

## EDUCATION PANELIST BIOS

**James Barrett** is finishing up eight years on the Chapel Hill-Carrboro school board, including two years as chair. He ran for the board after serving as a founding member of the education committee of a local interfaith social justice organization. He and his wife both attended elementary, junior high, and high school in North Carolina public schools, and their children did the same, with their older child now in college in the UNC system. Barrett has spent many years as a leader in his church, including time as a youth group leader, and volunteering as a parks and rec coach and a tutor in the schools. Barrett has spent his career in corporate IT leadership – managing large teams across the globe, leading large projects and significant budgets with a variety of stakeholders, and driving change. As state superintendent, he plans to lead the department to provide resources for our teachers and then get out of the way—so that the professionals who have the most impact on students can build relationships and deliver great results every day.

**Craig Horn**, a former Russian linguist with USAF Security Service, is a retired food broker and businessman. Elected in 2010, Horn is now serving his fifth term in the NC General Assembly representing District 68, Western Union County. Horn is co-chairman of both the House Committee on Education Appropriations and the House Education K-12 Policy Committee. He is also the House Chair of the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee. Horn serves on the NC Child Fatality Task Force. He is the NC Commissioner to the Education Commission of the States and an Early Learning Fellow at the National Conference of State Legislatures. Horn was named by LongLeaf Politics as one of the 50 Most Powerful People in North Carolina Politics, was recognized by the NC Technology Association as the Public Leader of the Year, and was selected by EdScoop as one of 25 Ed Tech Heroes in the US for his work in promoting a digital education environment to deliver quality education to every student. In 2015, Horn was awarded a Doctorate of Humane Letters by Wingate University for his work in education.

**Constance Lav Johnson** has served as a high school lead teacher, school counselor, and school administrator. As Publisher of CityPolitical Magazine, she teaches the constituents of states about the process for changing laws for improved communications for activism, to increase scholastic scores for children and youth, and to ensure that ethical officials are elected to maintain justice for those without a voice. Johnson seeks to educate youth about learning and the beauty of literacy through Johnson Burton Tutoring Centers, with a program designed to increase participation in education, social networks, the political process and empirical real life experiences. She has a Master's of Education from the University of Maryland; a Bachelor's of Education, Psychology, Sociology from Livingstone College; and she has completed coursework at the Lutheran School of Theology. Johnson is a Lifetime Member and former Chair of Public Relations for the Black Political Caucus of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, and a member of the NEA and NCAE. She is a member of the North Carolina PTA Governance Committee, the Greater Charlotte Alliance of Black Educators, the National Black MBA Association, the NAACP, and the Tri-County Medical Association of Iredell, Mecklenburg, Rowan, and Yadkin Counties.

**Michael Maher** has dedicated his career to positively impacting the lives of children throughout North Carolina. After teaching high school science in Forsyth and Wake counties, Maher moved

to a university career at Saint Augustine's University, and then to N.C. State University in an administrative role. As the assistant dean of professional education at N.C. State, he was able to work with talented professionals to develop one of the most effective teacher preparation programs in the nation. Maher currently serves as the president of the North Carolina Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators and also serves as vice chairman of the North Carolina Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission. He's also on the board of directors of the American Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators. Through his service with these organizations, Maher has collaborated with others to develop programs and policies that positively impact teachers and students. Maher has experience as an educator and in building effective educational programs and educational policy.

**Jennifer Mangrum** is a former elementary classroom teacher, literacy facilitator and district administrator. She earned a Master's Degree from ECU in Early Childhood Education and a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from UNCG. Mangrum designed and implemented the Elementary Education program at North Carolina State University and was the first faculty member in the department, serving from 2004-2008. She returned to UNCG in 2008 and currently teaches, advises and coordinates teacher education programs. As an Associate Professor, Mangrum provides extensive professional development with teachers around NC and collaborates closely with the National Paideia Center. In addition, she co-founded the UNCG STEM Teacher Leader Collaborative, a support for elementary teachers in schools highly impacted by poverty. As Superintendent, Mangrum plans to promote the recommendations of the Leandro Commission which call for a great teacher in every classroom, a great principal in every school and the proper funding to meet the diverse needs of all our schools across the state.

**Keith Sutton** is an education innovator, public servant, entrepreneur and advocate for children and families who has married his passion for education to his expertise in relationship management. Sutton is the founder of FocusED LLC., a firm designed to support organizations in the improvement and transformation of education. Prior to FocusED, he spent time as the Excellence Director for BEST NC, an education think tank committed to improving North Carolina's education system through policy and advocacy. A Rocky Mount, NC native, Sutton has served his community in Raleigh for nearly two decades through work on boards and committees including the state's NAACP, Triangle Urban League, Healthy Schools Task Force, Raising Achievement and Closing Gaps Task Force, the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, the Southeast Raleigh Assembly and the Blue Ribbon Committee on the Future of Wake County. Sutton has served as a member of the Wake County Board of Education since 2009 and served as the board chair in 2013. He is a member of the Triangle East Chapter of 100 Black Men, Unity Lodge #64 of Prince Hall Masons, and the Iota Iota Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

**Catherine Truitt** is the Chancellor of WGU NC—a nonprofit, online university designed to improve access to post-secondary degrees for adults. She previously served as Associate Vice President of University and P–12 Partnerships at UNC General Administration, where she worked to strengthen the state’s educator pipeline and provide support for public colleges of education. Prior to that, Truitt served as Senior Education Advisor to Governor Pat McCrory, coordinating policy for public education to ensure all North Carolina students received the high-quality education they need to be college- and career-ready in a global economy. Truitt began her career in education in 1998 as a classroom teacher spanning grades 4 through 12. She has co-founded a K–8 parent-run, private school on Chicago’s South Side and has taught in the British school system. She has also served nationally as a turnaround coach in underperforming public schools, with the International Center for Leadership in Education. Truitt earned her Master’s of Education from the University of Washington. As a lifelong educator, she is committed to the core belief that all people have a fundamental human right to maximize their potential.

**Panel Moderator:**

**Susan Scott** is chief growth officer at UNC-TV/ Public Media North Carolina, located in Research Triangle Park, where she stewards the organization’s growth, value and revenue funnel and is responsible for advancing the integrated, mission-based strategies of four distinct media brands: UNC-TV, ROOTLE, The North Carolina Channel and UNC-Explorer. She leads all development of corporate sponsorships, partnerships and grants. Prior to joining UNC-TV, Scott served as a venture mentor and advisor to start-ups and small businesses at the Center for Entrepreneurial Development (CED). She grew up in Chicago and graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her career has advanced through more than 15 years of progressively executive media roles spanning operations, sales, marketing, strategy and distribution for companies including Frontier, IAC, Weather Channel, Turner Broadcasting and Fox News Channel. Susan’s additional professional highlights include sports rights negotiations with the NBA and NHL, professional speaking engagements focused on leadership, chairing the national organization “Women in Cable Telecommunications,” and recognitions including “Top 100 Women in Leadership” and “Top 100 Minorities in Cable.” Susan chairs the Communications committee for Prevent Child Abuse NC and is a city-appointed representative on the Durham Sports Commission.

UNC-TV [Children’s Media and Education Services] nurtures North Carolina’s youngest citizens and the adults that influence their learning through the development and delivery of high-quality and innovative educational media and services that are designed to enhance learning, enrich lives, and extend the impact of public media content. Through free multi-media platforms, including Rootle PBS KIDS channel and livestream, UNC-TV is committed to reaching young children that are most in need who share one or more at-risk characteristics: low literacy, children with disabilities, non-English speaking, and those living in rural areas.

As North Carolina’s statewide PBS affiliate, Public Media North Carolina offers free broadcast and online access to PBS KIDS educational programming through Rootle, the locally branded, 24-hour and livestreamed children’s channel.