

Opening Plenary

Explore the history of the federal government in education policy, from 1965 to today. Learn about its role in shaping the national discourse, policy, and action on education from multiple perspectives. This session is designed to offer a foundation for the current overarching debates in education and the distribution of power in today's education laws and policies.

Catherine Brown
Vice President of Education Policy
Center for American Progress



Catherine Brown is the vice president of Education Policy at American Progress. Previously, Brown served as the vice president of policy at Teach for America and as a senior consultant for Leadership for Educational Equity. Prior to her role at Teach for America, Brown served as senior education policy adviser for the House Committee on Education and Labor, where she advised Chairman George Miller (D-CA). In 2008, Brown served as the domestic policy adviser for presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

Earlier in her career, Brown directed Teach for America's Early Childhood Initiative and served as a legislative assistant for both then-Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Rep. Jim Langevin (D-RI), as well as a research assistant at Mathematica Policy Research in New Jersey. Brown received her bachelor's degree from Smith College and holds a master's in public policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Brown serves on the board of Urban Adventure Squad.

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Daarel Burnette II
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Daarel Burnette II joined EPE in 2015 as a state policy reporter. He previously served as the bureau chief of *Chalkbeat Tennessee*, a startup news organization based in Memphis. He has worked as an education reporter at the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune* and the *Louisville Courier-Journal*. He also worked as a general assignment reporter at the *Chicago Tribune*. He received his undergraduate degree in print journalism from Hampton University and an M.A. in politics and journalism from Columbia University.

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Lillian Lowery
Vice President, Student & Teacher Assessment
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Lillian Lowery is a former Maryland State Superintendent of Schools and Delaware Secretary of Education, and was appointed vice president of Student and Teacher Assessments at Educational Testing Service (ETS) in September 2018. Lowery came to ETS from [The Education Trust](#) in Washington, D.C., where she served as a content expert on issues related to pre-K through 12 education and fostered collaborations with national, state and local organizations. She is also Chair of the Board of Trustees of the [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching](#). Prior to her roles in education administration and advocacy, Lowery taught English and was the department chair in numerous school districts in

Virginia and North Carolina. She earned a doctorate of education in educational leadership and policy studies from Virginia Polytechnic and State University, a master's degree in education in curriculum and instruction from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and a bachelor's degree in English education from North Carolina Central University.

As Vice President of the Student and Teacher Assessments strategic business unit, Lowery leads a division comprising Student Assessment and ETS Professional Educator programs. These include business development in state K–12 student assessment programs, among them the *Winsight*® Assessment System; the *Praxis*® tests; the *ProEthica*® program; the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP); the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California; the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) program; and ETS's work on contracts for or with Questar® Assessments.

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Michael Petrilli
President
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Mike Petrilli is president of the [Thomas B. Fordham Institute](#), research fellow at Stanford University's [Hoover Institution](#), executive editor of [Education Next](#), and a Distinguished Senior Fellow for [Education Commission of the States](#). An award-winning writer, he is the author of [The Diverse Schools Dilemma](#), and editor of [Education for Upward Mobility](#). Petrilli has published opinion pieces in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Bloomberg View*, and *Slate*, and appears frequently on television and radio. Petrilli helped to create the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement, the Policy Innovators in Education Network, and, long ago, Young Education Professionals. He serves on the advisory boards of the Association of American Educators, MDRC, and Texas Aspires. He lives with his family in Bethesda, Maryland.

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