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LOUISIANA

2024 Policy Summit Speaker Full Bios



Gregory M. Grandy

Coastal Resources Administrator, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority

Gregory M. Grandy currently holds the position of Coastal Resources Administrator of Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. He is a licensed landscape architect and holds degrees in Environmental Management and Landscape Architecture from Louisiana State University. He has over 25 years of experience in the development and implementation of effective, efficient coastal protection and restoration projects in the northern Gulf of Mexico. Over a decade of his experience included work as a project manager for the State of Louisiana successfully leading multidisciplinary, multi-agency teams through the planning, design and implementation of coastal restoration projects including several barrier island and marsh creation projects. He was the President of the Louisiana Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects from 2014 to 2016 and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association.



Richard Nelson, J.D.

Secretary, Louisiana Department of Revenue

Secretary Richard Nelson grew up in Mandeville, where he was an Eagle Scout and valedictorian of Mandeville High. He graduated in the top of his class in both Biological Engineering and Law at LSU. Richard served for seven years in the Foreign Service of the U.S. Department of State, living in Washington, D.C., Germany, and the Former Soviet Republic of Georgia.

As a State Department Officer, engineer, and diplomat, he managed projects and programs protecting American embassies around the world from terrorism and espionage. His time in the Foreign Service was not without adventure. Richard was shot at with rocket propelled grenades in Afghanistan, served in Libya with Ambassador Christopher Stevens shortly before he was killed in Benghazi, and was struck by lightning in Switzerland.

In 2017, he left the Foreign Service to take an executive position in the private sector and moved his family back home to Mandeville. Nelson was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives in 2019. During his four-year term, he championed issues from improving elementary school literacy to a comprehensive restructuring of Louisiana's tax code. After suspending his own campaign for Governor, Nelson was appointed by newly-elected Governor Jeff Landry as Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Revenue, where he is spearheading efforts to reform Louisiana's broken tax code.

Secretary Nelson and his wife Ashley live in Mandeville with their three boys, Michael, 10, Arthur, 8, and Jack, 5.



Susan B. Bourgeois

Secretary, Louisiana Economic Development

Susan B. Bourgeois has three decades of experience in building, transforming and sustaining organizations through strategic planning, project development, fundraising and advocacy.

Prior to her appointment as LED Secretary, she served as President of SBB Consulting and President Emeritus of the Northshore Community Foundation, having served as the CEO for 17 years since its founding.

Before launching the Foundation, Bourgeois was President of Bonnett & Co., a governmental and public affairs consulting firm specializing in insurance interest and advocacy. Prior to her consulting, she held multiple roles in Louisiana Governor M. J. Foster's Administration, including Director of Administrative Affairs and Special Assistant to the Governor.

Bourgeois is an active member of the International Women's Forum and has served in leadership roles on several Boards, including past Chairman of GNO, Inc., and past Board member of the Northshore Business Council and Lakeview Regional Medical Center.

Known for her visionary acumen, Bourgeois emphasizes innovation, collaboration and meaningful alliances, all of which are critical components to creating thriving communities and a thriving state.

She and her husband, Mace Bourgeois, have four grown children and live in Covington.



Christine Lobre, MHS, MPH, LPC

Trauma and Resilience Manager, Bureau of Family Health

Christine Lobre is the Trauma and Resilience Manager at the Louisiana Department of Health in the Bureau of Family Health. With a deep commitment to addressing the systemic drivers of developmental adversity, Christine leads the Whole Health Louisiana initiative for the department with a focus on statewide collaboration and enhanced community resilience. Her role involves cross-sector coordination to develop effective strategies for organizational integration of trauma-informed care. Christine's expertise is rooted in her extensive background in mental health services, harm reduction and crisis intervention, coupled with her passion for fostering systemic change to improve overall well-being in Louisiana.

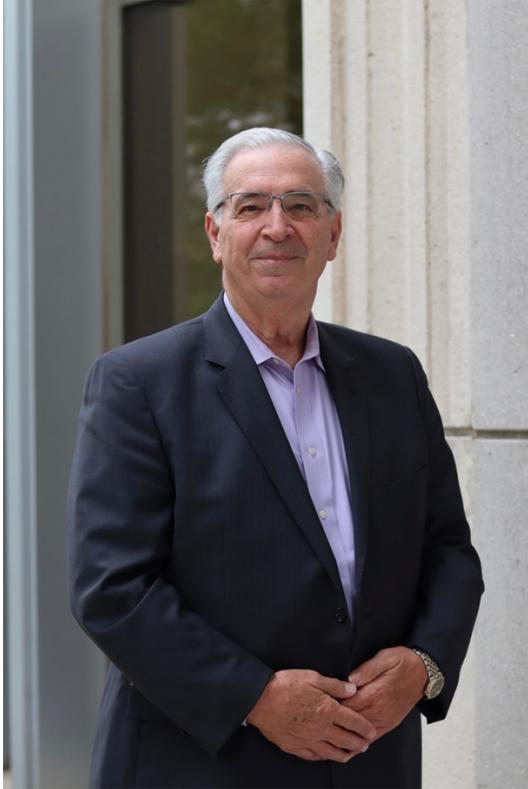


Kathleen Stewart Richey, J.D

State of Louisiana Child Ombudsman

Kathleen Stewart Richey joined the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's office in October 2023 as the first Child Ombudsman for the State of Louisiana. Prior to joining the LLA, Kathleen served as a juvenile court judge in East Baton Rouge Parish for 24 years and has extensive experience and training in both the child welfare system and the legal system.

Kathleen began her career as an attorney representing children in child dependency and delinquency matters. During that time, she served on the Children's Code Project Committee, which drafted the Louisiana law regarding children's issues. In 1991, Kathleen became the first Juvenile Judge in East Baton Rouge Parish. She served in that role for twenty-four years and was instrumental in establishing Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), for the capital area. Her decades of experience, knowledge and service as a proven and dedicated advocate for the well-being of all children makes her the perfect choice as the state's first Child Ombudsman.



Michael Harrington, MBA, MA

Secretary, Louisiana Department of Health

Michael Harrington, MBA, MA, is a former CEO/COO of adult/pediatric tertiary and community health services, including post-acute services. With over 25 years of service in for-profit and not-for-profit health systems, his passion is developing reliable processes that engage people, process, technology and culture to grow patient safety and financial viability.



Dr. Tristan Denley

Deputy Commissioner, Academic Affairs and Innovation, Louisiana Board of Regents

Dr. Tristan Denley currently serves as Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Innovation at the Louisiana Board of Regents. Before moving to Louisiana in January 2022, he served as Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer at the University System of Georgia, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the Tennessee Board of Regents and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Austin Peay State. Originally from Penzance, England, Dr. Denley earned his PhD in Mathematics from Trinity College Cambridge, and has held positions in Sweden, Canada, and the University of Mississippi. At Ole Miss he served as Chair of Mathematics, and Senior Fellow of the Residential College program.

Throughout his career, he has taken a hands-on approach in a variety of initiatives impacting student success. In 2007, he was chosen as a Redesign Scholar by the National Center for Academic Transformation for his work in rethinking the teaching of freshmen mathematics classes.

At Austin Peay he created Degree Compass, a course recommendation system that successfully pairs current students with the courses that best fit their talents and program of study for upcoming semesters. This system, which combines hundreds of thousands of past students' grades with each particular student's transcript, to make individualized recommendations for current students has received recognition from Educause, Complete College America, Lumina Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates

Foundation and President Obama and won a platinum IMS Global Learning Impact Award in 2014.

In 2016 he was selected as one of the Washington Monthly's sixteen most innovative people in Higher Education, one of the Center for Digital Education's Top 30 Technologists, Transformers and Trailblazers and was invited to the White House to address recipients of President Obama's First in the World grants as a model of what could be achieved by a higher education system. He was the recipient of the 2016 Newel Perry Award from the National Federation of the Blind for his leadership of a systemic approach to the accessibility of educational content. In 2017 he was recognized as one of five higher education leaders to watch in 2017 (and beyond) by Education Dive, and was named as a Complete College America Fellow.

Amongst his most recent work has been the development and implementation of a comprehensive system-scale student success strategy, the Momentum Year, that transforms developmental education and advising. Implementation of the Momentum Year strategies in Georgia increased system-wide 4yr graduation rates by 20%, and by 30% for African American students. He also developed and launched the nexus degree, the first new degree structure in the United States in more than 100 years.

His work continues in using a data informed approach to implement a wide variety of state-wide initiatives surrounding college completion, stretching from education redesign in a variety of disciplines, to the role of predictive analytics and data mining, cognitive psychology and behavioral economics in higher education.



Dr. Kim Hunter Reed

Louisiana's Commissioner of Higher Education

Kim Hunter Reed, Ph.D., is Louisiana's Commissioner of Higher Education. She is currently the only female in the country to have served as a state higher education leader in multiple states. Reed is a proven advocate for students who has worked effectively at campus, state, and federal levels. She was recognized nationally as the 2020 Exceptional Leader by the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO). In 2023, she successfully led efforts to secure additional state funding of more than \$180 million, the most significant strategic investment in Louisiana higher education to date.

Along with the Louisiana Board of Regents, Reed leads the state's talent development efforts, focused on increasing educational attainment, erasing achievement gaps, and increasing prosperity. To reach the state's goal of doubling the number of credentials awarded annually by 2030, she focuses on transformational policies and deep collaboration, advancing the Regents' talent imperative. In support of that vision, Louisiana's institutions are focused on strengthening the state's education-to-employment pipeline, accelerating student success, reskilling and training those seeking new career opportunities, finding solutions through research and discovery, and contributing significantly to the state's post-pandemic economic recovery.

In January 2023, Reed was named as one of the nation's Top 10 Black higher education leaders by Forbes, which stated "Louisiana's top higher ed exec is unrivaled, the absolute best among state-level leaders." In April 2023, she was named co-chair of the national Higher Education Climate Action Task Force, which is part of the Aspen Institute's This is Planet Ed initiative. In 2022, Governor John Bel Edwards named her as Chair of the Louisiana Cybersecurity Commission, advancing the State's cyber ecosystem and positioning Louisiana as a national leader and preferred location for cyber business, education, and research.

Reed is a nationally recognized student advocate with extensive higher education and government experience. In addition to leading the Colorado Department of Higher Education, she served in President Obama's administration as deputy undersecretary at the U.S. Department of Education. She led the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Collectively, Reed has served in various senior leadership roles with four governors.

A Lake Charles native, Reed received a doctorate in public policy from Southern University and A&M College, as well as a master's degree in public administration and a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism from Louisiana State University and A&M College. She also served as Chief of Staff and Deputy Commissioner for Public Affairs for the Louisiana Board of Regents, as well as an adjunct faculty member and Executive Vice President at the University of Louisiana System. She is a wife, proud mom to her favorite two-time Millsaps College graduate, and Louisiana's chief advocate for talent development.



Osmar Padilla, MS

Assistant Secretary, Workforce Development, Louisiana Workforce Commission

Osmar Padilla serves as the Assistant Secretary for Workforce Development at the Louisiana Workforce Commission, where he leads the Office of Workforce Development. He focuses on developing and implementing strategies to improve the employability and skills of Louisiana's workforce, ensuring alignment with job market demands. Osmar emphasizes collaboration with employers, educational institutions, economic development agencies, community organizations, and sister state agencies to build a strong and sustainable workforce ecosystem.

Prior to joining the LWC, Osmar was the Director of Workforce Development at Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.). There, he oversaw the GNOu initiative, supporting the design, implementation, and enhancement of workforce development programs tailored to the regional economy's specific needs. His efforts involved strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and continuous program evaluation to ensure that workforce initiatives effectively supported both individual career growth and regional economic development.

Osmar holds a Bachelor of Arts in Disaster Management and a Master of Science in Workforce Development from Louisiana State University.



Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer

CEO, Teamer Strategy Group

As CEO of Teamer Strategy Group, LLC., Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer brings more than 30 years of experience in administrative management; strategic enrollment management; workforce development; faculty and staff training; leadership searches; board development and training; research, assessment and evaluation; and diversity, equity and inclusion. Barnes-Teamer also provides expertise in state and system-level higher education research, policy, and cross sector collaboration.

She served as Vice President for student success at Dillard University (LA). Prior to her role at Dillard, Toya served as Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs for the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS); Vice Chancellor/Provost for Louisiana Technical College; Associate Director of Admissions for recruitment and enrollment management at the University of New Orleans (LA) and as Associate Director of Admissions at Loyola University (LA).

Toya holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Loyola University and received her Ph.D. in higher education administration from the UNO.



Caroline Roemer

Executive Director, Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools

Caroline Roemer is the Executive Director of the Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools (LAPCS), the only statewide association that supports, promotes, and advocates for the charter school movement in Louisiana. With a wealth of over 25 years of experience in corporate and political communications, public policy, message development, and coalition building, Caroline joined LAPCS in 2007 as its first Executive Director. Her extensive experience instills confidence in her leadership. Born and raised on a cotton and soybean farm in Bossier City, Louisiana, Roemer left the state in 1991 to work on political campaigns around the country. Clients include mayors, congressmen, governors, and Fortune 500 companies. She returned to her home state following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Caroline's achievements are truly impressive. She was a 2012 Pahara-Aspen Education Fellow and a fellow with Leadership Louisiana, a Council for a Better Louisiana program. She has also been recognized as one of Baton Rouge Business Report's "FortyUnder40" and the "2016 Outstanding Social Entrepreneur of the Year" by Tulane University's Freeman School of Business. Caroline was also named as one of Greater Baton Rouge Business Report's 2019 Influential Women in Business. She currently serves as an advisory board member for the Education Research Alliance. Caroline resides in Baton Rouge, Louisiana with her son, Owen, and their dog, Jazz, and their cat, Forty. When she is not a mom and working, she loves fishing, Sunday drives, live music and hanging out with her brothers and their families playing board games.



Jody Montelaro, J.D

Vice President, Public Affairs, Entergy Louisiana

Jody Montelaro is vice president of public affairs for Entergy Louisiana. He oversees Louisiana governmental affairs on behalf of Entergy’s Louisiana companies as well as the coordination of Entergy Louisiana’s volunteer efforts and charitable contributions. Montelaro joined Entergy Louisiana in 2011 as governmental affairs director with responsibility for composing and furthering the company’s legislative interest with the Louisiana Legislature and various state agencies. He also chaired and oversaw membership and contributions to ENPAC, Entergy’s employee member PAC.

Prior to joining Entergy, Montelaro served as senior policy advisor to Gov. Bobby Jindal. He managed the creation and introduction of legislation in multiple policy areas. In addition, he served as a policy advisor in the areas of energy, natural resources, wildlife and fisheries, environmental quality, agriculture, corrections and state police. Montelaro also served as Secretary of the Louisiana State Mineral and Energy Board, and previously served as assistant executive counsel to the governor. Prior to his government service, Montelaro practiced corporate litigation at the law firm of Adams and Reese, LLP. In addition, he served a one-year clerkship for Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Catherine “Kitty” Kimball.

Montelaro is an honors graduate of Loyola University College of Law in New Orleans, where he served as law school president. He currently serves on the boards of directors for the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, Public Affairs Research Council, Louisiana Governor’s Mansion Foundation, New Schools for Baton Rouge and Louisiana Art and Science Museum. He also serves on the University of South Alabama’s National Alumni Board of Directors, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation’s Civic Leadership Committee and the Association of Louisiana Lobbyists, where he previously served as president.

In 2014, the Baton Rouge Business Report named Montelaro in its “Forty Under 40” edition. Montelaro was also a member of the 2015 class of Leadership Louisiana.



Dr. Sabrah H. Kingham

Senior Education Policy Advisor to Governor Jeff Landry

Dr. Sabrah Kingham is the newly appointed Senior Education Policy Advisor to Governor Jeff Landry. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education, a Master of Education, and an Educational Specialist degree from McNeese State University in Education Administration & Leadership. She earned her Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership from the University of New Orleans and is certified by the National Institute of School Leadership in Louisiana.

Dr. Kingham has 38 years of experience as an educator, working in a variety of public, private, parochial, and charter school settings with diverse student populations from birth through high school and post-secondary students. She has served in numerous roles including classroom teacher for grades PK-12, elementary assistant principal, elementary principal, central office curriculum specialist, district Pre-K Director, educational consultant, Regional Director of Education, state charter compliance and policy administrator, and Executive Director in the Office of School Choice in the Louisiana Department of Education.

Dr. Kingham has been actively involved as an instructor in the Louisiana New Principals Induction Program, mentoring aspiring leaders, new assistant principals, and newly appointed principals in Louisiana. She has also served as an adjunct graduate professor at McNeese State University and guest lecturer at both Louisiana Tech College and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Dr. Kingham has contributed to and co-authored several professional publications and presented at local, state, and national conferences on school reform, strategic planning, systems operations models, and charter compliance. She serves on the Louisiana National Senior, Junior, and Elementary BETA Council.

Her responsibilities and expertise include education policy and law, systems change efforts, curriculum and instruction, design and evaluation of professional development, federal programs, early childhood, K-12 education, and strategic planning for school improvement at the school and district level using school transformational models. Finally, in her role as Senior Education Policy Advisor, Dr. Kingham works with Early Childhood (Birth to 5 years old), K-12, Higher Education, and the Department of Education. She collaborates with the Board of Elementary & Secondary Education, Louisiana Department of Education, state legislatures, and stakeholders to ensure that the Governor's educational priorities are successfully implemented.



Dr. Janet Pope

Executive Director, Louisiana School Boards Association

Dr. Janet Pope was selected by the Louisiana School Boards Association (LSBA) as their Executive Director in July 2018 after serving five years as their Board Development/Legislative Specialist. Pope's appointment marked a notable milestone in both the association's and the state's history as she is the first and only woman to be selected to serve as the full-time Executive Director of one of the major associations representing Louisiana local government.

Prior to joining LSBA, Dr. Pope, a Lafayette native, served nineteen years in Lafayette Parish School System where she held various teaching, administrative and central office positions.

Dr. Pope is an advocate of continuing education and professional development who believes in leading by example. She is National Board Certified for Professional Teaching Standards and has passed the School Superintendent Assessment. Pope was awarded a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 2015. After serving with the GEAR UP College Readiness Grant, Janet continues to mentor students towards completing their post-secondary degree and into the workforce. Dr. Pope also sits on the Local Uniform Sales Tax Board, the MFP Taskforce, College/Career Readiness Taskforce, Dual Enrollment Taskforce, and the La STEM Committee. She is a product of public-school education along with her husband and daughter Jolie Marie.



Tyler Gray, J.D, MBA

Secretary, Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources

Tyler Gray serves as Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR). Prior to this role, he has served as Corporate Secretary to Placid Refining Co, LLC, president and general counsel to Louisiana Mid-Continent's Oil and Gas Association, an attorney to the Office of Conservation within DENR, and for the City of New Orleans. He received his B.A. in Economics from James Madison University in Virginia, a J.D. from Loyola University in New Orleans, M.B.A. with a specialization in Economics from Louisiana State University and is licensed to practice law in Louisiana.



Dr. Libbie Sonnier

Executive Director, The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children

Libbie Sonnier, Ph.D., has served as the Executive Director of the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children since 2019. Recognized for her tenacity and deep commitment to children, Dr. Sonnier has led teams in system-wide initiatives for the betterment of children, families, caregivers, and practitioners for more than two decades. During her time at the Louisiana Policy Institute, she has helped secure and direct more than \$1B for early care and education in Louisiana, including the state's largest new early learning investments in a decade and a 20-year millage that creates one of the nation's largest dedicated funds for infant and toddler care in New Orleans. Since 2019, she also tripled the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children's research and media engagement outputs and staff while quadrupling its annual revenues, and securing its first five seven-figure grants. She also helped conceive, launch, and co-chair the Steering Committee of [Geaux Far Louisiana](#), a comprehensive effort that engages parents and early childhood health and education providers in leading the transformation of the state's early childhood systems to better meet the needs of families.