

emotional disturbance and learning disabilities. There, she worked as a private consultant on public policy issues with an emphasis on children's issues, including such topics as school policies. Before joining The Carter Center, Ms. Ellingson worked for the Georgia State Legislature's Budgetary and Reconciliation Oversight Committee where she conducted program and performance evaluations of child-serving agencies.

As Senior Associate Director for The Carter Center's Mental Health Programs, Ms. Ellingson has included planning and implementing a series of national policy discussions in collaboration with the U.S. Surgeon General and a broad array of other stakeholders on children's mental health issues.

Ms. Ellingson earned a master's degree in Public Policy from the Terry Sanford Institute at Duke University, a Master's of Science degree in Special Education from the Johns Hopkins University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Mount Holyoke College.

Ronda Hightower currently serves as the Interim Superintendent for the Laurens County School District. She earned a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership from Georgia Southern University. She also holds an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Education from Brewton Parker College, as well as a masters and a specialist degree in Educational Leadership from

(r)-2 (en)1 (t)3 (l)5.1 (yl.. 2 (d)-0 (om)-8d)-3 -5 (e)-5

Assistant Superintendent for the Candler County School District, Dr. Jordan oversees student services including Special Education Programming, Multi-Student Supports (MTSS) and Student Assessment. Currently Assistant Superintendent and serving as Principal for Metter High School for 10 years, Jordan has worked closely with and is an advocate for Care Partners of Georgia.

Garry McGiboney is the Deputy Superintendent of the Office of School Climate at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). Prior to joining the GaDOE, he worked in elementary, middle, high, and alternative schools. Dr. McGiboney was appointed by the Governor of Georgia to serve on the Joint Study Committee on Health Access, Study Commission on Leadership, 2020 Census Commission, Senate Study Committee on Dyslexia, and the House Study Committee on Youth Gangs and Violence. He serves by appointment on the Georgia Supreme Court's Justice for Children Committee; Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative Committee; Children in Need of Services Collaborative, Get Georgia Reading Campaign Cabinet; Georgia Accrediting Commission, and others. Dr. McGiboney has over 30 professional journal publications on youth-related issues, and he is the author of eight books. His most recent books are *The Psychology of School Climate* and *Building a Culture of Learning*.

Connie Smith is the Apex Program Manager for CSB of Middle Georgia. She has been employed with CSBMG for almost 5 years serving in the same capacity. In this role, Mrs. Smith is responsible for overseeing school based behavioral health services in 13 counties, 60 schools. Mrs. Smith was the Executive Director for Laurens County Family Connection and has been in this role for the past 16 years.

Mrs. Smith earned her bachelor's degree in Social Work from Savannah State University (formerly Savannah State College) in May 1994 and her master's degree in Psychology and Counseling (emphasis in clinical mental health) from Troy University in May 2014.

Steve J. Smith is completing his fifth year as superintendent of Bleckley County Schools and serving for six years as superintendent for Wilcox County Schools. In addition to his superintendent duties, Dr. Smith conducts workshops for many boards of education and professional organizations throughout Georgia about school finance. Prior to becoming an educator, Dr. Smith was an executive in the financial services industry, and he is also a minister who is serving his 12th year at a church in a neighboring county.

Marquita Timmons serves as one of the two School Social Workers for Laurens County Schools. She earned her master's degree in social work from Savannah State University along with active licensure from the State of Georgia in this area. Also, she holds an undergraduate degree in psychology with a minor in sociology from Georgia Southern University. She enjoys collaborating with all of her community partners, Community Service Board of Middle Georgia, Stepping Stone, DFC, and Family Connection to name a few. For it is when we work smarter and harder together, the child and family become stronger and health

Michael Waller is the Interim Executive Director of Georgia Appleseed. He leads the

