

**Great Start Cohort Workshop**  
**Wednesday, April 21, 2021**  
**Presenter Contact List and Bios**

**Facilitated by Dr. Kelly Smith**

Director

Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors

Retired Superintendent, Belle Plaine Public Schools

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Dr. Kelly D. Smith is a Director at Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors, LLC (formerly Springsted). He previously served for 24 years as superintendent in Minnesota in several Greater Minnesota districts and is a past President of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA). Dr. Smith also has experience as a school district business manager in Minnesota.

Dr. Smith brings a number of skills to the Springsted team including experience in school district re-organization, facilitating bond & operating levy campaigns, developing budgets and finding financial solutions to issues faced by school districts today.

**Michael J. Lovett, Ph.D.**

Lecturer, University of Minnesota

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From 2008 through 2017, Dr. Michael Lovett was superintendent of the White Bear Lake Public Schools in Minnesota, after serving as assistant superintendent with the Minnetonka Public Schools from 1988 to 2008. Previously he was a public school teacher in New York, an administrator at school site and district levels, and at the Minnesota Department of Education.

He teaches graduate level courses in educational leadership and policy at the University of Minnesota and the University of St. Thomas. Areas of teaching experience include human resources; school finance; strategic planning; research design, analysis and critique; and the superintendency.

During his career he has regularly presented to Minnesota and National conferences; traveled internationally to Asia, Africa, and Europe for education and nonprofit partnerships; is the author of journal articles on educational finance and law; published

a book on teacher retention; and is a contributor to national publications on education topics.

He provides strategic leadership mentoring and consulting to educational and nonprofit leaders through Lovett Leadership LLC; and is active on several nonprofit boards.

Dr. Lovett earned his B.A. in History from Carleton College, Northfield, MN, in 1970; attended Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan in 1969; and earned M.A. (1973) and Ph.D. (1979) degrees in Educational Leadership and Policy from the University of Minnesota.

**James Martin**

Attorney

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Mr. James Martin has practiced employment law for over thirty (30) years and currently practices law at Martin Law Firm PLLC. Prior to starting Martin Law Firm PLLC in April 2019, Mr. Martin has worked at small, medium and large law firms practicing in the areas of labor, employment and school law.

During his career he has served as the Executive Director of Human Resources for Bloomington Public Schools from 1998 to 2005, and the Director of Human Resources for St. Louis Park Public Schools from 1993 to 1998.

Mr. Martin also serves as a neutral investigator conducting employment investigations and has served as a hearing officer in employment arbitrations and student expulsion hearings.

He earned his B.A. in Psychology from William Jewell College, Liberty, MO, his M.S. in Industrial Relations from Purdue University and his J.D. from William Mitchell (now Mitchell/Hamline) College of Law, St. Paul, MN.

**Melissa Schaller**

Executive Director of Special Education

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Melissa Schaller is the Executive Director of Student Services for Intermediate School District 917 where she is in her 13th year serving its nine member school districts.

Melissa is responsible for oversight of district special education programming including 25 sites, approximately 500 staff, and a budget of more than 39 million dollars. Prior to joining ISD 917, Melissa was the Director of Special Education for the Austin Public School District. She has served many state level organizations in the field of education including serving currently on the Board of School Administrators as well as previously as the president of the executive board of both Minnesota Administrators for Special Education and Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children. Recently, she is completed her PhD at the University of Minnesota in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development.

### **Laura Tubbs Booth**

Partner

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Laura Tubbs Booth is a partner at Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney. She has represented school districts over 25 years and is the recipient of the 2019 Minnesota Association of Special Educators' Distinguished Service Award. Laura focuses much of her work with schools in Minnesota and North Dakota on preventive law and the practical application of the law. She has represented clients in administrative proceedings and in state and federal courts including the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court.

Laura routinely advises clients on all areas of education law, including special education and other student issues; discrimination; data practices and open meeting matters; employment issues; investigation of employment and child maltreatment issues; policy development, training and coaching in the human resources/employment area. Laura has successfully represented Minnesota schools in several cases that have shaped education law in Minnesota. Laura is a frequent presenter and trainer for school districts and charter schools.

Before coming to Ratwik, Roszak, & Maloney, Laura was the Founder and Managing Partner of Booth Law, LLC. She was also a partner at Rider Bennett, LLP and the Executive Director of Human Resource Services for the Wayzata Public Schools. During law school, Laura was a member of the Silver Gavel Society, Law Review and received a Dean's Academic Scholarship for each of her three years. Laura also received a March of Dimes Scholarship for her public service in college.

When not representing clients, Laura is active in teaching adaptive skiing during the winter, and hiking, biking and cabin time in the summer.