

**Parents as Curators of Their Children’s Education:
Opportunities & Implications of a New Federal Education Tax Credit**

A GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinar

December 2, 2025 | 3 pm – 4:30 pm ET

PRESENTER BIOS

PRESENTERS



Rachel Canter
Director of Education Policy
Progressive Policy Institute

Rachel Canter is the Director of Education Policy for the Reinventing America’s Schools project at PPI and author of PPI’s new education agenda, A New Compact for Educational Excellence. She holds a bachelor’s degree in English and History from the University of Pennsylvania and a master’s degree in public policy from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. In 2008, she founded Mississippi First and served as its Executive Director for over 16 years. During her tenure, Canter was the lead advocate of multiple watershed public education initiatives in Mississippi, including the passage and expansion of the state’s pre-K law, the passage of the state’s charter school law, the adoption of new state education standards and assessments, the passage of the Winter-Reed Teacher Loan Repayment program, the passage of the 2022 historic teacher pay raise, and the passage and funding of the 2024 student-centered public school funding formula, to name a few. She is a 2004 Mississippi Delta alumna of Teach For America and from 2018-2023 served on the national board of the Policy Innovators in Education Network. She is married and has two children.



Ben DeGrow
Senior Policy Director, Education Choice
ExcelsinEd

Ben DeGrow is Senior Policy Director for Education Choice at ExcelsinEd, where he leads a team focused on empowering more students across the United States with educational opportunity through improved policy development and implementation. He worked for nearly two decades providing expert analysis and strategic leadership in state-based public policy. A former charter school board member whose classroom experiences range from public schools to homeschool co-ops, he holds a B.A. from Hillsdale College, an M.A. from Penn State University, and a Certificate in Education Finance from Georgetown University. Ben and his wife live in Michigan and are proud parents of three daughters.



Augustus Mays
Vice President for Partnerships and Engagement
The Education Trust

Augustus serves as EdTrust’s vice president for Partnerships and Engagement. In this role, Augustus leads the organization’s efforts to engage policymakers and diverse coalitions of advocates to enact equity-advancing policy change at the national and state levels. He does this by working collaboratively with EdTrust’s president & CEO and the senior leadership team to coordinate the organization’s overall advocacy agenda. Prior to joining EdTrust, Augustus served as the director of policy and outreach at WestEd, where he led the organization’s strategic efforts to increase its visibility and impact with federal and state policymakers in the education, health, and justice prevention space. Before that, Augustus was the manager of policy & advocacy at Knowledge Alliance, the national trade association representing the education research, development, and service industry. Augustus holds an MPA from the University of Oklahoma and a BA in political science from Virginia Commonwealth University.



Scott Palmer
Managing Partner and Co-Founder
EducationCounsel

Mr. Palmer provides policy, legal, strategic planning, and advocacy services to education leaders across the country, including state/national policy counsel and federal advocacy before the White House, U.S. Department of Education, and Congress. He works on a wide range of major reforms, from designing K-12 policies that promote college and career readiness, to building comprehensive birth-to-five early learning systems, to promoting access and diversity in higher education. Mr. Palmer previously served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education and Attorney and Policy Advisor in the Clinton White House where he worked on the President's Race Initiative on education and civil rights issues. He holds a Juris Doctor from the University of California Berkeley Boalt Hall School of Law, a Master's in Public Policy from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and a Bachelor of Arts with honors from the University of Maryland.



Karen Pittman
Partner
Knowledge to Power Catalysts

Karen is often introduced as the “godmother” or “grandmother” of the positive youth development movement. A recognized thought leader, author and entrepreneur, she has made a career of starting organizations and initiatives that promote youth development – including the Forum for Youth Investment, which she co-founded with Merita Irby in 1998. In December 2021, Karen stepped away from organizational management to devote more time to changemaking. Karen partnered with Katherine Plog Martinez and Merita Irby to create Knowledge to Power Catalysts, an intentionally small and nimble consulting firm established to galvanize the growing interest in using science informed strategies to truly change the odds that all children and youth can thrive. In 2025, Knowledge to Power Catalysts took over the ownership of Youth Today, a trusted news source for the youth development fields. After 18 months of trust-building, they established the Alliance for Youth Thriving, an alliance of education, youth development and workforce/career pathways leaders committed to the development of community-wide, year-round pathways for youth and young adults by optimizing the people, places, possibilities, and systems across the learning ecosystem.

MODERATOR



Derrell Bradford
President
50 CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now

Derrell Bradford is the president of 50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now. In his role, Derrell leads 50CAN’s SPARK work, and trains and recruits local leaders across the country to serve as executive directors of state CANs, advocacy fellows, and citizen advocates. He also leads the National Voices fellowship which focuses on education policy, media, and political collaboration. Derrell previously served as the executive director at New Jersey’s Better Education for Kids. At B4K Derrell worked to secure passage of the tenure reform legislation TEACH NJ. Prior to B4K, Derrell spent nine years with New Jersey’s Excellent Education for Everyone (E3) as director of communications and then executive director. While there he also served on the state’s Educator Effectiveness Task Force. Derrell frequently contributes to education debates in print, digital, radio, and TV media. He serves on several boards dedicated to putting the needs of students and families first, including Success Academy Charter Schools, yes. every kid., the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, the advisory boards of the Alliance for Catholic Education at Notre Dame and the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, the PIE Network, and was the founding board chair of EdBuild. A native of Baltimore, Derrell attended the St. Paul’s School for Boys and received a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Pennsylvania.