**Fall 2016 PANC Conference Speaker Bio’s**

**Kathy Boyd -** is the senior staff attorney at the North Carolina School Boards Association, a position she has held since 2007. Her primary responsibilities are in the areas of policy development and training for school board members and school administrators. Prior to joining the NCSBA, she practiced education law with Tharrington Smith in Raleigh, and then worked as the special education compliance officer for Durham Public Schools. Kathy also served as the personnel director for a non-profit mental health agency and was an instructor in the Principals’ Executive Program at UNC. She graduated from the UNC School of Law with honors in 1995 after a ten-year career in healthcare.

**Donna Brown -** is currently the Director of the Federal Program Monitoring and Support Division at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The division supports approximately $514,000,000 in federal funds provided to districts and schools each year and includes responsibility for continuous school improvement planning. Prior to this she served as the Section Chief for Federal Program Monitoring and the State Textbook Administrator. Donna has served on state leadership teams in the development of numerous federal plans including the School Improvement Grant program, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility plan, the State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators, and most recently the state plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act. A graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Appalachian State University, Donna began her education career in Surry County where she was a classroom teacher, an Instructional and Curriculum Specialist, and a Federal Program Director. Most notably, Donna has served the public schools of NC for over 35 years.

**Chris Campbell** - co-founded the law firm of Campbell Shatley in 2009. Chris’ practice includes a focus on education law including legal training for School Boards and Administrators. In addition, his practice includes complex personnel investigations, multi-party construction litigation and school funding issues. Chris regularly defends school boards in administrative matters, state and federal court. Chris is a former Chair of the N.C. Council of School Attorneys, Education Section of the State Bar Association, and N.C. Council of Community College Attorneys. He also serves as *pro bono* legal counsel for Children First/Community In Schools of Buncombe County, Inc. He serves more than 40 public school boards and community colleges in North Carolina. Chris is an honors graduate of both UNC-Chapel Hill undergraduate and law school. In law school he served on the Law Review and as Student Body President. Chris lives in Asheville with his wife and their daughter and son.

**Katie Cornetto** - Attorney NC State Board of Education – Katie Cornetto’s legal practice has included representing teachers, clerking for a judge on the NC Court of Appeals and presently serves as in-house counsel to the NC State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction. Katie manages the legal resources of the agency, coordinates legal representation with the Attorney General’s Office and provides day-to-day legal advice for the agency and its advisory boards, councils and commissions. Katie has a BA in Political Science and Public Policy Analysis from UNC-Chapel Hill and a law degree from NC Central University. Katie is native to the Midwest and moved to the Southeast as a teenager. She has played musical instruments since she was 8 years old. At age 17 she was awarded a scholarship to play the oboe as an out-of-state student at UNC-Chapel Hill. While she plays the oboe much less frequently, she has been invited to educate elementary school students about the oboe and the benefits of music in education and life. Prior to beginning her legal career, Katie was a program instructor and administrator for the Close Up Foundation and the National Youth Leadership Forum in Washington DC, Hawaii and California. In that capacity, Katie prepared high school students to be civic-minded and college and career-ready. Katie has served in numerous professional organizations such as the NC Bar Association, NC Association of Women Attorneys, Braxton Craven Inn of Court, NC Council of School Attorneys Board of Directors, a School Improvement Team Parent Representative and is Past President of the National Council of State Education Attorneys.

**Lotta Crabtree, JD** - Deputy Executive Administrator and Legal Counsel – Lotta Crabtree is deputy executive administrator and legal counsel for the State Health Plan for Teachers and State Employees. Crabtree, an attorney and former registered nurse, is responsible for the oversight of contracting and healthcare compliance, healthcare analytics, and policy, planning and analysis. As legal counsel she works closely with counsel from the attorney general’s office on Plan litigation, serves as Secretary to the Plan’s Board of Trustees, and is responsible for ensuring that the Plan complies with all federal and state rules and regulations. Before joining the Plan in November 2010, Crabtree served as the Plan’s outside counsel as an assistant attorney general with the NC Department of Justice. She graduated from the University Of Pittsburg School Of Law in 1999. Following graduation, Crabtree practiced as a medical malpractice attorney for nine years with the firm of Caroselli Beachler McTiernan and Conboy of Pittsburgh. She also holds bachelor degrees in political science and philosophy from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and is a 1991 graduate of the Virginia Appalachian TriCollege Nursing Program.

**Nadine Ejire** - serves as NCDPI Assistant Section Chief of Licensure. She was born and raised in Washington, DC. She has been with the Licensure Section for more than 10 years. Her Licensure experience began as a Licensure Specialist before becoming the Assistant Section Chief in 2005. Nadine looks forward to many new opportunities with the Licensure Section and beyond the NC Department of Public Instruction. Nadine enjoys many hobbies that include reading many genres, Zumba, writing poetry, and walking on nature trails. She is the proud mother of two young adult daughters. One of her favorite quotes to live by is “Be the change you want to see.” Ghandi.

**Donald W. Foster** - CPP, CFE, Deputy Director NC Private Protective Services – Donald Foster is a security professional with 35 years of experience. Employed by NC Department of Public Safety as Deputy Director of Private Protective Services, he oversees the registration and licensing of security-related functions throughout the state. Donald has dedicated his career to security, law enforcement and management. He received his Masters in Security Administration from Webster University. Donald also has a graduate certificate in Community Preparedness and Disaster Management from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In addition, Donald has earned two professional certifications, Certified Protection Professional (CPP) and Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE). As a long time reviewer of criminal histories and background checks, Donald has evaluated hundreds of applicants based on past criminal history. Donald currently resides in Raleigh, NC where he spends his leisure time as a photographer and enjoys his family and friends.

**April Herman -** has been employed with Catawba County Schools for 17 years. Fourteen of those years have been in the Human Resources Department as a Human Resources Data Specialist. She works as the HRMS Systems Administrator, People Admin District Administrator, Student Records Coordinator, and NCID LEA Delegated Administrator. She served on the Applicant Tracking System selection committee. She serves as resource to school systems implementing the People Admin Applicant Tracking System.

**Rick Johnson** - Benefits Director for Johnston County Schools since May 1, 2007. Prior to that he worked with the NC Department of Insurance, January 1988-March 1998 where he worked his way up from clerk to supervisor over the Agent Licensing Section in the Agent Services Division and later as a consumer advocate with the Consumer Services Division. During this time he earned industry designations of FMLA (Fellow Life Management Associate) and ALHC (Associate in Life and Health Claims). In April 1998 he went to work with the Department of State Treasurer as a Benefits Counselor. While at the Retirement System, he was instrumental in establishing the Employer Services Section, which developed and conducted training presentations for State and Local Government employers. In January 2006 he was promoted to Section Chief over the Benefits Section which processed disability and death benefits for local and state government workers as well as local educational agencies. In May 2007 he was hired by Johnston County Schools as Benefits Coordinator, and later promoted to Benefits Director. His duties include Retirement, Disability, Workers’ Comp, FMLA, ADA, and FLSA. Rick received his undergraduate degree from Emmanuel College in Franklin Springs, GA, and earned his master’s degree in administration from Central Michigan University which is located in Mt. Pleasant, MI. He has been married to his wife, Mary, for 40 years. They have two children, and are expecting their first grandchild in December.

**Jeffrey S. Koweek -** Director of Employee Entitlements, Human Resources – Employee Relations for Wake County Public School System has worked for the Wake County Public Schools since 2008 helping employees understand their rights and responsibilities. He has worked in the public schools of Durham, Wake, Seattle, New York City, and a farming village in Japan, and has taught classes on bridge to inner city middle school students and Honors Chemistry. He earned his National Boards in Early Adolescent Science in 1999, and became a member of the NC State Bar in 2006.

**Christy Layne -** is a native of eastern North Carolina has worked in Licensure for a little more than 10 years.  She earned her Bachelor’s at UNC-Charlotte, and Master’s at Pfieffer University.  She is currently a Licensure Program Manager.  Christy enjoys the beach and being a fulltime Mom to her six year old son Brendan.  Because of her love of running, she ran her first half marathon a couple of years ago in Virginia.

**Joel Leeper** - PMP is Project Manager for HR Management Systems for DPI and has been since 2014. Prior to that, Joel has led projects and programs for over twenty years including a recent major project for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. He graduated from Virginia Tech with a B.S. in Business and an MBA from Campbell University. He is married to Sue who works from home for a technology firm and has two grown kids who are K12 products of the WCPSS and the UNC System. Their daughter, Sherry works as a Medical Physicist in Raleigh and son, Bobby works as a Project Manager in Hagerstown, MD.

**George Phelps, Jr. -** is the HRMS (Human Resource Management System) Business Analyst at the NC Department of Public Instruction. George has been with NCDPI since 1990. He started at NCDPI working in School Business Services performing salary audits, then transitioned to helping teachers integrate technology into the classroom, and eventually analysis/developing/testing in the Technology Services area. Most recently George was the Systems Analyst for CEDARS (Common Education Data Analysis and Reporting System.)

**Adam R. Pridemore** - After serving the North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA) as a contract lobbyist for two legislative sessions, Adam joined the NCASA staff full-time as a Government Affairs Specialist in 2014. Prior to joining NCASA, Adam was employed as a Staff Attorney with the North Carolina General Assembly/UNC School of Government, and also practiced law privately in Raleigh, NC. Adam is a graduate of the Valparaiso University School of Law, earning his degree with honors, and North Carolina State University where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. Adam is originally from Titusville, FL and now resides in Raleigh, NC. He spends his free time with his daughter Lillian, quickly becoming an expert in all things Disney Princesses and My Little Pony.

**Brian Propst** - HR Information Systems Manager for Buncombe County Schools – After spending six years teaching Middle School Technology Applications, he is now in his 10th year working in the Human Resources Department for Buncombe County Schools. He spends his days helping principals, office staff, and educators navigate through several software systems including HRMS, Aesop’s Absence Management System, SchoolMessenger’s Notification System, ScribOnline Electronic Document System, Home Base NCEES, MyLearningPlan's Continuing Education System, and App Garden’s Volunteer Tracker System. When he is not working he enjoys throwing water balloons filled with pickle juice at his four wonderful children and pulling pranks on his beautiful wife.

**Susan Ruiz -** joined the Department of Public Instruction as the Director of Licensure in February 2008. She has spent the past 20 years working in private and public environments that focus on customer service and business process automation. A native of North Carolina, Susan grew up in New Bern and attended public schools in Craven County. After graduating from Wake Forest University, Susan lived and studied in France for a period of time prior to beginning her career in the customer service industry. Her professional experience includes work at American Airlines, BTI, Nortel, and Witness Systems prior to joining the state.

**Allison Schafer** - Is the Director of Policy/Legal Counsel. She oversees administration of superintendent searches for NC school Districts, is In-house legal counsel for the NC School Boards Association and serves as a resource on legal issues for all members, including 115 NC school boards and the Cherokee Nation Board of Education. She provides in-service training for school board members and school administrators, participates in legislative and policy initiatives, oversees filing of amicus briefs in appellate courts, and participates as a representative to the National Affiliate of Superintendent Searches. She is a graduate of Wake Forest University School of Law and is the 2008 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award of the Education Law Section of the NC Bar Association. She and her husband have 2 grown children.

**Alexis Schauss -** is NCDPI Director of School Business emigrated from England 25 years ago. She graduated from Georgetown University, Washington D.C. in Accounting and became a licensed Certified Public Accountant. She started her career in Washington D.C. working for KPMG Peat Marwick in audit, specializing in Telecommunications, Institutes of Higher Education and nonprofit clients. She was recruited into a startup group that provided services in litigation support, fraud and bankruptcy. Her husband was relocated to North Carolina 18 years ago and since that time they have made their home in Cary with their three children. Alexis spent three years working at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill analyzing and reengineering their processes, as well as implementing a new financial and facilities management system. Since January 2002, Alexis has worked at the Department of Public Instruction as Chief of Information Analysis and Reporting, the Assistant Director and currently as the Director of the Division of School Business. The Division of School Business has broad responsibilities including Allotments to school districts, Statewide financial, salary and student data collection, policy, compliance, reporting and analysis of NC Public Schools. The analyst group provides critical costing and analysis on education initiatives to the State Budget Office and the General Assembly during the legislative sessions.

**Richard Schwartz -** is the lead attorney with Schwartz & Shaw, P.L.L.C., a law firm in Raleigh, North Carolina specializing in Education Law. He has an undergraduate degree from Duke University (1975), and his law degree is from the University of North Carolina (1978). Mr. Schwartz is a past member of the Boards of Directors of the National Council of School Attorneys and the North Carolina Council of School Attorneys. He currently serves as the President of the Foundation Board for the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT). He is a past Chairman of the North Carolina Council of School Attorneys, and has served on the American Bar Association’s Education Law Committee and held numerous offices in the Education Law Section of the North Carolina Bar Association. He has served on the North Carolina Business Committee for Education, and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Partnership for Excellence, and is the Vice-Chairman of the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust. Over the last two years Mr. Schwartz was the lead attorney in the cases ranked by Lawyers Weekly as the top verdicts and settlements in North Carolina –a 10-week jury trial in 2013 resulting in a verdict of more than $91 million for the Union County Board of Education and a 2014 settlement that will generate at least $49 million for the Rowan-Salisbury Schools. He is a frequent lecturer at national conventions and has written extensively on school law for many publications.

**Dean Shatley -** received his Bachelor’s degree in Music Education from Appalachian State University in 1997 and his law degree from the University Of North Carolina School Of Law in 2003. Dean co-founded the law firm of Campbell Shatley in 2009. For over a decade, Dean’s practice primarily focuses on education law, and he regularly assists clients by providing relevant professional development, addressing personnel and student issues and conducting complex investigations. Dean represents numerous public entities on an on-going basis as primary counselor and litigator and he frequently lectures across the State on legal issues facing public bodies. Prior to attending law school, Dean taught in the public schools of North Carolina.

**Eileen Bucko Townsend** - is Chief of Insurance for the Department of Public Instruction. She manages the self-insured property insurance fund, the workers’ compensation and unemployment insurance funds, and the professional liability insurance contract for public and charter school employees. Ms. Townsend is a graduate of the University of Maryland. She received her Associates in Underwriting, and her CPCU from the American Institute of Insurance. A transplant from Maryland to NC in 2001, she is an insurance professional with over 20 years of experience managing insurance funds. She is well versed in property and liability contracts, writing RFP’s for insurance solicitations and assisting public schools, charter schools, and community colleges with insurance needs and concerns. While most of us yawn at the word “insurance,” Eileen always has something exciting to say.