

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Steering Committee Members

Ouida Newton



Ms. Newton has 38 years of experience as an educator. In addition to teaching math and science, she has served as a library media specialist, math coach, curriculum supervisor, class sponsor, Arkansas State Beta Club sponsor, and Teachers of Tomorrow supervisor. She has been an adjunct professor at the College of the Ouachitas in Malvern. In 2014, she was named the Arkansas Rural Education Teacher of the Year and Arkansas Middle-Level Math Teacher of the Year. In 2015 she was named the Arkansas Teacher of the Year and currently serves as the Chair of the Arkansas State Board of Education.

Senator Jane English



Senator English is currently serving her third term in the Arkansas Senate and represents Senate District 34, covering part of Pulaski County. Previously she was elected and served two terms in the House of Representatives. She served two terms as the Chair of the Senate Education Committee. She is the chairwoman of two committees, including the Joint Performance Review and Legislative Council Subcommittee on Higher Education. She is a member of several other committees, both at the state and national levels.

Representative Bruce Cozart



Rep. Bruce Cozart of Hot Springs is serving his fifth term in the Arkansas House of Representatives. He represents District 24, which includes a portion of Garland County. For the 93rd General Assembly, Rep. Cozart serves as Chairperson of the House Education Committee. He also serves on the House State Agencies and Governmental Affairs Committee, Arkansas Legislative Council, and the Joint Performance Review Committee.

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Ima Etim



Mrs. Etim is a former secondary educator. She is a native of California and a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley. Upon graduation, she joined Teach for America and moved to Arkansas. As an educator, she received the Teacher of the Year Award from her administration. She was also the founder of the Arkansas Student Voice Council, providing students in the state a platform in which they are empowered to find their voice, enhance their leadership skills, and become advocates for educational change within the state. She completed her Masters in Education at Johns Hopkins University and has worked for various education and policy agencies within the state to further her dual passions for education and policy.

Michelle Owens Hayward



Ms. Hayward has dedicated 32 years of service to Arkansas public schools as a teacher, principal, and central office support. Currently, she is the Executive Director for Elementary and Middle-Level Education for Fayetteville Public Schools. In addition to serving students, staff, and building administrators, she also serves on the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform Board as the Fidelity Chair, which encompasses the United States and International Middle Schools. Additionally, she serves as a co-director for the Arkansas Schools to Watch initiative. Ms. Hayward is also an active board member for the Amazeum Children's Museum in Bentonville.

Joyce Flowers



Joyce Flowers retired after dedicating fifty years of service to the Camden Fairview School District. She received a BA degree from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and a MA degree from Ouachita Baptist University. While working for the district, she served as AP Literature and Language Composition teacher and Composition I and II teacher. For six years, she served as literacy specialist for the district. She was an active member of her local PTO when her children (Dr. Eric Flowers and Amber Flowers) were in school. She served as chair of the literacy department for the high school and the senior class and a representative on the district and high school leadership team. She serves as a volunteer for her community and church.

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Melinda Kinnison



Ms. Kinnison is a medical technologist at Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock and a church musician at Lakewood UMC in North Little Rock. She is a graduate of Carlisle High School and the University of Central Arkansas in Conway with a BS(MT) degree in Medical Technology. Both of her children graduated from North Little Rock High School. She has been a PTA member for over 20 years and has served in leadership roles at the local, council, and state levels. Ms. Kinnison serves on the Child Health Advisory Committee and is the Immediate Past President of Arkansas PTA.

Dr. Harold Jeffcoat



Dr. Jeffcoat was named superintendent of the Van Buren School District in April 2015. Previously, he served seven years in the central administration office at the Cabot School District. Dr. Jeffcoat also served as a teacher in the Little Rock School District, teacher and assistant principal in the Benton School District, and principal in the Sheridan School District. He completed his doctoral work in the Department of Educational Administration and Supervision at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in May 2011. He is an active member of the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, serves on the Board of Directors of the American Association of School Administrators and the Professional Licensure Standards Board, and many local civic clubs and organizations.

Melissa Bratton



Ms. Bratton graduated with a degree in Human Resources Management and has worked in education for the past ten years. She discovered a passion for working with students and adults through the English to Speakers of Other Languages Program (ESOL) at Hot Springs School District and has since become an ambassador for language learning. She serves as her district's ESOL and Assessment Coordinator, is a member of several education associations, including the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, the National Association of Testing Professionals, National Association of English Learner Program Administrators, and is currently a community of practice member of the Collaborative for the Alternative Assessment of English Language Proficiency.

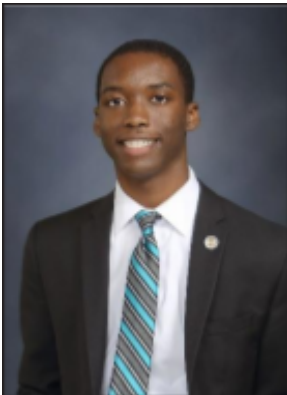
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Starlinda Sanders



Ms. Sanders has dedicated 16 years of service to Arkansas schools teaching Career and Technical Education (CTE) and five years coaching at North Arkansas College. She is a graduate of Mt. Judea High School and the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, receiving a Bachelor of Science in Vocational Home Economics and MEd. in Human Resource and Workforce Development Education. Currently the Career and Technical Education Director for Bentonville Schools, Ms. Sanders previously served the Division of Career and Technical Education as a Program Advisor for curriculum and as the Program Coordinator for Family & Consumer Science. She recently served two terms as President of the Arkansas Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) and serves on the ACTE Region IV National Policy Committee. She has been recognized as the Arkansas ACTE Administrator of the Year and ACTE Region IV Administrator of the Year.

Anthony Bennett, Jr.



Mr. Bennett is a 2020 graduate of Hendrix College, where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Politics and the John A. Ziegler Honor in Constitutional Law. During his time at Hendrix, he worked as Senior Vice President and Education Policy Chair of two national youth-focused, youth-led nonprofits. Since graduating, he has served as an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteer In Service To America) at an economic development nonprofit in Conway, AR, that connects impoverished families with shelter, nutrition, and education.