2018 Speaker Bios

**Mindy Binderman**  
*Executive Director, Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS)*

Mindy Binderman is the founding executive director of GEEARS: the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students. Mindy leads GEEARS’ efforts to inspire and provide leadership for a statewide movement on early learning and healthy development for children ages birth to five. Mindy serves as GEEARS’ lead advocate, fundraiser and spokesperson. She partners with the Board of Directors on strategic planning and works to strengthen relationships with community partners.

Mindy has had an extensive career in advocacy and government relations for nonprofits and corporations in Maryland and Georgia. She served as director of government relations and public affairs for the Baltimore Jewish Council and as vice president of public affairs for Planned Parenthood of Maryland before establishing her own successful lobbying firm based in Annapolis, Maryland, in 1999. For several years, Mindy also served as adjunct faculty at Johns Hopkins University where she taught a graduate level seminar in advocacy. Prior to coming to GEEARS, Mindy served as the advocacy director of Voices for Georgia’s Children from 2007-2010.

Mindy was the recipient of a Harvard Business School Club of Atlanta’s Social Enterprise Initiative scholarship in 2015 and completed the Harvard Business School’s Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management program. She is a member of the Leadership Atlanta class of 2012 and currently chairs the School Governance Council of North Springs Charter High School. She serves on the advisory board of Jumpstart and is a board member of Voices for Georgia’s Children and Limmud Southeast, an organization devoted to Jewish learning.

A native of Birmingham, Alabama, Mindy received her bachelor’s degree from Newcomb College, Tulane University, and her law degree from American University’s Washington College of Law. Mindy is married to Warren Binderman and has three children.

**Dr. Steve Dolinger**  
*President, Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education*

Dr. Dolinger joined the Partnership in 2002 as its third president. The organization is an Atlanta-based nonprofit that leads education reform across Georgia through research and communication, including strong advocacy through its EdQuest Coalition. Prior to joining the Partnership, he served as the superintendent of schools in Fulton County for seven years. During that time, he was recognized as Georgia Superintendent of the Year. He served in the Fairfax County, Virginia, school system as a teacher and administrator before accepting the Fulton position. He has a doctorate from Vanderbilt University where he served on the alumni board, a master’s degree
from George Mason University where he later served as an adjunct professor, and a bachelor’s degree from Wake Forest University. He currently serves on the boards of several organizations including the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement. In addition, he has served on the Education and Health Advisory Council for the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta and has been recognized as one of the “Top 100 Leaders in Education” by the Atlanta Business Chronicle and as one of the “100 Most Influential Georgians” by Georgia Trend Magazine.

**Russ Hardin**
*President, Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation*

Russ Hardin is President of the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation, Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation, Lettie Pate Evans Foundation and Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation.

The Woodruff Foundation is an independent private foundation established by Robert W. Woodruff, longtime leader of The Coca-Cola Company. The Whitehead and Evans Foundations were established by members of the family of Joseph B. Whitehead, one of the original Coca-Cola bottlers. The foundations share an office and staff, though each is governed by its own charter and self-perpetuating board.

The Woodruff, Whitehead and Evans foundations support a broad range of charitable activity, principally in Atlanta. Program interests include health, education, environment, human services, arts and culture, and community development. In addition, the Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation provides scholarships for women at more than 200 colleges, schools and universities in nine Southeastern states.

**Kim Holland**
*Director, Early Learning and School Readiness, Gwinnett County Public Schools*

Kim F. Holland is the director of early learning and school readiness for Gwinnett County Public Schools. She has more than 22 years of experience in education, all in Gwinnett. She started her career as a high school science teacher, then moved to a position as the technology coordinator for a school for special needs preschoolers, ages 3-5. After a few years, she became the assistant principal and then spent eight years as the principal. After spending 12 years as an instructional leader and administrator at the school, Kim was appointed to her current role, where she has been for the last three years. She has lived in Gwinnett County almost all of her life and attended school in Gwinnett County from kindergarten to high school graduation. She earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Georgia and an Ed.S. in instructional leadership from the University of North Georgia. Her passion is ensuring that all children have the opportunity to enter kindergarten on the same starting line.

**Amy M. Jacobs**
*Commissioner, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning*

Governor Nathan Deal appointed Amy M. Jacobs as interim commissioner of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning in June 2014. In January 2015, she was sworn in as permanent commissioner. Commissioner Jacobs leads the agency responsible for the early care and education of hundreds of thousands of Georgia’s children. She oversees an annual budget of $700 million for programs focused on child care licensing, child and adult care nutrition, child care quality and early childhood education, specifically Georgia’s pre-K program.

Before joining Bright from the Start, Commissioner Jacobs served as senior policy adviser for the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (OPB). She began her career at OPB in 2001 in the planning, research and
evaluation division focusing on strategic planning and program evaluation. Also while at OPB, she served as
director of the Education Division and the General Government Division. Before that, she worked for two years in
the Georgia Court of Appeals.

Commissioner Jacobs serves on the Governor’s Innovation Fund Advisory Board, the Governor’s Education
Reform Commission, the Georgia Child Fatality Review Panel, the Alliance of Education Agency Heads, and the
board of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education.

Commissioner Jacobs is a graduate of the University of Georgia. She and her husband, John, have two children
and reside in Mableton. They are members of Northside United Methodist Church.

**Lisa Klein, Ph.D.**
*Executive Director, Alliance for Early Success*

Lisa brings 10 years of grantmaking experience to the Alliance, having served as the manager of the Research and
Evaluation Department and vice president of early education at the Kauffman Foundation.

Before joining the Alliance, Lisa served as director of early childhood at the Kansas Health Institute, conducting
research and policy analyses. Prior to this, she served as principal of Hestia Advising, an independent consulting
firm focused on design, development and evaluation to improve programs and policies for young children and families.

Lisa has 10 years of experience in the not-for-profit community, directing a partial hospital program and
providing mental and behavioral health services to young children and their families.

Lisa has a bachelor’s degree from Occidental College and a master’s degree in education with an emphasis in
psychology from the University of Kansas. She earned a doctorate degree in psychology from the University of
Missouri-Kansas City, with an emphasis in child development. She completed a one-year post-doctorate
fellowship at the Menninger Institute in child development and family systems.

**Dr. Terri McFadden**
*General Pediatrician and Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Emory University School of Medicine*

Dr. McFadden is a general pediatrician and an associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics of the Emory
University School of Medicine. She serves as medical director of primary care at the Hughes Spalding campus of
Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, where she sees patients and teaches medical students, pediatric residents and
allied health students. She is also responsible the for primary care initiatives of the Emory Department of
Pediatrics PARTNERS for Equity in Child and Adolescent Health.

She is board-certified by the American Board of Pediatrics and is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
where she serves on the Council on Early Childhood. McFadden is the medical director of the Injury Free Coalition
for Kids (IFCK)-Atlanta childhood injury prevention program. She also serves as medical director of the Georgia
Coalition of Reach Out and Read.

Her academic and professional interests include comprehensive care for the underserved, childhood injury
prevention, preschool literacy promotion and breastfeeding support in underserved communities. She has a
bachelor’s degree from Spelman College and a medical degree from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. She
and her husband, Everett Garden, have two daughters.
**Dr. Geoffrey Nagle**  
*President and CEO, Erikson Institute*

Geoffrey A. Nagle, PhD, MSW, MPH, is president and chief executive officer of Erikson Institute, a leading force in improving the lives of young children and their families through knowledge, research, service and advocacy, and the nation’s premier graduate school in child development.

Dr. Nagle, an internationally recognized leader in the early childhood field, joined Erikson in January of 2014 after serving as the founding director of the Tulane University Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health and associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Tulane University School of Medicine. There, he worked closely with Louisiana government leaders to strengthen the state’s early childhood system and expand high-quality early care and education. His advocacy resulted in Quality Start, Louisiana’s child care quality rating and improvement system, and the School Readiness Tax Credits program, which, since implementation in 2008, has benefited Louisiana residents with tax credits in excess of $90 million in support of quality child care.

At Erikson, Dr. Nagle has championed new strategies that draw from Erikson’s core strengths to broaden the institute’s impact in the complex and ever-changing early childhood arena. He has driven the development and implementation of a new strategic plan that addresses how Erikson will work to transform the early childhood workforce, inform the use of technology in early childhood, improve support for families and communities, and influence leadership and policy to benefit young children, families, and communities.

Under his leadership, Erikson launched a master of social work degree program, the first in the nation to integrate a child development perspective into a social work curriculum. Working with faculty, he established a groundbreaking global partnership with China’s largest private preschool provider that brings Erikson’s unique perspective on early childhood to the education of thousands of early learning professionals. He has also deepened Erikson’s advocacy efforts and relationships at the community level and created a new Early Childhood Leadership Academy to provide advocates and lawmakers with an informed understanding of how policy shapes programs and practices in early childhood.

Dr. Nagle earned his bachelor’s degree in political science from Duke University and master’s degrees in both social work and public health from Tulane University. His doctorate, also from Tulane, is in mental health policy research.

**Dan Pedersen**  
*Chairman Emeritus, Alliance for Early Success*

Daniel Pedersen is Senior Adviser to the Atlanta Speech School in its efforts to build the nation’s leading distance learning platform in language and literacy for teachers of children from birth to third grade. The first benchmark is to train 75,000 teachers across Georgia within the next two years. From 2000 to 2011, Pedersen served as founding president of the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, which partnered with the Ounce of Prevention Fund in Chicago to build a coast-to-coast network of independently evaluated, highly effective Educare schools, 23 of which are now open from Miami to Seattle, Arizona to Maine. Pedersen served for eight years as chairman of the board of directors of the Alliance for Early Success, which he still advises, and is founding chair of the First Five Years Fund. Like the Educare network, the Alliance and the Fund are backed by at least eight national philanthropies which share a common theory of change and which pool their dollars to support a common “Integrated Strategy” for national reform of early learning by building exemplary schools and by advocating for smarter public policies at the state and federal levels in the United States. Pedersen currently serves on the board of directors of Child Care Aware of America. Before entering the early learning field, he worked for 25 years as a
Blythe Keeler Robinson  
*President and CEO, Sheltering Arms*

Blythe Keeler Robinson is an innovative leader with 20 years of nonprofit management experience and expertise in educational programming, early childhood education, program design and implementation, grant writing and contract review and negotiation.

Robinson is the president and CEO of Sheltering Arms Early Education and Family Centers in Atlanta. Founded in 1888, Sheltering Arms is one of Georgia's largest nonprofit organizations and one of its most respected. Sheltering Arms serves nearly 2,500 children daily, ages six weeks to five years old, and their families in 16 early care and education centers across metro Atlanta. As a recognized leader in early education, Sheltering Arms is a National Head Start Center of Excellence, as well as a member of the Educare network. Under Robinson's leadership, Sheltering Arms has increased its national impact and visibility as a member of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Family Economic Success – Early Childhood Initiative Action Learning Network and Ascend at the Aspen Institute.

Prior to joining Sheltering Arms, Robinson served as the senior vice president and chief programs officer of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, Florida. She was responsible for the management and implementation of early care and education programs providing services to more than 50,000 children and their families annually. In her role as the vice president of strategic planning and initiatives at Reading Is Fundamental, she directed programs and strategic initiatives across the country and designed and oversaw the implementation of the Multicultural Literacy Campaign, a national effort to promote and support early childhood literacy in targeted communities.

As a dedicated servant leader, Robinson believes in giving back to the community. She volunteers with local organizations focused on children and the homeless population, and mentors girls and women. Robinson serves on the Board of Directors of the National Black Child Development Institute, the board of Directors of the International Women's Forum-Georgia Chapter, the Atlanta Speech School Advisory Board and the Healthy Beginnings System of Care for Young Children Advisory Board.

Robinson holds a bachelor's degree in government and politics with a certificate in African American studies from the University of Maryland, College Park, and a juris doctorate from Georgetown University Law Center.

Dr. Stan Sonu  
*Pediatric Surgeon, Emory School of Medicine at Grady*

As a physician double-boarded in both internal medicine and pediatrics, Stan is an advocate for changing our health care system to deliver the highest-quality care to underserved and disadvantaged communities. Stan attended Vanderbilt University for his undergraduate studies and obtained his medical degree at the Medical College of Georgia. He completed a combined internal medicine and pediatrics residency at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois, where he stayed an extra year as a pediatric chief resident. Following his clinical residency, Stan pursued further training in prevention and public health at the Cook County Preventive Medicine program, where he also obtained a Masters in Public Health degree at Northwestern University.

Stan's specific interests include adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), trauma-informed care, and the integration of social determinants of health with clinical care. He is passionate about teaching about ACEs and training future
clinicians on effective ways to address trauma in the primary care setting. Recently, he was invited to speak at TEDxChicago 2017 where he highlighted the importance and need for human service institutions to have a deepened understanding of the long-term impacts of trauma in childhood.

Laurene Sperling
President, Sperling Family Charitable Foundation

Laurene Sperling is president of the Sperling Family Charitable Foundation, where she directs its strategic philanthropy in several program areas including education, child and youth development, early childhood, health care and poverty alleviation. Her prior professional experience includes investment banking and venture capital at Paine Webber, Inc., and Cowen and Co., and accounting for Ernst and Young. She has more than 30 years of experience with capital aggregation for corporate and nonprofit organizations seeking positive growth and impact.

Ms. Sperling graduated from Duke in 1978 with a degree in management science and accounting, and went on to the Harvard Business School to receive her MBA in 1982.

She is chair of the Bell Foundation, a national leader in after-school and summer programs for children at risk. In addition, she serves on the Duke University Board of Trustees where she serves as vice chair of the Board, chair of the Governance Committee, member of the Executive Committee, and serves on the Committee on Honorary Degrees. She also serves on the Board of Dean’s Advisors for Harvard Business School, the Dean’s Advisory Board for Harvard’s Graduate School of Education, The Social Enterprise Board for Harvard Business School, the Dana Farber Cancer Institute Women’s Cancers Visiting Committee, the Brigham and Women’s Hospital Women’s Health Leadership Council, The Board of Combined Jewish Philanthropies where she co-chairs the Taskforce on Measurement, and the Board of Temple Shir Tikva where she is a co-chair of Development.

Ms. Sperling and husband, Scott Sperling, live in Wayland, Massachusetts. They have four children.

Monica Warren
Director of Early Learning, Crisp County Schools

Monica Warren has been an educator for more than 25 years, beginning her career as a Georgia’s Pre-K teacher in Leesburg. Warren taught Georgia’s Pre-K in Sumter and Dooly counties before leaving the classroom in 2001 to work as an educational consultant for the Department of Early Care and Learning. Warren worked in the Georgia’s Pre-K Division for the Department of Early Care and Learning for 12 years in various roles, ending the last five of those years as the Director of the Georgia’s Pre-K Division. In July 2013, Warren left the agency to become the director of early learning for the Crisp County School System, where she currently also serves as the principal of the Crisp County Pre-K Program. Under Warren’s leadership, Crisp County Schools has received multiple grants for the Birth-Five Community, where she is focused on bridging programs and families to lessen the language and social-emotional gaps children face in a high-poverty community. Warren has a bachelor’s degree in early childhood from Mercer University, a master’s degree in early childhood from Georgia Southwestern University and her education specialist degree in educational administration and supervision from Albany State University. Warren currently serves on the Crisp Family Connections Board, the South Georgia Technical College ECE Advisory Board, Dooly Campground Board of Directors and as the Vice President of the Vienna Ladies Auxiliary. Warren is a member of Delta Kappa Gamma and the Crisp County Community League.