



Sheela VanHoose

Sheela VanHoose joined The Southern Group in 2019, with a strong focus on education leadership. She is recognized as a leader in education policy, successfully securing over \$64 million in legislative appropriations for computer science professional development. Her advocacy spans a wide range of education issues spanning early childhood through higher education. This includes advancing school safety legislation, navigating statewide education procurements, and helping clients effectively engage with local school districts to resolve complex challenges. Sheela currently serves on the Florida Advisory Board for Cognia (formerly AdvancED) and on the board of directors for Tech Hub South Florida.

Prior to joining The Southern Group, Sheela was the Director of State Government Affairs for Code.org, where she led the organization's policy work across 15 states. She has held similar positions with Charter Schools USA and Broward County Public Schools.

At Broward, she served as project lead for the "SMART Initiative" — Broward County Public Schools' initiative to educate stakeholders of the critical school needs that existed, resulting in the successful passage of an \$800 million bond referendum with 74% voter approval.

Sheela's expertise is built on years of hands-on experience and a strong foundation in education policy. She earned a BA in English from Nova Southeastern University and an MA in Education Policy and Leadership from American University, providing her with strategic insight to help clients navigate complex education issues effectively.

Sheela was named Nova Southeastern University's Distinguished Alumni of the Year in 2016 and was recently recognized by the News Service of Florida in 2024 with the Above & Beyond: Women Honoring Women in Government and Public Service award.

Sheela's commitment to her community runs deep. She served as a gubernatorial appointee to the Board of Commissioners for Broward Health, held board positions with PACE Center for Girls Broward and Covenant House Florida, and is a proud graduate of Leadership Broward (Class XXXIV).

As a black belt and former member of the U.S. National Karate Team, Sheela brings that same grit and discipline to fighting for her clients and championing critical education issues. She now lives in Tallahassee with her husband and daughter.



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