

Raise Your Hand Texas® Areas of Expertise

Raise Your Hand® staff members are available to speak on a wide range of public education topics. While not all of the issue areas listed are part of our policy agenda, we are able to contribute from a factual perspective.

Dr. Michelle Smith

Vice President of Policy and Advocacy

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(512) 617-2143 or (512) 466-0238

Michelle has worked for the past nine years as a Texas public education policy and advocacy expert. She has extensive experience and knowledge of both the legislative and political processes as well as the practical experience of being a former public school teacher.

Detailed areas of expertise include:

State-level education politics, school finance, school choice, charter schools, and incentives-based funding.



Bob Popinski

Director of Policy

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(512) 617-2553

Bob has provided in-depth policy analysis on school finance and property tax issues over the past nine legislative sessions. He has experience helping school districts with economic development agreements and other budgetary issues.

Detailed areas of expertise include:

Texas school funding, charter school funding, virtual programs, state funding and budget issues, school choice, legislative process.



David Anderson

General Counsel and Policy Analyst

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(512) 617-2129

David has broad experience with the Texas Education Code and laws generally affecting public schools after 20 years as General Counsel at TEA. He also has long experience with the legislative process and is board certified in administrative law.

Detailed areas of expertise include:

Texas school law generally, including districts of innovation, charters and district/charter partnerships, virtual programs, special student populations, student record confidentiality and school finance.



Dr. Shari Albright

President, Raise Your Hand Texas Foundation

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(512) 617-2126 or (210) 771-7210

Shari is the president of the Raise Your Hand Texas Foundation, an organization that supports programmatic initiatives structured to identify, pilot, and scale systemic improvements in public education. Over the course of her 37-year career, she has served as chair of the Department of Education at Trinity University, on numerous local and national education-focused boards and foundations, as an early childhood and elementary teacher and administrator, and as a high school principal and central office administrator.

Detailed areas of expertise include:

Educator quality, undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation, teacher pipeline issues, community engagement and school leader development.



Dr. Libby Cohen

Director of Advocacy and Outreach

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(214) 886-9221

Libby is an experienced community organizer specializing in public education and other policy issues. A Dallas native, she has spent extensive time traveling across Texas meeting educational leaders and learning about the different issues various regions face.

Detailed areas of expertise include:

Grassroots advocacy, GOTV work, candidate forums, state education politics.



Dr. Tim Miller

Superintendent in Residence

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(512) 617-2124 or (817) 240-9514

Tim's experience in public education spans over 25 years as a teacher, principal, school district superintendent, and Director of Educator Preparation and Program Accountability at the Texas Education Agency. He works closely with the higher education officials across Texas to implement researched-based improvements to the teacher preparation programs.

Detailed areas of expertise include:

Teacher, principal and superintendent preparation, educator certification, teacher pipeline issues, educator data systems, school district leadership, school district governance, and education policy.



Cody Huie

Vice President of Programs

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(512) 617-2135 or (512) 773-4751

Cody leads Raise Your Hand's programmatic efforts to innovate and improve public schools across Texas. He has extensive experience in school leadership development and school improvement programs across Texas having led training programs statewide for 7 years at an education service center and at Raise Your Hand Texas. While at the education service center, he was responsible for the implementation of all statewide and federal school improvement grants.

Detailed areas of expertise include:

School leader development, school turnaround, statewide school improvement policies and grants, rural education, student behavior, education service centers, educator training, and teacher pipeline issues.



Jennifer Jendrzey

Director of Strategic Learning & Evaluation

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(512) 617-2132

Jennifer leads Raise Your Hand Texas' Raising Blended Learners® initiative, a student-centered blended learning program. She also leads the organization's strategy for learning and evaluation with an emphasis on continuous improvement and data-driven decisions to inform organizational growth.

Detailed areas of expertise include:

Blended and personalized learning, data-driven instruction, 21st-century classrooms, development and evaluation of key performance indicators to drive programmatic improvements and organizational direction, and experience managing large-scale quantitative and qualitative studies.



Thea Ulrich-Lewis

Program Director

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(512) 617-2133

Thea oversees the Raising Texas TeachersSM program, an initiative designed to elevate the teaching profession across Texas through partnerships with teacher preparation programs, scholarships for aspiring teachers, and a campaign to elevate the status of the teaching profession. The program includes the Charles Butt Scholarship for Aspiring Teachers, which supports teacher candidates with scholarship funding, mentorship, and professional development.

Detailed areas of expertise include:

Educator training and recruitment and other teacher pipeline issues.

