

## South Carolina: State of Education and Assessment

### **Overview and Purpose**

This panel on the state of South Carolina's education and assessment programs will introduce the efforts of South Carolina's education leaders to National Assessment Governing Board members.

The panelists, listed below with their biographies, will discuss education in South Carolina generally and specifically South Carolina's use of assessment data, guided by the following primary questions:

- 1) What is the current state of K-12 education in South Carolina—both challenges and successes?
- 2) What role do the panelists believe assessment can and/or does play in addressing challenges and building on successes?

Governing Board member, Charleston host, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Patrick Kelly, will moderate the panel.

### **Panelist Biographies**



*Melanie Barton, Senior Education Advisor to Governor Henry McMaster*

Since September of 2019 Melanie has served Governor Henry McMaster, advising the Governor on policy and budget matters related to early childhood education, K-12 education, and higher education. She previously served as the Executive Director of the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee where she oversaw implementation of the state's accountability system for K-12 education. During her nineteen years working for the Education Oversight Committee, Melanie also directed the evaluation of the state's full-day 4K program and assisted the General Assembly in developing public education finance policies.

Since 2012 she has represented South Carolina on the Southern Regional Education Board, serving on several commissions including the Early Childhood Commission, Computer Science Commission, Teacher Preparation Commission, and Dual Enrollment Commission. She is a

member of the Practitioner Council of the Hoover Education Success Initiative at Stanford University and serves on the Education Commission of the States. She earned her master's degree in public policy analysis from Duke University and her undergraduate degrees in history and political science from Furman University.



***Senator Greg Hembree, Chair, Senate Education Committee, South Carolina Senate***

Senator Greg Hembree represents the citizens of South Carolina Senate District 28 (Horry and Dillon Counties) in the South Carolina Senate. Greg received his B.B.A. in Economics from the University of Memphis in 1982 and his law degree from the University of South Carolina School of Law. He was admitted to the South Carolina Bar in 1986 and has also been admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court.

Greg was elected to represent Senate District 28 in November 2012 with 67% of the vote and was re-elected without opposition in 2016 and 2020. Prior to his election to the South Carolina Senate, he served 14 years as Solicitor for Horry and Georgetown Counties. In the Senate, Greg serves on the following committees: Education (Chairman), Transportation, Finance, Corrections and Penology, and Rules. Senator Hembree focuses his efforts on improving public safety and education as well as maintaining a fair and ethical system of state government. He also has served as a majority whip and was elected Chairman of the 2013 Senate Freshman Caucus by his fellow freshmen Senators.



***Tommy Hodges, Interim Dean, College of Education, University of South Carolina***

Thomas Hodges is Interim Dean and Professor of Mathematics Education at the University of South Carolina. He concurrently serves as principal investigator and director of the Center for Research on Teacher Education, combining large-scale state data with first person teacher narratives to address the recruitment, preparation, and retention of the next generation teacher workforce. Previously, he was Executive Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs, and Chair of the Department of Instruction and Teacher Education at the University of South Carolina. His scholarship has focused on policy and practice issues related to educator workforce, as well as the preparation of teachers of mathematics.



***David Mathis, Deputy Superintendent, Division of College and Career Readiness, South Carolina Department of Education***

David began his career as a middle school social studies teacher before becoming an administrator; he has served as an assistant principal, elementary and middle school principal, and district administrator. Prior to his work at the South Carolina Department of Education, David served as Superintendent of Saluda County Schools for nine years.

In addition to his work in education, David has been involved in several professional organizations. He was elected to the international Board of Directors for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Chair of the Superintendents Division of the South Carolina Association of School Administrators, and President of the South Carolina Association of School Administrators. David is currently a member of the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees.



***Alvin Pressley, Superintendent, Newberry County School District***

Alvin D. Pressley currently serves as the Superintendent of Schools for Newberry County School District. He has previously served in district level roles as the Director of Secondary Schools and Executive Director of High Schools. Mr. Pressley has been a building level principal for a total of 10 years at the middle and high school levels. Additionally, he held roles at the high school building level of assistant principal of instruction, dean of academics and began his career in education as a high school science teacher.

All of Mr. Pressley's formal education leading to degree attainment has been at the University of South Carolina – Columbia Campus. He has attained his Educational Specialist Degree, Master of Education, Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and is completing his Educational Doctorate in Education Systems Improvement.