



Focused on work-based learning, career-connected, experiential and community-applied learning

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Iowa Events Center in Des Moines, Iowa

produced by the Governor's STEM Advisory Council at the Iowa Department of Education and partners

Register to attend this free event at: www.iowaSTEM.org/2024Summit (Registration is required.)

Speaker Biographies

Governor Kim Reynolds is the 43rd governor of Iowa and has the distinction of being the first woman elected to the state's highest office in November 2018.

Governor Reynolds has a long-standing record of public service, having served four terms as Clarke County Treasurer before being elected to the Iowa Senate in November 2008. Two years later, as running mate of former Governor Terry Branstad, she was elected Lieutenant Governor and served nearly two terms before succeeding Branstad as Governor of Iowa in May 2017, when he left office to become United States Ambassador to China.

Governor Reynolds is proud of her Iowa roots. A small-town, rural Iowa girl at heart, she grew up in Madison County, graduated from Interstate 35 Community Schools in 1977, married her husband Kevin Reynolds in 1982, worked and raised three daughters, and completed her bachelor's degree from Iowa State University in 2016 while serving as Lieutenant Governor. The Reynolds' cherish spending time together as a family with their daughters, sons-in-law, and 11 grandchildren... all who live nearby in central Iowa.

Diane Young is the director of technical services and owner of Foundation Analytical Laboratory and co-chair of the Governor's STEM Advisory Council. In 2008, with a passionate desire and clear entrepreneurial vision, Young, a graduate of Iowa State University, chose to leave the security of the corporate world and build an analytical laboratory from the ground up in her home community of Cherokee, Iowa.

Her business acumen, as well as her experience with laboratory management and the expertise gained by working with successful companies, sparked her entrepreneurial passion.

A proponent of STEM education, Diane started this science-based business to give young, college-educated individuals a reason to return to the Cherokee, Iowa-area. By providing quality, high-paying career opportunities in science and technology, she could attract young talent while enhancing her hometown economy.

McKenzie Snow was appointed by Governor Kim Reynolds to lead the Iowa Department of Education beginning June 26, 2023.

Director Snow is committed to ensuring all children have access to a high-quality education that inspires them and prepares them for the future. As director, her work is grounded in high-quality teaching and learning, family and teacher empowerment, evidence-based innovation, college and career pathways, transparency and student-centered funding and supports.

Director Snow began her work in the classroom teaching remedial courses at the University of the Free State in South Africa. She served as Virginia Deputy Secretary of Education over early childhood education through postsecondary

pathways and as New Hampshire Division Director of Academics and Assessment, Special Education, Career Development, Adult Education, Wellness and Nutrition following her confirmation.

She also served in the federal government as a special assistant to the President at the White House Domestic Policy Council, senior adviser at the Office of Management and Budget, and policy director at the U.S. Department of Education. Prior to government service, Snow was policy director at the Foundation for Excellence in Education.

Snow has been named a Fulbright grantee, Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar and Bush Institute and Clinton Foundation Presidential Leadership Scholar. She is a proud fifth-generation Midwesterner.

Justin Lewis is the STEM Bureau Chief under the Innovation Division for the Iowa Department of Education. Justin is a passionate and empowering leader with a background spanning industry management and educational leadership. Justin specializes in innovative strategies and visionary leadership to empower teams and foster collaboration that propels organizations towards excellence. Justin also serves as the Executive Director of an Iowa non-profit organization dedicated to introducing Iowa youth to the outdoors including fishing, conservation and educational opportunities. In his free time, Justin enjoys fishing, traveling with his family and served his community as a part-time firefighter.

Quentin Suffren is Senior Advisor at ExcelinEd, where he leads the organization's policy and research efforts to strengthen education to workforce pathways in states. These efforts also include the recently released policy framework Pathways Matter and the first-of-its-kind research into student credentialing, Credentials Matter. Quentin and his team engage with governor's offices, system leaders and state partners to develop policy and programmatic solutions to support high-demand, high-skill and high-wage pathways for learners of all ages. Before joining ExcelinEd, Quentin was Executive Director of the College, Career and Military Preparation division at the Texas Education Agency. Prior to that, he served as Executive Director of Amplify's consulting services, working with state agencies and consortia on major technology and implementation contracts. He has also held roles at TNTP and The Learning Institute. Quentin earned his master's and bachelor's degrees from the University of Memphis.

Pat Yongpradit is the Chief Academic Officer for Code.org, a non-profit dedicated to promoting computer science education, and lead of TeachAI, a global initiative to guide education leaders in rethinking education in an age of AI. His work spans policy and government affairs, curriculum and professional learning, school outreach, coalition building, and international development. Before becoming a global voice on K-12 computer science and AI education, he taught for 13 years, inspiring students to create mobile games and apps for social causes and broadening participation in computer science among underrepresented groups. He has been featured in the book, "American Teacher: Heroes in the Classroom," and has been recognized as a Microsoft Worldwide Innovative Educator. He is certified in biology, physics, math, health, and technology education. Although Pat currently spends most of his time in education policy conversations, he still finds ways to sneak into the classroom

Hannah Weissman serves as the Director of Policy at Code.org, where she is an advocate for K-12 computer science education. Her enthusiasm for computer science was ignited during her high school years, setting the stage for a career dedicated to this field. After earning a masters in education, Hannah taught high school math in Boston. Recently, she played an instrumental role in the successful passage of the Computer Science Advancement Act in Minnesota. As a Midwesterner, Hannah is particularly excited to be here working to expand access to students across arguable the best region of the country.

Rebecca Lucas is the Global R&D Director for Kemin Health and Human Nutrition, a role she has held since 2021. In this role she leads a team exploring and launching hero ingredients for incorporation into dietary supplements leading to quality of life improvements in areas including: cognition, eye health, sleep, immunity and gastrointestinal health to name a few.

Over the past 15+ years at Kemin, Rebecca has held positions in research & development, business development, mergers and acquisitions, consumer education and technical marketing. Rebecca is passionate about showing how the principles of STEM can be incorporated into any role and truly believes in the strength of Kemin's tagline: Compelled by Curiosity.

With a bachelor's degree in microbiology and a master's degree in business administration, Rebecca would like to thank all her teachers who patiently answered numerous questions and ignited her passion for the question, "Why?"