

LESN Ancillary Meeting Participant List

2018 National Forum ON EDUCATION POLICY



LESN Steering Committee

CONNECTICUT

Subira Gordon

Executive Director, Connecticut
Commission on Equity and
Opportunity

subira.gordon.cga.ct.gov

GEORGIA

Cortney George

Fiscal and Policy Analyst, House
Budget and Research Office, Georgia
House of Representatives

cortney.george@house.ga.gov

HAWAII

Scott Fuji

Committee Clerk, Office of Sen.
Michelle N. Kidani, Hawaii State
Legislature

s.fuji@capitol.hawaii.gov

WEST VIRGINIA

Melissa White

Chief Counsel, Education Committee,
West Virginia House of Delegates

melissa.white@wvhouse.gov

LESN Members

ALASKA

Patricia Walker

Legislative Assistant, Alaska
Legislature

Patricia.Walker@akleg.gov

ALABAMA

Dustin Jones

Legislative Fiscal Analyst, Alabama
Legislative Services Agency, Alabama
State Legislature

djones@lsa.state.al.us

ARKANSAS

Julie Holt

Legislative Analyst, Arkansas Bureau
of Legislative Research, Arkansas
General Assembly

holtj@blr.arkansas.gov

ARIZONA

Matt Beienburg

Senior Fiscal Analyst, Education
Committee, Arizona Joint Legislative
Budget Committee, Arizona State
Legislature

mbeienburg@azleg.gov

CALIFORNIA

Sawait Seyoum

Senior Legislative Aide, Senior
Legislative Aide

sawait.seyoum@asm.ca.gov

CALIFORNIA

Tanya Lieberman

Deputy Chief Consultant, Education
Committee, California General
Assembly

tanya.lieberman@asm.ca.gov

COLORADO

Damion Pechota

Senior Research Analyst, Colorado
Legislative Council, Colorado General
Assembly

damion.pechota@state.co.us

COLORADO

Anna Gerstle

Fiscal Analyst, Colorado Legislative
Council, Colorado General Assembly

anna.gerstle@state.co.us

CONNECTICUT

Steven Hernández

Executive Director, Connecticut
Commission on Women, Children and
Seniors

steven.hernandez@cga.ct.gov

IOWA

Kathy Hanlon

Senior Research Analyst, Legislative
Services Agency, Iowa General
Assembly

kathy.hanlon@legis.iowa.gov

IDAHO

Robyn Lockett

Principal Budget and Policy Analyst,
Idaho Legislative Services Office

rlockett@lso.idaho.gov

IDAHO

Janet Jessup

Budget and Policy Analyst, Idaho
Legislative Services Office

jjessup@lso.idaho.gov

INDIANA

Niki DaSilva

Legislative Assistant, Indiana State
Senate

niki.dasilva@iga.in.gov

KANSAS

John Hess

Fiscal Analyst, Kansas Legislative
Research Department

John.Hess@klrd.ks.gov

MICHIGAN

Philip Laffey

Legal Counsel, Michigan Legislative
Service Bureau, Legal Division

plaffey@legislature.mi.gov

MICHIGAN

Nathan Leaman

Legislative Analyst, Michigan Senate
Fiscal Agency

NLeaman@senate.michigan.gov

LESN Ancillary Meeting Participant List

MARYLAND

Sara Fidler

Principal Policy Analyst, Department of Legislative Services, Maryland General Assembly
sara.fidler@mlis.state.md.us

MINNESOTA

Tricia Elite

Committee Administrator, Education Policy Committee, Minnesota Senate
tricia.elite@senate.mn

MONTANA

Shauna Albrecht

Fiscal Analyst, Montana Legislative Services Division, Commissioner of Higher Education
salbrecht@mt.gov

NEBRASKA

W. LaMont Rainey

Education Committee, Legal Counsel, Nebraska Legislature
lrailey@leg.ne.gov

NEW MEXICO

Tim Bedeaux

Fiscal Analyst, New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee
tim.bedeaux@nmlegis.gov

NEW MEXICO

Sunny Liu

Fiscal Analyst, New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee
sunny.liu@nmlegis.gov

NEVADA

Jen Sturm

Senior Policy Analyst, Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau
jen.sturm@lcb.state.nv.us

NEVADA

Adam Drost

Program Analyst, Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau
adam.drost@lcb.state.nv.us

OHIO

Jason Glover

Budget Analyst, Ohio Legislative Service Commission
Jason.Glover@lsc.ohio.gov

OKLAHOMA

Erin Kennedy

Staff Attorney, Oklahoma House of Representatives
erin.kennedy@okhouse.gov

OREGON

Drew Cummins

Legislative Assistant, Oregon State Legislature
drew.cummins@oregonlegislature.gov

OREGON

Alethia Miller

Legislative Analyst, Fiscal Review Committee, Oregon State Legislature
Alethia.Miller@oregonlegislature.gov

TENNESSEE

Patrick Boggs

Research Analyst, Tennessee General Assembly
patrick.boggs@capitol.tn.gov

TENNESSEE

Adam Fye

Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Review Committee, Tennessee General Assembly
adam.fye@capitol.tn.gov

TENNESSEE

Kasey Washburn

Legislative Attorney, Tennessee General Assembly
Kasey.washburn@capitol.tn.gov

SOUTH CAROLINA

Pierce McNair

Director of Research, House Education and Public Works Committee, South Carolina House of Representatives
piercemcnair@schouse.gov

TEXAS

Lesli Cathey

Manager, School Performance Review, Texas Legislative Budget Board
lesli.cathey@lbb.texas.gov

TEXAS

Cathy Eady

Staff Attorney, Texas Legislative Council
cathy.eady@tlc.texas.gov

UTAH

Nathan Brady

Policy Analyst, Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, Utah Legislature
nbrady@le.utah.gov

WASHINGTON

Mary Kenfield

Policy Director, Washington State House of Representatives
mary.kenfield@leg.wa.gov

WISCONSIN

Nathan Schwanz

Chief of Staff, Office of Rep. John Nygren, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance, Wisconsin State Legislature
nathan.schwanz@legis.wi.gov

LESN Ancillary Meeting Participant List

2018 National Forum
ON EDUCATION POLICY



Other Speakers and Session Leads



Stephanie Aragon

Policy Analyst and LESN Coordinator,
Education Commission of the States

saragon@ecs.org
303.299.3614

Stephanie joined Education Commission of the States in January 2015. She works on various topics related to K-12 education, focusing most of her efforts on issues related to teacher recruitment and retention. Prior, Stephanie held various positions at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law and at a private law firm. Stephanie holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Colorado at Boulder, as well as a master's degree in public policy/education policy from the University of Denver's Institute for Public Policy Studies. Outside the office, Stephanie enjoys tri training, dreaming alongside her husband, David, and keeping pace with her always curious, always active son, Elijah.



Neal Holly

Assistant Director, Postsecondary and
Workforce Development, Education
Commission of the States

nholly@ecs.org
303.299.3604

Neal joined Education Commission of the States in February 2017. He provides project management, staff supervision and development, and budget oversight to large-scale projects. He stays current on states' political and governance structures, as well as policy climates, to better serve their postsecondary and workforce needs. Prior, Neal served as vice chancellor for policy and planning for the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical Education. He has also served multiple staff roles at public and private colleges and universities throughout North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. He holds a bachelor's degree in history from Wingate University, a master's degree in higher education administration from Appalachian State University and a doctorate of philosophy in higher education administration from the College of William and Mary. He enjoys fishing, camping and spending time with his wife and two beagles.



Joellen Kralik

Policy Specialist and LESN Coordinator,
National Conference of State Legislatures

Joellen.Kralik@ncsl.org
303.856.1376

Joellen joined the National Conference of State Legislatures in 2015. Joellen serves as the education program's career pathways expert, covering the continuum of K-12 education, postsecondary education and workforce systems. Prior, Joellen worked as a science teacher in Mississippi and Colorado. Joellen holds a bachelor's of science in journalism from Ohio University and a master's in social work from the University of Denver.



Emily Parker

Policy Analyst, Education Commission
of the States

eparker@ecs.org
303.299.3662

Emily joined Education Commission of the States in December 2015. In this role, she supports states on issues of school finance across the entire P-20 continuum. Prior, Emily worked at the Hutchins Center on Fiscal and Monetary Policy at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., where she helped launch Ben Bernanke's Blog. While in grad school, she worked at the Colorado Department of Higher Education and on the Emmy Award-winning Truth Test Team at 9NEWS/KUSA in Denver. A proud Pioneer, Emily earned her bachelor's degree and her master's of public policy from the University of Denver. Outside of the office, Emily enjoys board games, show tunes and trivia.



Alyssa Rafa

Policy Analyst, Education Commission
of the States

erafa@ecs.org
303.299.3691

Alyssa joined Education Commission of the States in November 2015. As a policy analyst, she focuses on various topics related to K-12 education, including school climate, accountability, assessments and school improvement.

LESN Ancillary Meeting Participant List

Prior, Alyssa worked and interned for several nonprofit organizations, holding positions in policy, development and administration. Alyssa holds a bachelor's degree in political science from California State University, San Bernardino and a master's degree in international relations from the University of Denver's Josef Korbel School of International Studies. Outside of work, Alyssa enjoys spending time with her family, coaching youth volleyball and traveling with her husband.



Sara Shelton

Director of State Relations, Education
Commission of the States
sshelton@ecs.org
303.299.3667

Sara joined Education Commission of the States in February 2016. As a member of the state relations team, Sara strives to serve all stakeholders of Education Commission of the States by cultivating relationships and building partnerships. Prior, Sara directed civic engagement initiatives at The Civic Canopy, a local nonprofit, where she helped build and support a statewide Civic Health Network. Sara also spent 10 years at the National Conference of State Legislatures, working on state education policy. Sara holds a bachelor's degree in forestry from the University of Montana and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Colorado at Denver. Sara enjoys spending her free time exploring the rugged Rocky Mountains with her adventurous kids and husband.



Lauren Sisneros

State Relations Strategist, Education
Commission of the States
lsisneros@ecs.org
303.299.3629

Lauren joined Education Commission of the States in August 2015 and is currently a member of the state relations team. Prior, she was a policy analyst, primarily focused on postsecondary issues. Lauren has also held positions at the Colorado Department of Higher Education, Colorado Legislative Council Staff and Adams State University. She earned a bachelor's degree in business management from

Colorado State University–Pueblo and a master's degree in education and human resource studies from Colorado State University. Lauren is a Colorado native, and enjoys spending time with her husband and two children exploring the outdoors of Colorado.



John Turcotte

Director, Program Evaluation Division, North
Carolina General Assembly
John.Turcotte@ncleg.net
919.301.1399

John is a career legislative program evaluator, who has now headed legislative program evaluation staffs in three states over a 40-year period. The Legislative Services Commission appointed John as the first director of the Program Evaluation Division in June 2007, following his services as project manager of the North Carolina General Assembly's Government Performance Audit Committee in 2006. John was CEO of Turcotte Public Administration Consulting and Training, LLC from 2003–07. TPACT provided training and consulting for audit and other knowledge-based staffs at all levels of government. From 1996–2003, John was director of the Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. From 1977–95, John served as director of Mississippi's Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review. In Mississippi, Florida and North Carolina, John and his staffs produced over 907 technical reports and program evaluations. He was the national staff chair of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in 1994. John has also been an adjunct professor of political science at Mississippi College and Millsaps College and an instructor of American Government at Hinds Community College in Jackson, Miss. He began his career as a math and science teacher in Mississippi. He received a bachelor's degree in political science with highest honors and a master's degree in political science and American government from the University of Southern Mississippi. He completed additional study at Millsaps College, the Federal Executive Institute, Mississippi State Executive Development Institute and the NCSL Legislative Staff Management Institute. In 1986, the Council of State Governments selected John as one of the first group of Henry Toll Fellows.

LESN Ancillary Meeting Participant List

2018 National Forum

ON EDUCATION POLICY



Julie Woods

Senior Policy Analyst, Education
Commission of the States

jwoods@ecs.org

303.299.3672

Julie is a senior policy analyst. In her role, she researches and analyzes K-12 education policies and provides support to policymakers on education issues, with a focus on standards, assessments, accountability and federal law. Julie earned her law degree and master's degree in education policy from the Pennsylvania State University, and is a Colorado-licensed attorney. She has taught legal research and writing to attorneys from around the world and taught English as a second language to immigrants. Julie is a proud Texan, married a Midwesterner and is raising a Colorado-native daughter.



Jennifer Zinth

Principal, High School and STEM,
Education Commission of the States

jzinth@ecs.org

303.299.3689

Jennifer first joined Education Commission of the States in 1997. In her current role, she conducts research and analysis and counsels states on numerous issues related to high school, college readiness and transitions to postsecondary, in addition to STEM topics from early learning through postsecondary. Previously, Jennifer served as the co-director of Education Commission of the States' Information Clearinghouse, where she honed her expertise on high school issues while performing, coordinating and overseeing research, analysis and technical assistance across issues from early learning through postsecondary. Jennifer's education experience also includes teaching adult English as a second language in Slovakia and Denver. When not bent on saving the world through better education policy, she loves travel, yoga, cooking (including inflicting new recipes on her reluctant husband), watching documentaries and spending time with her family.