

# SPEAKERS

## **Dr. Carole Clancy**

Dr. Carole Clancy serves as the Director of Special Education for the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Her extensive background includes over twenty-eight years spearheading initiatives in the field of Special Education within her school districts. Dr. Clancy's role is to oversee the work of the Bureau of Special Education. The Bureau of Special Education works collaboratively with educators, schools, agencies, and other stakeholders across the Commonwealth to ensure students have access to quality and meaningful educational supports, services, and opportunities while complying with state and federal guidelines.

Prior to joining PDE, Dr. Clancy served as Director of Pupil Services for the Solanco School District, as Director of Special Education at Oxford Area School District, and served in many roles from educator to administrator within the School District of Lancaster from 1995-2015, ending her time as the Supervising Coordinator of Special Education Services. Dr. Clancy earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Millersville University. Additionally, she holds a Special Education Supervisory Certificate from Penn State University, a Gifted and Talented Education Certification from the University of San Diego, her Superintendent's Letter of Eligibility and Doctorate in Educational Leadership from California University of Pennsylvania, now known as Penn West.

## **Dr. Gina R. Scala**

Dr. Gina R. Scala is chair of the Special Education/Rehabilitation Department at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania. In addition to teaching at the undergraduate/graduate level, she supervises within the Partnership of Professional Development Schools. She holds many committee positions at the university. She received the Harrie M. Selznick CASE Distinguished Service Award for the recognition of individuals who have been career-long leaders in the administration of special education programs. She has been appointed to the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) by the Governor, as well as numerous state appointed committees on compliance monitoring, certification, administration, and mental health professional guidelines. She continues to consult with districts, provides in-service training, presents at many local, state, national, and international conferences, and maintains membership in many state and national organizations. She is a recent recipient of many grants including administration, Attract Prepare Retain educators, development of Highly Qualified Secondary Special Education teachers, integration of students with Complex Needs, P2G Partnership with IHE, HRSPC, and Trauma-informed Practices. She has been selected to be a member of the Office of Dispute Resolution Stakeholder group. She is also involved in the Creating Agreement initiative at the state and federal level. Dr. Scala has completed her second term as Research Liaison to the Executive Committee of the International Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE). Dr. Scala is a QPR and YMHFA trainer. Previously, she held a variety of positions at Centennial School/Lehigh University. She is a wife to Gabriel, a mother to Francesca and Alexa, mother-in-law to Christopher, future mother-in-law to Michael, and "Gigi" to Grayson and Avrianna and mom to her dogs, Gizmo and Stella!

## **Hollie Woodard**

Passionate about educational innovation and equity, Hollie Woodard, 2022 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year Finalist, NEA California Casualty Award for Teaching Excellence, PETE&C Innovator of the Year, and author of Hacking Flex Teaching: 10 Solutions for Your Blended, Hybrid, or Distance Learning Classroom, is a special needs parent, English teacher, and Tech Coach from Bucks County's Council Rock School District. As an equity advocate, she works to innovate public education by advocating for digital and literacy equity as a PSEA ACE, TEACH Plus PA Senior Fellow, Keystone Technology Innovator Star, and seven-time KTI Lead Learner.

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## **Karen Myers, M.A. Ed. OTR/L**

Karen currently works within the Central Bucks School District as a 5th and 6th-grade autistic support teacher. She received her Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy from Temple University. She worked as an Occupational therapist for 20 years, evaluating and treating children with developmental, learning, sensory processing, and regulatory disorders within private practice (6 years), early intervention (2 years), and school settings (12 years). Prior to her current role, Karen worked for Austill's Educational Therapy Services within the Central Bucks School District. While working in the school setting, she started her journey to attain a Master of Arts in Education with dual certification for general education and special education through LaSalle University. She desired to work more directly and consistently with students and knew her knowledge as an Occupational Therapist would be beneficial in the classroom.

## **Tara Lyons, MS, OTR/L**

Tara has been a pediatric occupational therapist for over 18 years. She has worked in various pediatric settings throughout Philadelphia, Delaware, Montgomery, and Bucks counties. Her experience includes working with school-aged children with significant behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and motor needs in public and charter schools, with children in residential programs, with infants, toddlers, and their families in early intervention programs, and with children aged birth to 21 years in an outpatient clinic. She currently works in the Central Bucks School District, where she has been for the past five years. Throughout her career, she has worked primarily with students who have been diagnosed with autism, ADHD, learning disorders, and emotional disorders who require minor to significant sensory intervention to participate in their daily activities successfully.

## **Judith Petruzzi, M.Ed.**

Judith Petruzzi served as Director of Education Services at PSEA for seven years. Prior to this work, she was the Director of Special Education in the Keystone Central School District for eighteen years. Teaching experience includes positions in K-12, working in both rural and urban settings in Pennsylvania and Ohio with a variety of exceptionalities. Currently, adjunct work at Commonwealth University in the Department of Early Childhood Education and Exceptionality Programs is being delivered to support future educators.

## **Rena Loughlin**

Rena Loughlin is the Vice President of Programs and Advocacy at the Epilepsy Foundation Eastern Pennsylvania (EFEP) which provides support, training, resources, education, and advocacy to benefit the epilepsy community in 18 counties in eastern Pennsylvania. Rena has a background in community counseling and has brought 3 mental health programs to the EFEP as epilepsy goes beyond seizures. She first became involved with the EFEP in 2007 as a volunteer camp counselor at their Camp Achieve program for children diagnosed with epilepsy. She met her husband Mike at Camp Achieve that summer and they were happily together for 15 years before he passed away from epilepsy in 2022. From the love and support received after Mike's passing the EFEP was able to open the doors of the Michael P. Loughlin Epilepsy Community and Resource Center in Kingston, PA last January.

## **Taylor Baublitz**

Taylor Baublitz is a staff attorney at PSEA in the headquarters division and works on a variety of education labor law issues. Taylor previously served as an associate attorney and school district solicitor at two mid-size law firms in York, PA.

# SPEAKERS

## **Dr. Denise Morelli**

Dr. Denise Morelli serves on the Pennsylvania Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (PBIDA) Board. Until her recent retirement, she served as a Program Director for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU). During her 36 years at AIU, she held positions as a special education teacher, reading specialist, and supervisor. Denise earned her B.S. Ed in Special Education with dual certification in special and elementary education at Edinboro University and her M.S. Ed Reading Specialist, Principal Certification, and Ed D. from Duquesne University. Her passion for reading and her advocacy for readers stems from her own struggles with dyslexia.

## **Greg Gerhart**

Gregory Gerhart is an Educational Consultant at the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN). He is a member of the Blindness-Visual Impairment, Deaf-Blind, and Assistive Technology teams, and additionally leads the statewide initiative on Accessible Educational Materials. Gregory collaborates with PaTTAN's Short-Term Loan program, which provides assistive technology to students for 6-week trial periods. He also works with the Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) Center, supplying braille, large print, and formatted PDFs to eligible students in Pennsylvania. Before joining PaTTAN, Gregory primarily worked as an itinerant teacher for the visually impaired. He holds a master's degree in special education, a certificate in assistive technology, and is an orientation and mobility specialist.

## **Tammy Thompson-Cooke**

Tammy Thompson-Cooke, Ed.D., CCC-SLP is an educational consultant with the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) in the East office. She serves as the state lead for the assistive technology initiative and supports the speech-language and secondary transition initiatives. With over 25 years of experience, Tammy specializes in delivering professional development and technical assistance to educators, focusing on best practices for integrating assistive technology, augmentative and alternative communication, and speech-language services in educational settings. She holds a Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology, a Doctorate in Education (Policy, Planning, and Administration), and certificates in Assistive Technology in Education and Educational Technology. Tammy's career includes extensive experience in school systems, community agencies, and private practice, where she provided early intervention and adult-based services.

## **Jamie Schisler**

Jamie Schisler is a therapeutic emotional support teacher at Pocono Mountain School District and employed by Colonial Intermediate Unit 20. She has been teaching special education for the past 15 years and has a passion to incorporate technology in her classroom to increase student engagement. Prior to being a teacher, Jamie worked in the field of electronics at Lucent Technologies & Agere Systems, where she worked with fiber optics and utilized her Associate's Degree in Electronic Engineering Technology from Lincoln Technical Institute. After realizing her passion was to work with children with special needs, she then went on to complete a Bachelor's Degree Special Education and Elementary Education at East Stroudsburg University and a Master's Degree in Special Education from Lehigh University. The role of a therapeutic emotional support teacher has provided a space where she can not only help students and their families, but continue to utilize her technology skills. She has also been a member of her local leader team at Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 Education Association, chair of the Eastern Region Special Education Committee and currently sits on PSEA's Special Education Board; where she has utilized Canva to increase member engagement through newsletters, flyers, and presentations.

# SPEAKERS

## **Aaron Chapin**

Aaron Chapin took office as PSEA president on Sept. 1, 2023. He previously served as PSEA vice president, PSEA Northeastern Region president, and president of the Stroudsburg Area Education Association. Aaron has also served on the PSEA Board of Directors and the National Education Association's Committee for Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules.

Aaron taught fourth and fifth grade for 25 years, most of that time at the Stroudsburg Area Middle School. He's taught all content areas throughout his career but has focused particularly on social studies and reading.

Aaron graduated from Penn State in 1993 with a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education, after switching from a business major his sophomore year when he realized teaching was his true calling. He went on to receive a master's degree in education from Wilkes University in 1999.

Early in his career, Aaron became involved with his local, the Stroudsburg Area Education Association, initially as a building rep and later as the Act 48 chair, the PACE chair, and chief negotiator. From 2013 to 2019, he served as president of the local. Aaron also served as PSEA's Northeastern Region president from 2017 to 2019.

As president of PSEA, Chapin focuses on engaging PSEA members, lifting up their voices, and finding solutions to some of the toughest challenges facing public education today, including crisis-level school staff shortages and inequities in education funding.

## **Dr. Victoria Rice Campbell**

Dr. Campbell is a certified special education teacher who holds seven additional certifications and currently practices her profession as a Secondary Transition Consultant for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU). She is the 2015 recipient of the AIU's Annie Sullivan Award. She is the proud President of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit Education Association, Chair of PSEA's Special Education Board, and Liaison to the PSEA Board of Directors. She was an adjunct professor at LaRoche University and a cooperating transition consultant for Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Duquesne University. She is the former Vice Chair of the Westmoreland County Democratic Committee. Victoria is the author of Classroom Bootcamp, Accommodations and Modifications under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act/Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act, What Employers and Transition Personnel Need to Know about the Jobs Accommodation Network, and How to Lose a Job in 5 Minutes. An assiduous advocate for individuals with disabilities, Victoria encourages everyone to practice person-first language.