

Margaret Spellings

Senior Consultant

Nationally known as an education thought leader and public policy expert, Spellings joined Texas 2036 after serving as the president of the 17-institution University of North Carolina System, leading the state's public university into a new period of performance, affordability, and growth with a focus on improving economic mobility, ensuring accountability, and advancing the public good. During her tenure, Spellings oversaw a strategic planning process that won unanimous approval from the UNC Board of Governors for its roadmap titled Higher Expectations. That roadmap has led to unprecedented performance agreements at each UNC System institution which outline measurable goals and metrics to advance key UNC System priorities like improving graduation rates, reducing achievement gaps, and ensuring access for students of every background.

Spellings has extensive experience at the highest levels of the United States government. From 2005 to 2009, she served as the U.S. Secretary of Education, where she oversaw the creation of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education, which shifted the national conversation around colleges and universities, and implemented the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), a national bipartisan initiative to provide greater accountability for public K-12 schools. From 2001 to 2005, she was Chief Domestic Policy Advisor at the White House for President George W. Bush. Beyond her service at the federal level, Spellings served as President of the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas, Texas, as President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, and at the state-level in Texas politics. She served as a senior advisor to then Governor Bush of Texas, as head of governmental and external relations for the Texas Association of School Boards, and in key positions at Austin Community College and with the Texas Legislature. Spellings is a graduate of the University of Houston, where she earned a bachelor's degree in political science. She also received an honorary doctorate and Distinguished Alumna Award from the university in 2006.