

**Deeper Learning in the Time of COVID-19:
Supporting Educators' Professional Development in Virginia**
An AYPF Webinar Series (Part 2 of 3)

Panelist Biographies



James Lane
State Superintendent
Virginia Department of Education
Twitter: @DrJamesLane, @VDOE_News

James Lane was appointed Virginia's 25th superintendent of public instruction by the Governor of Virginia, effective June 1, 2018. As state superintendent, Dr. Lane serves as the executive officer of the Virginia Department of Education, which is the administrative agency for the Commonwealth's public schools. He also serves as secretary of the state Board of Education.

Prior to his appointment as the Commonwealth's chief school officer, Dr. Lane served as a division superintendent in Chesterfield County, Goochland County and Middlesex County. He was recognized as the 2017 Virginia Superintendent of the Year for his leadership in Goochland County. Dr. Lane was one of 100 superintendents in the nation selected to attend the 2014 ConnectEd Superintendents Summit at the White House in recognition of his leadership in the use of instructional technology by his schools. In 2015, the national Data Quality Campaign awarded its annual Flashlight award to Goochland County in recognition of the division's achievements under Lane's leadership in using data to empower educators and communicate with parents and the public.

As the Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Lane leads the Commonwealth's Virginia is for Learners initiative — a commitment to ensure that every public school student is ready to thrive after graduation. Education is the most effective tool to reduce poverty, address social challenges, and sustain economic advancement for all Virginians. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is prioritizing equity and building a broad coalition of support that represents stakeholders from across the Commonwealth to ensure every student graduates with life ready skills that include the 5 C's — critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration and citizenship. Under Dr. Lane's leadership, the Commonwealth is committed to ensuring that students and families, regardless of their race, economic status, or native language, feel welcome in school and have access to the resources they need to succeed. Dr. Lane holds a doctorate in education from the University of Virginia, a master's degree in school administration from North Carolina State University, and master's and bachelor's degrees in teaching from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Lane and his wife, Sarah, are the parents of two elementary school students in Chesterfield County.



Leah Walker
Director of Equity and Community Engagement
Virginia Department of Education
Twitter: @LeDwalk, @VDOE_News

Resolute in her commitment to community impact, Leah has more than twenty years of public sector experience. Possessing a diverse record of service throughout the Commonwealth, Leah has worked for Mayor Dwight C. Jones' Administration in the City of Richmond, Governor Timothy M. Kaine at the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, the Virginia Democratic Caucus in the House of Delegates, the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus and its Foundation, Richmond City Council, and Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott.

Leah currently serves as the Director for Equity and Community Engagement at the Virginia Department of Education where she leads external relations and statewide efforts aimed at advancing education equity, closing the achievement gap, and decreasing disproportionality in student outcomes. Leah serves on the Virginia Indian Advisory Board and the Governor's Advisory Board for Service and Volunteerism and devotes her time to mentoring young women in Richmond. In 2018, Style Weekly named Leah to its annual "Power List" as one of the most influential people in education in the Richmond region.

Dedicated to disrupting structural racism, Leah utilizes communications savvy, public relations expertise, and innovative outreach tactics to galvanize support for social justice and to advance inclusive learning environments for all students.

Leah earned her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Hampton University, and a Master's of Public Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University. She is the proud mother of two teenage daughters, Alexandra and Adriana.



Gena Keller
Director
Commonwealth Learning Partnership
Twitter: @gckeller1230, @VA_Partners4Edu

Gena Keller has served students in Virginia for over 39 years in public education. She has been a teacher, counselor, home-school coordinator, administrator at the elementary, middle and high school level, district superintendent and recently retired from the Virginia Department of Education as the assistant superintendent for learning. Gena currently is the Director of Commonwealth Learning Partnership, which focuses on amplifying impact through coaching and team building. Gena is also working alongside Stephanie Krauss, Senior Director for JFF, to expand and strengthen the professional learning opportunities for educators across Virginia as they operationalize the Profile of a Virginia Graduate.



Stephanie Malia Krauss
Senior Director
Jobs For the Future (JFF)
Twitter: @Stephanie_Malia, @JFFtweets

Stephanie Malia Krauss is a senior director at JFF.

In that role, she helps leaders design solutions that improve the economic well-being of young people and families—especially those living in poverty. She works with national, state and local changemakers to make sure everyone has the chance to experience quality learning and work opportunities and livable lives.

Previously, as a senior fellow with the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, the Forum for Youth Investment, and JFF, she focused on youth readiness and well-being, credentialing, competency-based education, and opportunity youth. She was also campaign director of Connecting Credentials and co-director of The Readiness Project.

Stephanie also founded and led Shearwater Education Foundation, and the first competency-based high school for disconnected youth in St. Louis.

She started her career as an elementary school teacher and soccer coach in Phoenix, Arizona.

Stephanie staffs the Economic Well-Being work group of the Youth Transition Funders Group and is involved in the CASEL Collaborating States Initiative, the AIR Competency-Based Education Research Advisory Board, and the Partnership for the Future of Learning.

She has been a guest commentator on PBS NewsHour, StoryCorps, and public radio. Her book, *Making It: What Today's Kids Need for Tomorrow's World*, will be released by Jossey-Bass Wiley in January 2021.

Stephanie was drawn to JFF because it is a national platform for building a future that works for everyone. "Many people struggle to get by, and JFF works relentlessly to find ways for them to get the knowledge, skills, and jobs they need to build good lives," she says.

Stephanie and her husband, Evan, met in social work school and have been working for social change ever since. They live in the St. Louis area with their two boys and two dogs.