

Metro Atlanta Speakers

All Metro Atlanta Speakers (in alphabetical order)

Brittany Bullock, Business Services Manager, Technical College System of Georgia

Brittany Bullock serves as the Business Services Manager for the Office of Workforce Development of the Technical College System of Georgia. In this role, Brittany works with Georgia's 19 WorkSource Georgia areas' to provide exceptional customer service to local employers and industries. She also supports the Georgia's economic development professionals in coordinating innovative workforce solutions to the new and existing industries that make Georgia the #1 State for Business.

Previously, Brittany served as High Demand Career Initiative Program Specialist, leading the state's construction and logistics task forces and sector partnership efforts to develop and implement employer-driven workforce solutions for high demand careers and industries. Prior to entering workforce development, Brittany worked with the Middle Georgia Regional Commission consulting cities and counties on various community and economic development planning matters. Brittany is a graduate of Georgia Southern University with a bachelor's degree in Political Science and a graduate of the University of Georgia with a master's degree in Public Administration. She is a native of Augusta, Georgia and currently resides in Atlanta.

Katy Castanien, CEO Griffin Region College & Career Academy

Katy O'Neal (Arrowood) Castanien is the CEO of the Griffin Region College and Career Academy. The Academy is a partnership between Spalding, Butts, and Pike counties as well as Southern Crescent Technical College, Gordon State College, and the University of Georgia. Katy grew up in Conyers, Georgia and graduated from the University of Georgia with a BS in Family & Consumer Sciences. She has previously served as a Family Management Consultant with Athens Women's Clinic, the founder and owner of Champions for Children, a state of the art daycare and preschool in Athens. She most recently was the CEO of the Athens Community Career Academy, named Georgia's College & Career Academy of the Year, 2014 – 2015.

Katy has served on many boards including the Salvation Army, Food Bank of Northeast Georgia, Red Cross, and UGA Family & Consumer Sciences Alumni board. Upon moving her career to Spalding County, Katy continues her civic involvement as a member of the Griffin Rotary Club and serves on the board of directors for the Salvation

Army in Griffin. Katy is the married to David Castanien and they live in Newnan, GA. She is the mother of grown children, Keith and Molly.

Sally Creel, STEM & Innovation Supervisor, Cobb County Schools

Sally Creel, K-12 STEM & Innovation Supervisor for Cobb County Schools in Georgia, has spent the last 25 years as an educator, author, science and STEM administrator working with leaders, teachers, students, business and community members. Dr. Creel has a passion for empowering classroom teachers and designing sustainable partnerships between educators and business/industry.

Sally currently serves on the STEM Advisory Board for the National Science Teaching Association (NSTA). She is actively involved in the National Science Education Leaders Association, Georgia Science Teachers Association and Georgia Science Supervisors Association and has served as president of these organizations.

Dr. Creel earned a Bachelor of Science in Childhood Education from Shorter College, a Master of Education in Early Childhood Education from Piedmont College, and her doctorate in Teacher Leadership from Kennesaw State University.

Lisa Davis, Project Administrator, Workforce Solutions Group, Atlanta Regional Commission

Lisa Davis is a Project Administrator in the Workforce Solutions Group at the Atlanta Regional Commission (WorkSource Atlanta Regional). In this role, she provides oversight and guidance for the group's special projects. Lisa also provides oversight of One Stop Operations and technical assistance and guidance for program operations. WorkSource Atlanta Regional services resident and business in a seven-county area including Cherokee, Clayton, Douglas, Fayette, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale Counties.

Prior to joining ARC, Lisa worked seven years as the Program Services Manager at WorkSource Cobb, formally CobbWorks, Inc. where she served as a member of the management team with the responsibility of oversight of the organizations Adult/Dislocated programs and initiatives. Lisa also worked as Continuous Quality Improvement Liaison with WorkSource Fulton, formally Fulton County Office of Workforce Development and spent four years at the Georgia Department of Labor where she served as a DOL Services Specialist and Unit Supervisor. Lisa Davis attained her undergraduate degree from Spelman College and has a Master of Public Administration from Clark University.

Adam Forrand, Director, Education & Talent, Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce

Adam serves as Director, Education & Talent Development for Partnership Gwinnett, the economic and community development initiative of the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce. He leads the implementation efforts for Goal 2: Talent Development serving as the key point person to connect and align Gwinnett business' talent needs with Gwinnett's workforce ecosystem.

Adam has made significant contributions to the success of a range of companies including his own marketing communications agency, a Seattle-based education technology start-up and multinational education companies such as Pearson Learning and McGraw-Hill. Adam earned a BBA in Marketing from Stetson University and resides in Suwanee with his wife Lori, a Gwinnett County Public Schools Special Education Paraprofessional, and their three children, Arden (18), Alex (15) and Aidan (13).

Danielle Frazier, CEO, Charlotte Works

Danielle Frazier is the president and CEO of Charlotte Works, which works to provide opportunities that prepare people for education and available careers while connecting businesses to skilled workers. Her focus is the cultivation of a thriving local economy that includes effective career counseling, training and upskilling of jobseekers; developing career pathways that guide individuals through potential professions; and working with local industries to create a sustainable talent pipeline. She has experience in nearly all facets during her more than a decade tenure with Charlotte Works. She has served in roles such as COO, operations director and youth programs director. She also led the development of NCWorks certified regional career pathways in advanced manufacturing and healthcare.

Connie Haynes, Executive Director, GeorgiaFIRST

Connie is the Chief Executive Officer for GeorgiaFIRST Robotics, responsible for the daily operations of all four FIRST programs (FIRST Lego League Jr., FIRST Lego League, FIRST Tech Challenge and FIRST Robotics Competition). She has worked with the FIRST organization for over nineteen years, being instrumental in bringing FIRST Lego League to Georgia and FIRST Robotics to Tennessee and Georgia. She is a former educator with a Master's Degree in Early Childhood and Gifted Education. In addition, she has served on the Governor's Task Force for STEM Education in Georgia, the Governor's HDCI IT Task Force and the steering committee for TAG STEM awards. Connie has been the driving force behind GeorgiaFIRST obtaining its newest designation within our state – CTSO pathway. Her dedication to promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Math to our next generation of leaders has brought her to her current role.

Marci Hanson, Student Placement Services, Fayette-Piedmont Hospital

Marci Hanson is a Student Placement Specialist who works for Piedmont Healthcare bridging the gap between education and workforce. Marci understands the importance of working directly with educational partners to meet the needs of the industry. She is driven to create a pipeline of potential employees from within our local communities. Marci has worked with Piedmont Healthcare for over 22 years and graduated from the University of Georgia. Over her many years of managing Student Placement Services for Piedmont Healthcare she has streamlined the process for all entities within Piedmont Healthcare and has strengthened relationships with educational partners. She serves on the Executive Board for Three Rivers AHEC and numerous Advisory Boards for Colleges and Universities. Marci is joyfully married to her husband, Don, for 23 years and has 3 charming children, the oldest is proudly serving in the United States Army.

Avery Hart, Project Manager, Economic Development, University System of Georgia

A Newnan native, Avery has garnered extensive experience with statewide initiatives and projects through her professional work in the Governor's Office and the Board of Regents System Office that oversees all 26 public colleges and universities in Georgia. She currently serves as lead project manager for economic development programs in the state's higher education system. Through this work, she has helped to shape key economic and workforce development efforts that ensure Georgia remains the No. 1 place to do business, find success and call home. Those efforts include preparing the next generation of Georgia professionals in the areas of fintech, cyber security, healthcare, engineering and a host of other cutting-edge, high-demand career fields.

Before transitioning to the University System, Avery coordinated logistics for former Governor Nathan Deal. She started her career in this executive office that touched every part of the state after graduating from West Georgia University with a Bachelor of Science degree (Go Wolves!). She believes that the greatest success is achieved by those committed to a lifetime of learning. This belief is what drives her every day, as she continues to develop in both her personal and professional pursuits.

Mandy Johnson, Director, College and Career Programs, Douglas County Schools

Mike Kenig, Vice Chairman, Holder Construction Company

Michael is Vice Chairman of Holder Construction Company. Founded in 1960, Holder is a national commercial construction services firm with offices in Atlanta; Phoenix; Denver; Dallas; Charlotte; San Jose, CA and Washington DC.

Michael is a member of the Executive Committee of the Business Leaders United (BLU) for Workforce Partnerships and as a member of the Metro Atlanta Chamber's Educated

Workforce Council, leads a local affiliate, GeorgiaBLU. BLU is a group within the National Skills Coalition comprised of employers from a range of industries across the nation who are concerned about our nation's skills gap.

Michael served on the leadership of the Georgia's HDCI (High Demand Career Initiative) Construction Industry Task Force. He also served on the Advisory Council of TradeFive (formerly Go Build Georgia), a campaign designed to educate young people on the value of learning a trade. Michael recently served on the board of Associated General Contractors of GA and chairs their statewide Workforce Development Committee. Previously he served on the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of America's Training Education and Development Forum's Steering Committee.

Michael teaches a graduate course at Georgia Tech and graduated from Purdue University with a degree in Construction Engineering and Management.

Robert Lewis, Atlanta Site Director, JUMA

Dawn Mann, Program Manager for Career Guidance and Counseling, Georgia Department of Education - CTAE

Dawn Mann, Program Manager for Career Guidance and Counseling, is 17-year Cobb County veteran school counselor. Mann is a two-time graduate of Mississippi State University (Hail State!), received her Education Specialist degree from Lincoln Memorial University, and is currently enrolled in the Education Leadership doctoral program through Samford University. When this wife and mother of two daughters isn't advocating for students and school counselors as a 2017 National School Counselor of the Year Finalist, she can be found dancing around her kitchen. (Comment on her dance moves from her husband still haven't come in...)

Rebecca McIver, Research Professional, Carl Vinson Institute of Government

As a research professional at the Institute of Government, Rebecca McIver assists governmental organizations across the state with workforce and economic development needs. Her areas of expertise include labor market data analysis, applied research, and project management. In her year and a half at the Institute she has supported several local government projects, numerous regional projects, and has even worked on multiple state level plans and projects all of which have involved citizen or stakeholder engagement. Prior to joining the team she served with AmeriCorps at the Community Development Office with the City of Knoxville, Tennessee. In this role, she coordinated citizen training events, tabled at various community engagement events, and served as a liaison between local organizations and the City's Office of Neighborhoods. Rebecca has a BA in International Affairs with a minor in Mechanical Engineering from Lafayette College and a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Georgia.

Brooke Perez, Community and Economic Development Manager, Georgia Power

Brooke currently serves as the Metro North Community and Economic Development Manager for Georgia Power. She moved into this position in July of 2019 after serving as Georgia Power's Workforce Development Manager, where she led collaborative efforts to improve education and workforce outcomes for Georgia over the last four years. Brooke represented Georgia Power on local, state and national education and workforce partnerships developing education and workforce development strategies and initiatives. Prior to that, Brooke held various roles in her 10 years of service at Southern Company, including time as a Change Management Manager and Senior Business Analyst at Southern Company's Enterprise Solutions Support.

Brooke is a graduate of the University of Georgia with degrees in marketing and advertising. She is also a graduate of Leadership Sandy Springs and the Georgia Academy of Economic Development. She currently holds leadership a position with the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement and The Grady Society Alumni Board. Brooke lives in Sandy Springs with her husband and four children.

Marores Perry, CEO Paulding College and Career Academy, CTAE Director for Paulding County Schools

Marores D. Perry is the CEO of Paulding College & Career Academy and Director of CTAE for Paulding County School District. She is a respected leader and mentor to fellow educators, a guest speaker for different groups and organizations, Chair of Paulding Chamber of Commerce Workforce Development Committee and Chair of Chamber of Commerce Leadership Paulding Program. Mrs. Perry received the 2018 Horizon Award at the Paulding Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Gala for her work educating the future workforce in Paulding County. Her great passion in life is to give students more options so they can earn a good living when they graduate. Marores has served in multiple committees and advisory groups during her career and has been, and still is, a contributor to different task force groups at the local, regional, state, national and international level.

Originally from Spain, she moved to the US in 1999. She is a wife, mom of adult children, dog person, and avid writer and crocheter. She enjoys the outdoors and loves working out and cooking for her family.

Cindy Quinlan, Work-Based Learning Coordinator and Entrepreneurship teacher, Brookwood High School

Cindy Quinlan is an Entrepreneurship teacher at Brookwood High School in Gwinnett County. Cindy founded the Brookwood Integrated Entrepreneurship Program where

students launch a real business while earning their core Language Arts course credit at the same time. Through an alliance with her city, each student is provided with a student business license, mentorship, and a chance to earn investment capital. So far over 30 viable student-businesses have launched and over \$25,000 of investment funding has been awarded. In addition, Cindy also led the feeder schools to start entrepreneurial-focused programs. The articulation of primary and secondary education helped form a complete vertical K-12 alignment of entrepreneurship education.

On the side, Cindy taught for a nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance and promote economic development opportunities through entrepreneurship education. In recent years she has trained and consulted over 200 educators from all over the world including Bulgaria, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Greece, Honduras, and Norway. This includes leading a training workshop in both Honduras in 2015 and Bulgaria in 2018. Cindy continues to present all over the country and has now started her own entrepreneurial curriculum and training business. For her work, she is a member of UGA's 2019 40 Under 40 class, 2017 UGA COE Outstanding Alumni, 2016 Freedoms Foundation Leavey Award recipient, and 2016 ACTE National Teacher of the Year.

David Tanner, Associate Director, Carl Vinson Institute of Government

As associate director of the Institute of Government's State Services and Decision Support division, David Tanner focuses on helping governments address some of the state's most pressing issues, such as juvenile justice reform, workforce development, economic development, and improving decision-making through data analytics. David leads the Institute of Government's survey research, program evaluation, state services, and demographic and economic analysis units in their support of UGA's public service and outreach mission. Prior to joining the Institute of Government, he served as the deputy director at the Georgia Governor's Office of Planning and Budget for more than 12 years, working with three different governors to address key budget and policy issues.

Jason Tanner, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Chattahoochee Technical College

Jason Tanner began his career in higher education as an English instructor, primarily teaching Freshman Composition. Since moving out of the classroom in 2009, he has served as the Division Chair of English/Humanities, Associate Dean of Academic Support, and Dean of Arts & Sciences at Chattahoochee Technical College. He became the Vice President of Academic Affairs at Chattahoochee on October 1, 2015.

As the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Economic Development since February 1, 2018, Jason has worked to have all instruction in one department at Georgia's largest technical college. His goal is strengthening collaboration and increasing opportunities for students as they prepare for the workforce.

Jahari Soward, Program Manger, TechBridge Technology Career Program

Breezy Straton, Director of Existing Industry, Workforce, and Compliance, Douglas County

Breezy Straton serves as the Director of Existing Industry, Workforce, and Compliance for the Douglas County Economic Development Authority and is the State Lead for Business Leaders United (GaBLU). Most recently she was named the 2019 Taking Care of Business Leader by the National Skills Coalition. She is a native of Georgia and a graduate of Mercer University where she received a Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree with concentrations in History and Religion and the University of Georgia where she received a Master of Public Administration degree with concentrations in Social Policy and Quasi-Government Entities. In her spare time, she teaches as an adjunct professor for Mercer University's Penfield College and spends time with her husband, Brenton and their two girls, Layla (15 years old) and Charlotte (4 years old) and a boxer puppy Lincoln.

Rebecca Williamson, Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Counselor, GVRA

Greg Wilson, Public Service Assistant, Carl Vinson Institute of Government

Greg Wilson is a public service assistant with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia, where he leads strategic planning and applied research projects to support local governments, state agencies, and economic development organizations. He regularly serves as a project manager responsible for managing people, schedule, tasks, and final deliverables. Greg has worked with a diverse set of clients in Georgia including the Cherokee Office of Economic Development, the Cobb Chamber of Commerce, Chattahoochee Technical College, Marietta City Schools, the Georgia Department of Economic Development, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, the Georgia Department of Education, and MARTA. Before coming to the Institute, Greg worked in Washington, DC for the Office of Naval Intelligence and the White House Office of Management and Budget. Greg has a BA in Political Science and International Affairs and a Master's in Public Administration all from the University of Georgia.