



# American Youth Policy Forum

## Speaker Biographies

### Scaling Deeper Learning through District-Wide Implementation of Project-Based Learning

An AYPF Study Tour

Kentucky/Ohio | November 6-8, 2018

#### David Cook

Director of Innovation

Division of Innovation and Partner Engagement

Kentucky Department of Education



David Cook is the Director of Innovation at the Kentucky Department of Education, a position he has held for nine years. In that role he oversees all statewide initiatives related to innovation in schools, including the “Districts of Innovation” legislative initiative, The “Non-Traditional Instruction” (Snow Bound) Program, The Competency Education and Assessment Pilot, and the Kentucky Innovation Lab Network. David holds a Bachelor’s degree from Berea College and a Master’s in Education in School Administration from the University of Kentucky.

#### Buddy Harris

Director

Office of Innovation

Ohio Department of Education



Buddy Harris is the director of the Office of Innovation at the Ohio Department of Education where his portfolio includes Ohio’s competency-based education pilot, STEM school designation, the Purple Star designation for military-friendly schools, and the Innovation Lab Network among many other projects and initiatives. Having joined ODE in 2014 as Senior Policy Analyst, Buddy has helped shape state-level policy that promotes innovative practice to support personalized learning. In his previous role at the Hunt Institute, Buddy worked with state and national education leaders to inform North Carolina’s legislators and policy leaders on important He is a proud father of two brilleautiful daughters, Tar Heel, and former Strategic Data Project Fellow at the Center for Education Policy at Harvard University.

## **Gene Wilhoit**

Chief Executive Officer

Center for Innovation in Education



Gene Wilhoit is a founding partner of the Center for Innovation in Education at the University of Kentucky after spending a lifetime as an educator at the local, state and national levels. Gene served as executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) from 2006 until 2013 during which he spearheaded the states' collective action to establish college and career ready learning standards, marshaled a comprehensive restructuring of teacher and leader supports including consensus on preparation reform, stimulated state actions to improve data systems and founded the multi-state Innovation Lab Network.

From 1994 to 2006, Gene led two state education agencies, as director of the Arkansas Department of Education and commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Education. Gene began his career as a social studies teacher in Ohio and Indiana. He served in the Indiana Department of Education, an administrator in Kanawha County West Virginia, and a special assistant in the U.S. Department of Education and executive director of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE).

Gene holds degrees from Georgetown College and Indiana University. He is a member of numerous education organizations, serves on several boards, has served on national and state commissions and has written and spoken on a variety of education issues.