



GLR WEEK 2023 JULY 17-21

Bright Spots and Silver Linings

Gratitude & Appreciation: Public Television Partners With CGLR

A GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinar

July 17, 2023 | 12:30-2:00 pm ET/9:30 - 11:00 am PT

Panelist Bios

MODERATOR



Jamila Smith

Director, Office of Innovation and Early Learning

U.S. Department of Education

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Jamila Smith serves as the Director of the Office of Innovation and Early Learning Programs at the U.S. Department of Education. She oversees several initiatives that provides financial and technical support to improve the educational achievement of students, particularly high-need students and our youngest learners.

Jamila has led initiatives to support students and communities in rural and geographically isolated areas and has also served as a technical assistance lead, leading initiatives focused on performance management and education reform sustainability.

Prior to joining the Department, Jamila's commitment to education reform was solidified early in her career in her work as a social work advocate for homeless children; where she advocated for coordinated and timely assessment services for elementary school aged children

PRESENTERS



Mouna Algahaithi

Early Learning Engagement Specialist

PBS Wisconsin

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Mouna Algahaithi is an Early Learning Engagement Specialist with PBS Wisconsin. She manages the "Ready To Learn" project, which aims to cultivate a love of learning and supports critical school readiness skills for marginalized children and families. Mouna is passionate about advocating for equity in education and works to dismantle barriers to high-quality, free educational media. With prior experience in early childhood centers in Wisconsin and West Africa, she designs and facilitates family

engagement workshops and implements professional learning opportunities for early childhood educators across the state



Patrick Butler
President and Chief Executive Officer
America's Public Television Stations
[@APTStweet](#)

Patrick Butler has been president and chief executive officer of America's Public Television Stations (APTS) since January 1, 2011. During his tenure, public television stations have secured record levels of federal and state funding and substantially enhanced their local service in education, public safety and civic leadership.

Butler joined APTS after 18 years as senior vice president of The Washington Post Company, where among other duties he founded and led Newsweek Productions, which produced more than 200 hours of non-fiction programming, including "Watergate Plus 30: Shadow of History," winner of the Emmy Award for Best Documentary of 2003.

While at the Post Company, Butler also chaired PCS Action, a coalition of companies pioneering Personal Communications Services, the spectrum technology that ultimately enabled the smart phone. He also founded the Post Company's conference business, now operating as Washington Post Live.

Butler received the 2023 Champion Award from Maryland Public Television, the 2021 Champion of Public Broadcasting Award from the board of trustees of America's Public Television Stations, the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019 from American Public Television, a leading provider of programming for public television stations, and the Excellence in Leadership Award in 2017 from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Patrick Butler's accomplishments are many and his full bio can be found [here](#).



Cathy Cook.
Director of Education
WQED Multimedia
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Cathy Cook is the Director of Education at WQED Multimedia, where she has made significant contributions to early childhood education and professional development. With diverse roles and exceptional skills, Cathy drives educational initiatives and brings positive change. She had a fruitful career working with Head Start, impacting children, families, and daycare providers. Cathy's educational experience spans from teaching kindergarten to high school students and serving as a community service liaison. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from the Pennsylvania State University. Cathy is recognized for her work and has been invited to speak at local and national events. She actively engages with educational organizations and serves on committees, including the PBS Station Leadership Committee and the NETA Education Peer Learning Community. In 2022, Cathy was honored with the Bobbi English Champion for Children Award from Sesame Workshop, PBS, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. With a passion for education, she continues to shape the field at WQED Multimedia and beyond.



Pamela Johnson, Ph.D.
**Executive Director, Ready To Learn
Corporation for Public Broadcasting**
[@CPBmedia](#) | [Corporation for Public Broadcasting](#)

Pamela Johnson is Executive Director of the CPB-PBS Ready To Learn Initiative, a school readiness program that teams public media content with community collaboration to support improved educational outcomes for children, especially those from low-income families. This work is conducted in partnership with PBS KIDS, the U.S. Department of Education, local PBS stations, and other content, engagement, and research collaborators. Prior to joining CPB, Pam was Vice President for Education and Outreach at Buffalo Toronto Public Media, where she spearheaded ThinkBright TV, the Buffalo Professional Development and Technology Center, PBS TeacherLine NY, and Reading Rainbow's national outreach.



David Lowenstein
**Senior Director, Ready to Learn
Public Broadcasting Service**
[@PBSKids](#)

As Senior Director of Ready To Learn, David Lowenstein manages PBS' partnership with Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the U.S. Department of Education. He oversees grants strategy at PBS KIDS and daily operations of the Ready To Learn initiative, leading a cross-disciplinary team responsible for the research, development, and distribution of educational media for young children and their families. He is a regular speaker on education technology, the digital divide, and the role of public media in improving early learning outcomes.



Gina Masciola
**Managing Director of Education
WQED Multimedia**
[@WQED](#), [WQED Multimedia](#)

Gina Masciola is the Managing Director of Education at WQED. Gina has managed and created several projects including the WQED Writers Contest, Inquire Within, IQ Smartparent, WQED SmartSchools, IQ Kids Radio, and Musical Kids. Gina has been invited to speak about her work with children and media at both the local and national level. Gina is currently a member of the Remake Learning Council, serving on the AIU3 Head Start Policy Council, Community Champion for The Pittsburgh Study, board member of Crafton Heights Community Pre-school, and Vice-Chairman for the non-profit organization Books Bridge Hope.



Miriam Mendoza
Program Director, Ready to Learn
Austin PBS
[@AustinPBS](#) | [Austin PBS](#)

Miriam Mendoza (she/her), a native of Laredo, Texas, has been at Austin PBS since 2016. She is the station's Program Director for Ready to Learn, the US Department of Education-funded initiative that brings new research-based PBS multiplatform content – including television programs, video, interactive games, mobile apps and hands-on activities – to engage children, families, and educators in learning experiences at home, in preschool, and in out-of-school settings. Prior to her work at Austin PBS, Miriam was the Director of Education at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, and a Program Manager at Austin Partners in Education. She graduated from Rice University with a Bachelor's Degree in Biology and is fully bilingual in Spanish and English.



Shelley Pasnik
Senior Vice President, External Affairs
Education Development Center
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Shelley Pasnik is the senior vice president of external affairs at [Education Development Center](#). An internationally recognized expert in the thoughtful integration of digital media, she has guided the development of children's educational services, conducted policy-influencing research, and cultivated high-profile public-private partnerships both in the U.S. and globally.

In close collaboration with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Shelley leads the research program for [Ready To Learn](#), the U.S. Department of Education's signature investment in PBS KIDS.



Kierstan Schwab
Executive Director
Texas PBS
Co-State Lead, Start Smart Texas
[@Texas PBS](#)

Kierstan Schwab has served as executive director of Texas PBS since 2008. In that role, Schwab strives to develop unique stories for a Texas audience. During her tenure the 10 Texas PBS stations have worked together to produce documentaries and build education programs across the state.

Schwab serves on the Governor's Council for Early Childhood and fosters partnerships with state agencies on behalf of stations. Along with the United Ways of Texas, she co-chairs the Campaign for Grade Level Reading's initiatives in Texas. For more than a decade, Schwab has led an initiative to integrate PBS LearningMedia into the state's education portal making PBS resources available to Texas teachers and students.

Schwab has served on the board of the Austin YMCA. She has a master's degree from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. She lives with her family in Austin, Texas.



Ralph Smith
Managing Director
Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
[@readingby3rd](#) | [CampaignforGLR](#)

Ralph Smith serves as Founding Managing Director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, a network of more than 350+ communities, representing 46 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Canada — with 5,200 local organizations, and more than 500 state and local funders (including over 200 United Ways).

Previously, as Executive Vice President for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Smith led the Making Connections initiative, a comprehensive effort to improve outcomes for children by strengthening families and neighborhoods. Smith served on the Foundation’s Senior Leadership Team from 1994 through 2016.

Smith taught Corporations and Securities Law and Education Law and Policy as a member of the Law Faculty at the University of Pennsylvania for two decades. He also served as Chief of Staff and Chief Operating Officer for the School District of Philadelphia and as a senior advisor to Philadelphia’s mayor on children and family policy. Smith led efforts to design and implement the school district’s landmark voluntary desegregation plan, negotiate some of the nation’s first education reform-driven teacher contracts, and develop Children Achieving, a district-wide blueprint supported by the Annenberg Challenge.

Smith is the founding director of both the National Center on Fathers and Families and the Philadelphia Children’s Network, and he has served on governing and/or advisory boards of numerous other nonprofit, for-profit, and philanthropic entities. Among Smith’s favorite honors are the Champion of Children Award (Foundations, Inc.), GlobalMindED Inclusive Leader Award (GlobalMindED), the Jane Addams Distinguished Leadership Award (United Neighborhood Centers of America), and Fred Rogers Leadership in Philanthropy Award (Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Family).