



Meet our Panel Speakers



Michael Blair is a graduate of Baylor University and has been working in and around the Capitol since 2013. Prior to joining Team Roberts, he served as the Legislative Director for State Representative Cecil Bell, Jr. (R-Magnolia). Additionally, he has worked for Representative Doug Miller (R-New Braunfels), Representative Jason Villalba (R-Dallas), Representative Diane Patrick (R-Arlington), and has worked on several Congressional campaigns. When he is not at the Capitol, he enjoys taking his dog for long walks around Austin.



Donna Howard has served in the Texas House of Representatives since 2006. She is a member of the House appropriations Committee, and sits on its Article III Subcommittee which oversees education spending in the state budget. Donna is also a longtime member of the House Higher Education Committee – on which she currently serves as Vice-Chair – and the House Administration Committee. Donna was elected to the Eanes ISD board in West Austin for the 1996-1999 term. She now serves as a board member of Expanding Horizons Foundation, supporting low-income housing and education.



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Caroline Joiner is the Executive Director of TechNet, a bipartisan policy and political network of innovation economy CEOs and senior executives. Joiner has more than a decade of experience in government affairs, political consulting, grassroots organizing and strategic communications. Since 2009, she has been an independent government affairs consultant for a variety of corporate and political clients, including the Texas Cable Association and National Instruments. Earlier, she served as vice president of the Global Intellectual Property Center at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C., leading a 700-member coalition of companies and associations to protect IP and innovation around the world.



Dr. Tom Leonard is superintendent of the highly-acclaimed Eanes Independent School District in Austin, Texas. His doctorate is in curriculum and instruction from Loyola University of Chicago. He served as superintendent in the Barrington 220 School District in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago, Ill for seven years. He holds a master's degree in secondary education and a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Northern Illinois University of DeKalb, Ill. Dr. Leonard is often a featured speaker and guest columnist for various conferences and publications.