

About the Speakers

Robert Mahaffey is the Director of Communications for the Rural School and Community Trust, the premier national advocacy organization dedicated in helping rural schools and communities grow better together. Previously, Mr. Mahaffey was Vice President, Communications, New American Schools, the Publisher and Communications Director, National Association of Secondary School Principals, and Vice President, External Relations, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

Currently, Rob is Vice Chairman for the Coalition for Community Schools which is an alliance of national, state and local organizations in education, youth development, community planning and development, family support, health and human services, government and philanthropy as well as national, state and local community school networks.

In 2011, he was elected President, Organizations Concerned about Rural Education (OCRE), a national coalition of education, agriculture, community development, technology and utility organizations dedicating to providing a quality education for all rural children and securing the economic future of rural America.

As a West Virginia resident, Rob is a certified substitute teacher and has a BS degree in Political Science and English, Brigham Young University and MS degree in Management, University of Maryland.

Mary Kingston Roche is the Public Policy Manager for the Coalition for Community Schools. In this role she leads the policy and advocacy efforts of the Coalition to promote the community schools approach both on the federal and state levels. Prior to this role, Mary served for 2.5 years as Manager of Government Relations for the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). In this role she represented the NASSP members as an active voice on Capitol Hill at the federal level for the best policies possible for secondary school leaders and school districts across the nation. While at NASSP, Mary also led the lobbying efforts of the nation's largest education coalition, the Committee for Education Funding, in the role of Hill Teams Co-Chair. Mary is a proud alumna of IEL's Education Policy Fellowship Program, class of 2011.

Mary received her Master of Public Policy from Duke University and a Bachelor of Arts in English from Boston University. She began her career teaching secondary English for three years in Oakland, CA.

In her spare time, Mary leads workshops for DCPS parents through the nonprofit Turning the Page to help parents become more effective educators of their children at home, advocates for their children in school and leaders within their school community.