. Prior to his current role, Dr. Ralls served as President of Craven Community College for six years, during which he increased enrollment by 27% and worked to develop collaborative efforts with the UNC School System. He has also served as the Vice-President of Economic and Workforce Development and the Director of Economic Development for the North Carolina Community College System.

Dr. Ralls received his Bachelor of Science with highest distinction in Industrial Relations and Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He then earned a Masters of Arts and Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology from the University of Maryland. Dr. Ralls' primary educational focuses are computer training, continuing education and workforce development.

Dr. Ralls also serves on a number of Boards of Directors, including the North Carolina Partnership for Children, the North Carolina Board of Science and Technology, the North Carolina Public School Forum, and the North Carolina Rural Center. He has also written and contributed to a number of publications and is fluent in Japanese.

A. HOPE WILLIAMS, ED.D.
President, NC Independent Colleges and Universities

Dr. A. Hope Williams is President of North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, the statewide advocacy and public policy organization for the 36 independent, or private, colleges and universities in the state. As President, she is the Chief Executive Officer for the 36 presidents who comprise NCICU's Board of Directors and for the Independent College Fund of North Carolina, that raises corporate and foundation funds for student scholarships. She has been president of NCICU since 1992.

Representing independent higher education, Dr. Williams works closely with the state of North Carolina and the federal government including the executive branches, the North Carolina General Assembly and Congress. She serves on the Education Cabinet with the Governor, the presidents of the state university system, the Department of Community Colleges, the State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction to address issues affecting education in North Carolina. She works on behalf of independent colleges and universities, advocating public policy issues, providing research and information, raising corporate and foundation funds and administering collaborative programs. At the national level, Dr. Williams has served as chair of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities State Executives and as a member of the board of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

Dr. Williams received her undergraduate degree in French and History from Duke University, an MPA degree in Public Affairs from North Carolina State University and a doctorate in Education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She received the Outstanding Service Award from the Rotary Club of Raleigh in 1997, was named the 1999 Distinguished Woman of North Carolina in Education, one of the top 25 Women in Business in 2001 by *The Business Journal* and a Woman Extraordinaire in 2005 by *Business Leader Magazine*. She has served as president of the North Carolina Adult Education Association and of the North Carolina Association of Institutional Researchers. She serves on the National Advisory Board of the Institute for Emerging Issues, College Foundation, Incorporated, Public School Forum of North Carolina, Communities in Schools of North Carolina, Capital City Club, Foundation for Independent Higher Education's National Venture Fund Committee and the Chair of Advanced Energy Corporation. She and her husband, Tom Bersuder, are the parents of two sons, ages 23 and 20.

THE HONORABLE DOUGLAS YONGUE
Member, North Carolina House of Representatives

Representative Yongue was appointed to the North Carolina House of Representatives in February, 1994. He has been elected to eight terms in office. As a Co-Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, he is known to be a strong advocate for funding public schools, community colleges, and universities. Representative Yongue has been the voice for low-wealth funding, teacher licensure reciprocity, disadvantaged student supplemental funding, strong vocational education, increased community college equipment funding, and childhood obesity. He also serves as Co-Chair of the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee during the interim and was recently elected by peers as Vice Chair of the Legislative Advisory Council of the Southern Regional Education Board. Before serving in the legislature, Representative Yongue was a career educator - teacher, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent of schools. He lives in Laurinburg, NC with his wife, Millie.