

**Together in Pittsburgh:  
Connections, Commitments, Community**

**NCEA<sup>®</sup>**  
**2024**  
**APRIL 2-4**  
**PITTSBURGH**



*Preliminary Program*

**National Catholic  
Educational Association  
2024 Convention  
April 2-4 | Pittsburgh, PA  
David L. Lawrence Convention Center**

**Register Here!**



[www.ncea.org/NCEA2024](http://www.ncea.org/NCEA2024)

[#NCEA2024](https://twitter.com/NCEA2024)



*Register here!*

## *Why Attend NCEA 2024?*

NCEA 2024 is the must-attend event for educators and leaders in Catholic and faith-based education! Register now to secure your spot for April 2-4, 2024, at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, PA.

Join us for one of the largest private-education association gatherings in the nation, in partnership with the Diocese of Pittsburgh. This unique event brings together educators from across the United States, Canada and beyond.

Whether you're involved in early childhood education, elementary, secondary, colleges and universities or local parish leadership, NCEA 2024 has something for all including an opportunity to attend professional development sessions on Connecting with Community, Centered in Christ, Leading the Way, Characterized by Excellence, Serving All Students and Committing to a Successful Tomorrow.

Make sure to set aside time to explore our exhibitors' offerings, where you can discover the latest in educational, products, services and technology, experience beautiful liturgies and take part in special events.

We look forward to seeing you at NCEA 2024, Together in Pittsburgh: Connections, Commitments, Community—the Catholic school education event of the year.

# NCEA 2024 Schedule at a Glance

As of January 5, 2024. The schedule is subject to change.  
Please check [www.NCEA.org/NCEA2024](http://www.NCEA.org/NCEA2024) for the latest information.

Activities occur at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center  
in downtown Pittsburgh.



Register here!

## MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024

**3:30 – 5:15 PM**

Check-In and Badge Pick-Up

**5:30 – 8 PM**

President's Reception, Dinner and  
Awards (Invite only)

*Dinner sponsored by FACTS and  
Archangel Education + Technology*

THE WESTIN PITTSBURGH

## TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2024

**7:30 AM – 3:45 PM**

Check-In and Badge Pick-Up

**9 – 9:15 AM**

Welcome:

President/CEO Lincoln Snyder

**9:15 – 10:15 AM**

Opening Eucharistic Liturgy

**10:30 – 11:30 AM**

**Keynote: Steve Angrisano**

**11:30 AM**

Exhibit Hall Grand Opening and  
Reception

**11:30 AM – 6 PM**

Exhibit Hall Open

**1:30 – 2:45 PM**

Professional Learning Breakout  
Sessions #1

**3:15 – 4:30 PM**

Professional Learning Breakout  
Sessions #2

**4:30 – 6 PM**

Exhibit Hall Reception

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 2024

**7:30 AM – 3:15 PM**

Check-In and Badge Pick-Up

**7:30 – 8:30 AM**

Reconciliation

**9 – 10 AM**

Eucharistic Liturgy

**9 AM – 6 PM**

Exhibit Hall Open

**10:30 – 11:30 AM**

**General Session:**

**Josh Packard, Ph.D.;**

**John Galvan, M.A., M.Ed.;**

**Megan Bissell, M.A.**

**11:30 AM – 1 PM**

Exhibit Hall Reception

**12 – 1:30 PM**

Superintendent Lunch and  
Networking (Invite Only)

*Sponsored by Renaissance*

**1:30 – 2:45 PM**

Professional Learning Breakout  
Sessions #3

**3:15 – 4:30 PM**

Panel: State of Catholic Education

**3:15 – 4:30 PM**

Professional Learning Breakout  
Sessions #4

**4:30 – 6 PM**

Exhibit Hall Reception

## THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2024

**7:30 – 9:30 AM**

Check-In and Badge Pick-Up

**9 AM – 1:30 PM**

Exhibit Hall Open

**8 – 9:15 AM**

Professional Learning Breakout  
Sessions #5

**9:45 – 11 AM**

Professional Learning Breakout  
Sessions #6

**11:30 AM – 12:15 PM**

**Keynote: Steve Angrisano**

**12:15 – 12:30 PM**

Closing Remarks

**12:30 – 1:30 PM**

Closing Liturgy

**1:30 PM**

Farewell

# NCEA 2024 Additional Events for Guests and Attendees

DISCLAIMER: This program is NOT FINAL. Any and all programs, sponsored events and receptions are subject to change.



Register here!



## President's Dinner and Awards

Monday, April 1

5:30 PM Reception

6 PM Dinner and Awards - *Sponsored by FACTS and Archangel Education. + Technology*

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THE WESTIN PITTSBURGH, THIRD FLOOR  
ALLEGHENY GRAND BALLROOM

Kick off the Convention with a reception and dinner to recognize the outstanding contributions of Catholic school leaders across our country. Lead. Learn. Proclaim. (LLP) and the President's Awards awardees will be honored.

*Invitation only*

## Superintendent Lunch

Wednesday, April 3

12 - 1:30 PM

*Sponsored by Renaissance*

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THE WESTIN PITTSBURGH, THIRD FLOOR  
ALLEGHENY GRAND BALLROOM

The Superintendent Lunch is the opportunity to connect with diocesan leaders from around the country. It is open to system leaders and their guests.

Superintendents and diocesan leaders can register when registering online for Convention. Tickets will not be available at the door.

## Box of Joy Packing Event

### Cross Catholic Outreach— Service Project

Tuesday 11:30 AM - 6 PM

Wednesday 9 AM - 6 PM

Thursday 9 AM - 1:30 PM

*Sponsored by Cross Catholic Outreach*

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EXHIBIT HALL FLOOR

The Box of Joy project at NCEA 2024, organized with Cross Catholic Outreach, involves partnering with Catholic communities to assemble Christmas shoeboxes filled with toys, clothing and school supplies for children in need. Attendees fill shoebox-sized packages with toys, clothing, school supplies and other cherished items. The initiative spreads joy to both contributors and recipients in developing countries, providing not only material gifts but also a rosary and a booklet sharing The Story of Jesus. Since its inception, over 512,000 Box of Joy gifts have been delivered to children in nine developing countries. The goal is to increase the number of gifts sent for Christmas 2024, offering hope and love to those who may otherwise receive no Christmas presents.

**Pack your Box of Joy!** To learn more about how to bring Box of Joy to your school visit: <https://crosscatholic.org/box-of-joy/>

**Watch for more information coming soon.**

# NCEA 2024 Registration Rates\*



Register here!

REGISTER AT

[www.ncea.org/NCEA2024](http://www.ncea.org/NCEA2024)

## NCEA 2024 Registration Rates\*

Purchase orders are only available to those using Title II-A funds. If using Title II-A funds, please have your local educational agency (LEA) contact Cedric Bernescut at [cedric@ncea.org](mailto:cedric@ncea.org) or 571.451.2887 for registration. For LEA purposes, NCEA is scheduled to provide 75% secular programming at NCEA 2024.

In-Person Member Rates	Early Bird Fees 10/5/23 - 2/23/24	Advanced 2/24/24 - 3/29/24	Onsite 4/1/24 - 4/4/24
Full Convention	\$260	\$400	\$500
One Day Only	\$260	\$300	\$340

In-Person Non-Member Rates	Early Bird Fees 10/5/23 - 2/23/24	Advanced 2/24/24 - 3/29/24	Onsite 4/1/24 - 4/4/24
Full Convention	\$480	\$620	\$730
One Day Only	\$480	\$530	\$570

*\*Special Note Concerning Speaker Registration: Invited and confirmed speakers at NCEA 2024 will receive instructions via email on how to properly register as a speaker. Speakers should wait to register until they receive these instructions.*

## NCEA 2024 Registration Details

You must sign-in to register; you cannot register as a guest. If you do not have an account, you must create a profile before you can register.

To receive member rates you must be signed in as a member.

If you are an institution and wish to register multiple attendees, they must be linked to your institution BEFORE they can be registered. To add, remove and update staff linked to your institution, go to the [NCEA membership page](#) and click on the Roster Manager button under staff rosters. Then use the "Register Someone Else" button and locate them within your list of linked staff.



# NCEA 2024 Terms & Conditions



*Register here!*

## Terms & Conditions

1. Payment is due upon receipt of invoice. Send checks payable to NCEA, PO Box 222432, Chantilly, VA 20153-2432.
2. In order to ensure proper credit, please be sure to include the name of the attendee and/or order number in the memo of the check.
3. Purchase Orders will be accepted until March 1, 2024. As of March 2, 2024, only checks or credit cards will be accepted.
4. Fees associated with tickets to any special event must be paid in full prior to or upon arrival at NCEA 2024. If there is an outstanding balance for special event tickets, you may not be allowed to attend the special event.
5. Schools will be responsible for all registration fees if payment is not made by the local educational agency (LEA) by June 30, 2024.
6. Registration fees do not include meals or hotel accommodations.
7. Please send cancellation requests to [wade@ncea.org](mailto:wade@ncea.org). Individuals requesting a refund prior to or on March 5, 2024 will receive a full refund, requests made between March 6, 2024 and March 19, 2024 will receive a refund of 50% of the fees. Refunds will not be granted after March 20, 2024.
8. Cancellation of convention registration does not constitute cancellation of a hotel room. Please be sure to handle both separately.
9. No one under the age of 18 is permitted to attend NCEA 2024.
10. Attendees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and agree to accept responsibility for their actions while at an NCEA event. Please speak with an NCEA staff member if anyone is acting inappropriately at an NCEA event.
11. Any individual who is soliciting business in public spaces or is in violation of the event venue's rules and regulations will be asked to leave immediately.
12. Please bring your registration confirmation with you for check-in.
13. Attendees will be charged a \$25 fee to reproduce any name badge that has been misplaced onsite.
14. Title II-A funds for professional development under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) may be available for you to attend NCEA 2024. These funds may be used to pay for the "secular, non-ideological" sessions that a participant attends. Funds may be used for registration, as well as travel, lodging, etc. Requests must be made to the LEA that controls government funding for these programs. Registration fees can be paid directly to NCEA by the LEA. If using Title II-A funds, please have your LEA contact Cedric Bernescut at [cedric@ncea.org](mailto:cedric@ncea.org) or 571.451.2887 for registration.

## About Title II-A

Title II-A funds for professional development under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) may be available for you to attend NCEA 2024. These funds may be used to pay for the "secular, non-ideological" sessions a participant attend. Funds may be used for registration, travel, lodging, etc. Requests must be made to the LEA that controls government funding for these programs. Registration fees can be paid directly to NCEA by the LEA.

Permitting religious organizations and secular organizations alike to provide secular services to schools does not violate the Establishment Clause and absent specific language to the contrary (e.g., ESEA sections 1117(d)(2)(B), the Department generally considers faith-based organizations to be eligible to contract with grantees and sub grantees and to apply for and receive Department grants on the same basis as any other private organization. See 2 C.F.R. 3474.15(b)(1); 34 C.F.R. 72.52(a) (1). Of course, the Department will continue to implement all other provisions of ESEA, including the requirement that all equitable services be "secular, neutral and nonideological." 20 U.S.C. 53(a)(2), 7881(a)(2).

If using Title II-A funds, please have your LEA contact Cedric Bernescut at [cedric@ncea.org](mailto:cedric@ncea.org) or 571.451.2887 for registration.

# NCEA 2024 Justification Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The NCEA 2024 Convention will take place April 2-4, 2024, at David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, PA. This is the largest private-education association gathering in the nation, held in partnership with the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Professional development and networking with fellow teacher-educators is imperative as I continue to grow as an educator. Attending this conference will not only help me build in those areas, I will also be able to meet directly with vendors and suppliers in the exhibit hall to identify new products and services that could help improve my profession and our school's resources.

I am seeking use of Title II-A for my registration fees and other travel-related expenses. As you are aware, Title II-A funds may be used to pay for the "secular, non-ideological" sessions that the participant attends. Funds may be used for registration, travel, lodging and other daily expenses.

While there will be three keynotes, six featured sessions and over 150 professional development sessions to choose from, I hope to attend \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

Other topic areas include Connecting with Community, Centered in Christ, Leading the Way, Characterized by Excellence, Serving All Students and Committing to a Successful Tomorrow.

The NCEA 2024 program will list the session topic categories and time slots for professional learning at NCEA 2024 Convention.

Registration fees for NCEA 2024 increase on February 23, 2024. I have detailed the cost breakdown below and estimated the cost of my attendance at \_\_\_\_\_. I appreciate your support.

Here is the breakdown of my NCEA 2024 attendance expenses:

Airfare: \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_

Hotel: \_\_\_\_\_

Meals: \_\_\_\_\_

Convention Fee: \_\_\_\_\_

Total estimated NCEA 2024 cost of: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you,

\_\_\_\_\_



# NCEA 2024 Main Stage and Featured Sessions



Register here!

We are excited you will be with us for three days of professional learning in the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. Whether it's one of the keynote sessions, a Eucharistic liturgy, one of the six professional learning sessions, a reception or networking in the exhibit hall, we are pleased to share in your experiences.

## Keynote and General Sessions

Tuesday April 2, 2024

**Keynote**  
**10:30 – 11:30 AM**

### **Keeping the Faith While Teaching the Faith**

Steve Angrisano

A highly effective hour designed especially for teachers and administrators with a little humor and genuine appreciation for what Catholic school educators do! This session is a great spiritual boost for anyone teaching in Catholic schools. To be “around” faith is not the same thing as having faith. With great spiritual and practical suggestions on keeping our faith strong, this keynote is designed to keep us from mistaking our own spiritual journey with our frequent professional “near faith experiences!”

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

**NCEA General Session**  
**10:30 – 11:30 AM**

### **The Power of Listening for Faith Formation in Catholic Education**

Josh Packard, Ph.D.; John Galvan, M.A., M.Ed.; Megan Bissell, M.A.

Listening is a sacred act. It's also the single most impactful thing you can do to support young people's faith formation. In this engaging general session, you'll learn what the research says about the importance of listening, what young people themselves say about the adults who have taken the time to listen and what church teachings say about why you should listen. Come see three dynamic speakers and a panel of young people on the mainstage to learn how you can reverse the trend of disaffiliation by listening to young people.

Thursday, April 4, 2024

**Keynote**  
**11:30 AM – 12:15 PM**

### **Teaching Youth to Follow Christ in “The Way” of Discipleship**

Steve Angrisano

It's not enough to teach our young people about God, we need to provide them with opportunities that draw them into an experience with God, an experience they yearn to share with the world. The youth that we encounter in our schools are ready for this challenge. Participants will explore ways to engage youth to live the Word, share the Word and BE the next generation of faith-filled disciples.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*





## Featured and NCEA Sessions

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

1:30 – 2:45 PM

### Professional Learning Breakout Sessions #1

#### Getting a “Head Start” on Pre-K Vitality Through Language Intensive Preschool Development

Katy Lichon, Ph.D.; Clare Roach

Due to COVID, preschool enrollment has dipped significantly. In this session, we will share the magnificent story of 25+ schools across two major (arch)dioceses combatting this trend while deeply honoring the rich linguistic gifts of their communities through the formation of language-intensive preschools (~1 hour a day of targeted literacy-focused language instruction). We believe and have found that bilingual early childhood programs not only provide a strategic academic onramp for Spanish-speaking Latino children, they also attract a diverse array of families to Catholic schools who recognize the cognitive, career and interpersonal value of speaking more than one language. The session will present the Early Childhood Language Intensive Program (ECLIP) model, curriculum design, outcomes and benefits of this innovative model and its implementation in multiple schools.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

#### Putting the Grade on Faith: 10 Tips for Religious Teachers

John Galvan

Have you ever had a student question whether you can

assign a grade to their faith? Explore practical approaches to teaching religion from a 30-year veteran. John Galvan, NCEA Vice President of Assessments, spent the better part of his career in Catholic education teaching high school religious studies before becoming an administrator and superintendent for his home Diocese of San Diego. John will reflect on 10 lessons learned from the religion classroom and share tips to advance your Catholic education mission. This session promises to be informative, insightful and inspired.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

3:15 – 4:30 PM

### Professional Learning Breakout Sessions #2

#### Catholic Schools and The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): Partners in Progress

Jessica Couey; Mike Fassbach, M.S.; Matthew Snyder; William Ward, Ph.D.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only nationally representative assessment of what students in public and private schools know and can do in various subjects. Catholic school participation is essential for the accurate reporting of national and private school results. The presenters will provide updates to the NAEP program for schools, highlight recent and historical results for students and demonstrate various NAEP tools available to members of the Catholic school community to learn more about student performance.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### Ministering to Whole Families

Steve Angrisano

We spend a great deal of time catechizing young people about God, who will return home to no experiences of faith in God. We are sowing seed in shadow soil. What we must do, what Pope Francis is urging us to do, is evangelize families as we catechize their children. Come discover strategies to reach and engage entire families with a compelling message of the Gospel.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

1:30 – 2:45 PM

### Professional Learning Breakout Sessions #3

#### Public Policy Issues and Federal Education Benefits for Students and Teachers

Sr. Dale McDonald, PBVM, Ph.D.

Navigating the current political landscape of education policy, this presentation will focus on issues and concerns surfacing in federal education legislation, guidance documents and court decisions and their potential effect on Catholic school teachers and students. Topics will include maximizing equitable participation in federal education programs, school choice, religious liberty issues along with questions from participants.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

## **Weaving a Richer Tapestry: Inviting, Welcoming and Supporting Teachers of Color in Catholic Schools**

John Beltramo, Ph.D.; Antonio Felix, Ed.D.; Héctor Martínez

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Our session outlines the blessings and cultural richness bestowed upon Catholic schools by ethnically, racially and linguistically diverse teachers. We will lead attendees in a workshop-style exploration of practical and research-based strategies that school leaders can take to recruit, welcome, support and develop teachers of color in their own dioceses and school sites. We also offer illustrative examples of these strategies, and we then share first-hand accounts of current Catholic school teachers of color who have participated in them. Throughout the session, we invite attendees to reflect on the extent to which their schools already utilize these strategies and how they could more intentionally and effectively do so in the future.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

**3:15 – 4:30 PM**

### **Professional Learning Breakout Sessions #4**

#### **St. Anthony School Programs - Inclusivity and Beyond**

Korin H. McMillen, M.A.;  
Anka Gataric

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St. Anthony School Programs offers support and opportunities for students with special needs in select Catholic schools within the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Comprehensive programming includes many facets to create a successful, positive school experience for students, such as specially designed instruction, replacement

curriculums, accommodations and modifications to grade-level material, as well as speech and occupational therapy when eligible. Staff are comprised of certified special education teachers, as well as paraprofessionals at the elementary level, and job coaches at the high school level. Our programs have one or two classrooms in each of our partner schools, which serve as the hub for special services, and where our staff collaborate to meet the needs of our students. Student programming is guided by an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which is customized to the St. Anthony's program and the goals of the student. We focus on inclusion experiences, social skills, vocational skills and faith-formation in all aspects of our programs. We utilize a teaming approach to all things, from instruction to social programming, to vocational aspirations. We utilize strategies and practices that provide optimal learning for students, while continuing to assist in their emotional and spiritual development, rooted in our Faith.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

#### **PANEL**

#### **State of Catholic Education**

Lincoln Snyder

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Join NCEA President/CEO Lincoln Snyder and a panel of NCEA leadership to discuss important topics that impact Catholic education.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

Thursday, April 4, 2024

**8 – 9: 15 AM**

### **Professional Learning Breakout Sessions #5**

#### **Calming an Anxious Organization: Lead with Conviction**

Melanie B. Palmisano, Ed.D.

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All organizations have challenges, but some seem to experience a culture of anxiety that inhibits growth and improvement. It can be difficult for a leader to determine how to calm anxious waters. Leaders will understand how to lead with conviction so that they can be more effective in navigating challenging times while making a huge difference in outcomes. Leading with conviction prepares us to ride the waves of chaos and sabotage. Come learn to stay calm, stay the course and stay connected as you act boldly within increasing complexity and escalating change.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

#### **Implications of Changes in Religious Sponsorship for P-12 Catholic Schools**

Fr. Tom Simonds, SJ, Ed.D.;  
Mike Daniels, Ed.D.

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As some religious orders plan for a future with fewer members, they are rethinking how they will sponsor Catholic schools and sustain the charism of the schools. Through presentations and breakout table discussions, participants will develop strategies to address changes to religious sponsorship in their schools.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

9:45 – 11 AM

**Professional Learning  
Breakout Sessions #6**

**Care for Creation in High School  
Classrooms**

Emma Doerfler, M.Ed.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis writes, "Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to build a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded." As Catholic high school teachers, we share the urgency of young people who seek meaningful change and who desire hope for the future in our time of environmental crisis. We focus a three-part approach to encourage educators to respond to the call to care for God's creation through our work in Catholic schools. First, we will reflect on why creation care is an integral part of our work as Catholic school educators and how we see this work as necessary for the future vitality of Catholic schools. Second, since we believe that teachers can integrate lessons about environmental sustainability in all high school content areas, we will share stories from the classrooms of teachers in Catholic schools around our country who are committed to educating their students about care for creation in the context of English, math, social studies and theology classes. Finally, we hope to highlight the excellent work that many teachers and students are already doing by offering practical examples and strategies for implementing more sustainable practices on high school campuses.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational  
Vitality*

**Cultivating Talent Continued:  
Exploring Innovative Educator  
Pipelines Strategies from  
Recruitment to Retention**

Michael T. O'Connor, Ph.D.

Recruiting and retaining excellent educators and school leaders is a critical and ongoing issue in our Catholic schools and systems. Building upon the Cultivating Talent report from Boston College (Ospino & Wyttenbach, 2022) this collaborative session goes deeper into educator pipelines in Catholic education. The session will provide a guided examination to identify pipeline "leaks," explore innovative recruitment and retention strategies implemented across the U.S., and review research on educator pipelines for thoughtful design of pipeline strategies in your Catholic school or system. Participants will engage with a pipeline diagnostic tool and concrete examples of policies and practices, collaborating to put strategy into action with a distinctive mission-informed approach. The presenter will share research, resources and tools and will make all session resources available to participants in real time (and for future reference) via a shared Google Drive folder. Select printed materials, particularly the pipeline diagnostic tool, will be provided. Intended for leaders or any educators in Catholic schools and systems working to support human capital and talent strategies.

*NSBECS Domain:  
Governance and  
Leadership*

**Eucharistic  
Liturgies**

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

**Opening Eucharistic Liturgy**

9:15 – 10:15 AM

Most Reverend David A. Zubik, DD,  
MSEd, *Bishop of Pittsburgh*

DAVID L. LAWRENCE CONVENTION CENTER,  
LEVEL TWO, HALL A

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

**Eucharistic Liturgy**

9 – 10 AM

Most Reverend William J.  
Waltersheid, VG, STL,  
*Auxiliary Bishop of Pittsburgh*

DAVID L. LAWRENCE CONVENTION CENTER,  
LEVEL TWO, HALL A

Thursday, April 4, 2024

**Closing Liturgy**

12:30 – 1:30 PM

Most Reverend Mark A. Eckman,  
VG, *Auxiliary Bishop of Pittsburgh*

DAVID L. LAWRENCE CONVENTION CENTER,  
LEVEL TWO, HALL A



## Professional Learning Breakout Sessions

David L. Lawrence Convention Center, Levels Three and Four. All session scheduling is not final and is subject to change.

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

1:30 – 2:45 PM

### Professional Learning Breakout Sessions #1

LEARNING TRACK:

## Centered in Christ

### Appeal to the Human Heart: *Theology of the Body* and Tough Pastoral Conversations

Rev. Christopher J. Ford, M.Ed.

In the contemporary world, we face many challenging pastoral conversations with our students. What we believe and profess as Catholics is often challenged by the beliefs and propositions of the culture in which we live. How do we answer the questions posed by our students, both in the classroom and during their lives? How do we balance the truth we are called to teach with the love we must express? John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* provides a framework to answering not only the questions directly addressed within it, but many more contemporary moral questions faced daily by administrators, teachers, students and their families. I will introduce *Theology of the Body*, exploring its content and how the method John Paul II uses can be adapted to various pastoral situations, especially in schools, allowing us to authentically profess the truth in love.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*



### Biomimicry: Inspired by God's Creation

Jaclyn Farley

God is a great engineer! Let's study his creation! Scientists, engineers and product designers sometimes model everyday things after animal structures. This imitation of nature is called biomimetics or biomimicry. Animals use different structures for different things. An example of something in nature (plant) used to help create an everyday object is a prickly burdock bur getting stuck on fur. The idea for Velcro came from studying this plant. There are many animals that scientists could study to help them mimic an animal or plant structure to create or improve an everyday item. God has given us solutions to problems and the answers are all around us. I will discuss the importance of studying God's creation and how we can share this passion with our students. Students will learn how engineers study God's creation to solve problems and use the engineering process (STEM) to create a solution.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### Elementary Music Education in Catholic Schools

Kevin Humke

Dialogue exploring what the elementary music classroom should be like in a Catholic school. Topics such as: including the Catholic Faith in all music lessons, how to use traditional and contemporary sacred music to teach national music standards, concert/programming ideas for Catholic school elementary Christmas/spring concerts and exploring the lives of the saints using hymn tunes.  
*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

### High School Campus Ministry: Articulating, Advocating, Affirming and Animating Social Justice

Patrick W Spedale; Jeremiah Brandt

Explore various tools and resources that can enable high school campus ministry to articulate Catholic Social Teaching, advocate for a faith that does justice, and animate campus ministry initiatives in the daily justice posture of Catholic high school communities.  
*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

## **Catholic Meditation as the Foundation of Catechesis that Lasts a Lifetime**

Alessandro DiSanto  
*Hallow*

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The co-founder of Hallow, the #1 Catholic app in the world, will explore the dynamics of disaffiliation among youth and young adults in the U.S. and strategies for Catholic school educators and administrators to create an experience of faith that lasts a lifetime of discipleship. The discussion will be grounded in the recent sociological research around the rise of the “spiritual, but not religious,” comment on the rise in popularity of the mindfulness movement and highlight what distinguishes an authentically Catholic approach to meditation. Attendees will learn about the different expressions of prayer, how to extend an inclusive invitation to personal relationship with God and why building a culture of prayer in a Catholic school is critical to effective catechesis and resilient mental health.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

## **Putting the Grade on Faith: 10 Tips for Religion Teachers**

John Galvan

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Have you ever had a student question whether you can assign a grade to their faith? Explore practical approaches to teaching religion from a 30-year veteran. John Galvan, NCEA Vice President of Assessments, spent the better part of his career in Catholic education teaching high school religious studies before becoming an administrator and superintendent for his home Diocese of San Diego. John will reflect on 10 lessons learned from the religion classroom and share useful resources to

advance your Catholic education mission. This session promises to be informative, insightful and inspired.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

## **LEARNING TRACK: Characterized by Excellence**

### **Transform Your Classroom with Math Stations**

Erin Meunier

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Are you looking to jumpstart your math class? Do you want students to feel confident when leaving your room? Make math fun again for students and you by coming to this session. Learn how introducing stations/centers in your classroom (elementary, middle or high school) can engage your students, leading to rich learning and achievement. Leave with new ideas you can use in your next classroom with little to no budget required.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Encourage Curiosity, Spark Inquiry: Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions**

Maureen McGrail

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The Question Formulation Technique (QFT) will be explored in a hands-on, teacher-to-teacher training session with life and physical science standards as the guide. “How can we work together on creating more opportunities for all students to ask their own questions?” This multidisciplinary presentation will explore the QFT created by the Right Question Institute. We will explore why some students are not asking questions while taking participants through the QFT strategy and research-based process of identifying, sorting

and improving questions. Learn how to prepare students to ask more and better questions and how to use student questions to meet different instructional goals. Experienced biology, chemistry, environmental science and physics teachers will share their real-world examples and applications for this impactful teaching strategy. Share connections to your life and physical science subjects and reflect on the successes and challenges of implementing the QFT in a science classroom.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Pursue Excellence, Not Enrollment**

Mike Wisnor

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One of the most pressing issues facing Catholic school administrators across the country is declining or lagging enrollment. Let’s face it, when somebody asks, “How are things at your school?” What they are really asking is “How is your enrollment?” Digital marketers and enrollment management companies all promise to help solve this problem, but the efforts often fall well short of expectations. Why? We have all witnessed schools that see a significant boost in enrollment in a short time, only to have other issues arise as a result of “solving” their enrollment issue. See enrollment management from a different perspective. Participants will learn to view enrollment as a symptom of a larger root problem. Once the root problem is identified and addressed, the path to enrollment management becomes clear. Participants will learn to set conventional wisdom aside and pursue excellence, not enrollment. Although this will look different at every school, it is the only real solution to addressing the issue of enrollment.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

## **Innovative Instructional Leadership: Data-Informed Decision-Making in Catholic Schools**

Brian Colombari; Liz Dowd;  
Anthony Cook, Ed.D.  
*Curriculum Associates*

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Teachers and leaders from across the country are invited to share and learn about innovative data-informed decision-making. Diocesan and school leaders from the Diocese of Rockville Centre (NY) and the Diocese of Rochester (NY) will discuss how valid, reliable and actionable data informs best practices for pedagogy and leadership. Participants will connect with perspectives from a diocesan assistant superintendent and Catholic elementary school principal, highlighting cutting-edge instructional design for student growth and achievement. While school leaders are aware of the importance of data, all attendees will be inspired to embrace continuous change using invaluable tips, tools and practices. A key takeaway for all will include a holistic roadmap for teachers and leaders, focusing on “how” to utilize both qualitative and quantitative data to engage and inspire academic excellence in our classrooms.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **LEARNING TRACK:**

## **Committing to a Successful Tomorrow**

### **Retain to Gain – Planning, Designing and Executing Your Yearly School Retention Campaign**

Speaker TBD

*Community Brands*

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Do you want to learn some new strategies to keep your school’s retention rates high? If your rates

are between the average of 90 to 95 percent, your retention rates can still rise. Each new academic year presents a valuable opportunity for increasing retention numbers in schools. Attendees will learn how to design, plan and execute a powerful retention campaign. How to promote the campaign, how to use their Student Information System (SIS) to target each grade level specifically, and how to engage the parents and community as part of the retention efforts. This presentation will also help schools plan retention efforts focused on increasing equity (keeping students who are at risk of not being able to afford to stay). It will also involve helping schools use social media, online marketing and offline marketing to grow and connect the community as part of the retention campaign plan. All attendees will leave with a draft retention campaign plan and analysis to ensure incorporating next steps to take back to their schools. There will be breakout opportunities within the session to share and brainstorm effective retention techniques and to highlight new ideas and successes.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

### **Put the “R” in STREAM: Practical Ways to Integrate STEAM Strategies in Your Religion Classroom**

Kayla Dellinger; Stefanie Horgan  
*Archangel Education + Technology*

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Ready to re-energize your religion classroom, but not sure how? Join us as we guide you through how to develop plans and activities that will incorporate and connect STEAM strategies and concepts with your religion content. Help your students to understand the

role that religion has played throughout history including how religious ideas have influenced innovations in science, technology and art. Incorporate critical thinking skills and encourage global perspective to foster well-rounded student development. Use authentic resources to explore methods for integration and collaborate with other educators to develop ready-to-use lessons. Participants will leave with templates and experience for creating hands-on, cross-curricular, current and engaging religion units.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Artificial Intelligence: Opportunities and Challenges**

W. Joy Lopez, Ed.D.

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This presentation will explore the promising landscape where AI intersects with education, offering novel possibilities and confronting distinct challenges. Uncover the myriad opportunities AI presents to educators, from personalized learning experiences to efficient administrative tasks. We’ll delve into AI-powered adaptive learning platforms that cater to individual student needs, enhancing engagement and comprehension. Learn how AI can streamline administrative duties, allowing educators to focus more on teaching and mentoring. However, as AI’s influence grows, so do the challenges. Dive into discussions about data privacy and ethical considerations when implementing AI in educational contexts. Discover strategies to ensure transparency, fairness, and inclusivity in AI-driven educational tools.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

LEARNING TRACK:

## Connecting with Community

### Believing. Belonging.: A House System at Work

Kristie Wainwright, MEDL;  
Candice Barbosa, M.Ed.

In 2019, Bishop Lynch High School transitioned to a House System to better engage the community as a whole. Driven by building relationships outside of academics and athletics, the House System offers students an opportunity to meet classmates outside of their friend groups, develop activities and service projects and build relationships with adults on campus who will walk with them throughout their high school experience. While aspects of competition foster comradery, mentor time reaches far beyond the classroom or the playing field. The relationships that are built within the mentor group provide opportunities for students to build trust with one another, which then evolves into peer-led dialogues, developing inclusive activities and working toward a common goal—being in community with one another.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

PANEL

### What We Have Learned: The Role of Catholic School Leadership in Advocating for School Choice and Maximizing Enrollment

Lauren May; Bruce Hermie;  
Ron Matus, Jeremy Ekeler;  
Patrick Gibbons

School leaders can learn about the national landscape of school choice, how Catholic school leaders in states across the nation are engaging in advocacy and steps those school leaders are taking to provide tools to their families, students and communities to

increase educational funding and opportunity. Hear about how Florida Catholic school enrollment has increased over the past ten years and how schools offering choice, innovation, diversity and competition are growing. Review the report called, “Why Catholic Schools in Florida Are Growing: 5 Things to Know” by Step Up For Students. Participants will leave with takeaways they can implement in their state or at their school to see growth, foster vitality and focus on the ways Catholic school leadership, at the diocesan and school levels, can impact the establishment, expansion and defense of school choice opportunities for families who desire a Catholic education for their children.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

### A New Model for Parent Engagement and Leadership in Catholic Schools

Jason Curtis; Emily Curtis

Parent engagement is the key to strong schools. We will be sharing a new and proven model of parent engagement that encourages parent involvement, increases volunteerism, offers parent leadership opportunities and actively engages parents in the mission of Catholic schools. Participants will discuss challenges and obstacles to parent engagement and will learn ways to mentor parents to both an authentic partnership with schools and engagement resulting in inspirational parent formation. See a new structure for an effective, visionary parent leadership group, and discuss the challenges and opportunities in changing established parent leadership organizations.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

LEARNING TRACK:

## Leading the Way

### Getting a “Head Start” on Pre-K Vitality Through Language Intensive Preschool Development

Katy Lichon, Ph.D.; Clare Roach

Due to COVID, preschool enrollment has dipped significantly. In this session, we will share the magnificent story of 25+ schools across two major (arch) dioceses combatting this trend while deeply honoring the rich linguistic gifts of their communities through the formation of language-intensive preschools (~1 hour a day of targeted literacy-focused language instruction). We believe and have found that bilingual early childhood programs not only provide a strategic academic onramp for Spanish-speaking Latino children, they also attract a diverse array of families to Catholic schools who recognize the cognitive, career and interpersonal value of speaking more than one language. The session will present the Early Childhood Language Intensive Program (ECLIP) model, curriculum design, outcomes and benefits of this innovative model and its implementation in multiple schools.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*



## **The LRN Framework: A Comprehensive Approach to Program Evaluation for Catholic School Leaders**

Michael Faggella-Luby;  
Laura Swenson; Adam Bigbee

Discover the LRN Framework, an innovative and adaptable program evaluation model tailored to the unique context of Catholic schools. Developed over two decades of collaboration with educators, the LRN Framework emphasizes iterative processes and aligns with Catholic Social Teaching principles. Explore six comprehensive steps, guided by five key principles that align with Catholic values: (1) utility of evaluation, (2) evaluation serving the common good, (3) ethical evaluation with dignity for all, (4) empirically and methodologically sound evaluation, and (5) social justice guided evaluation. In each step, you will gain insights into how the LRN Team employs instruments such as schoolwide surveys, classroom observations, focus groups and interviews to gather credible evidence. Learn to justify conclusions and ensure findings translate into actionable steps for school improvement planning. Finally, school leader-partners from the Catholic Diocese of Arlington will share practical tips for using framework findings to guide improved service delivery and student outcomes.

Whether you're a seasoned administrator or new to the world of program evaluation, this session offers valuable tools and strategies to enhance your impact. Join us to discover how the LRN Framework can guide your journey toward meaningful inclusion, ethical evaluation and evidence-based decision-making.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*



## **Prioritizing TALENT: A Roadmap for Best-In-Class Retention and Recruitment In Your School**

Brendan Bedell, Ph.D.

Learn tools and strategies to minimize your staff turnover every year and gather tools and strategies for hiring the best talent in your school. This session will also provide you with space to review and refine the selection tools you are using this hiring season. The decision of who to hire in your school is the most significant decision you'll make. Refine your tools to make sure you're bringing in mission-fit individuals who fit into your school community.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

## **Leading Your School Advisory Board to Success: An Asset, Not a Burden**

David Sorkin, Ed.D.

The goal for school advisory boards is to help school leaders further realize the mission of the school and partner with stakeholders to drive the school forward toward strategic success. Unfortunately, school advisory boards can become ineffective

for school leaders. Members can push personal agendas that may conflict with the direction of administration—they may want to complain about a teacher or discuss what happened in the parent pickup line—or the advisory board may lack strategic focus. Participants will discuss and learn strategies to effectively lead school advisory boards by focusing on seven principles of effective advisory school boards, along with the roles and responsibilities of advisory board members. The result of an effective advisory school board is that the advisory board becomes a significant asset to the principal, not a burden.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

## **The “Why” and “How” of Meaningful Generational Mentoring Relationships in Catholic Schools**

Anna M. Alinda; Leslie Fundakowski

Who first invested in your potential to minister as a Catholic school educator or administrator? Whether that answer comes quickly or requires reflection, this session offers an opportunity to consider your own mentoring experiences even as you are challenged to engage more deeply in the best practices of generational mentoring. Participants will walk through the individual and institutional arguments for investing in generational mentoring relationships. They will also use a participatory approach to examine the impact of such partnerships on their own professional lives. Finally, participants will consider key elements of intentional, mutual and impactful mentoring frameworks as they plan professional space for a two-way mentoring experience.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*



## LEARNING TRACK:

# Serving All Students

## Building Connections Through a Middle School Advisory Program

DawnMarie Smith

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The middle school advisory program's purpose is to equip students with academic, social and emotional life skills that foster individual wellbeing and promote a healthy faith-based community connection. To foster connections, you need to intentionally build the space into your schedule and develop the programming. In addition to imparting knowledge, education is also about forming the whole child and fostering a sense of belonging and community. A focus on individual connections and relationships promotes a sense of responsibility and service to others as well. Service is rooted in the Catholic tradition of social responsibility and the belief that everyone has a duty to contribute to the common good. As a result of creating a sense of community, we are promoting positive outcomes for students. It is proven that students who feel connected will also feel a sense of ownership in their learning. Through a variety of lessons and activities, faculty will empower the students with life enhancing themes that will address developmentally appropriate needs and concerns. Advisory time will allow students to foster relationships with faculty and peers, providing an opportunity to grow together.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

## Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education

Pamela Allen

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The U.S. Department of Education will provide an overview of the requirements and discuss the 2022 updated guidance related to children with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private schools under in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This includes the consultation requirements to ensure that eligible children with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private schools can participate equitably in programs authorized under the act.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

## Mapping the Journey: Finding Your Path for Inclusionary Approaches in Catholic Schools

Michael J. Boyle, Ph.D.

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"How do we begin?" "What are the next steps?" These are some of the questions Catholic schools might ask as they consider how they best serve students with disabilities. Come join this interactive presentation in exploring the map for inclusionary practices in Catholic schools. Using a readiness rubric designed specifically for Catholic schools and checklists, participants will identify their starting point, identify strengths and areas in need of growth to create a map for increasing the capacity of their school to serve all of God's children. As a result, participants will create a plan to journey towards inclusive approaches.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

## Technology and Differentiation, a Powerful Combination!

Clare Kilbane, Ph.D.

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How can teachers achieve more powerful differentiation with technology? Explore how approaching teaching with a design mindset transforms what is possible, with even the simplest educational skill set and tool set. Learn how functioning as an educational designer enables the creation of more equitable, efficient, effective and engaging instruction.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

## Fostering Lifelong Health Through Physical Education

Rory O'Brien, MS, CSCS, PES

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This presentation will delve into the pivotal role of physical education in nurturing not just healthy bodies, but also strong minds and resilient spirits. Modern exercise science has unveiled groundbreaking insights that can revolutionize physical education curricula. This presentation will showcase how these scientific advances can shape physical education to prevent injuries, enhance sports performance, foster a lifelong love for active living, enhance community building and elevate academic achievement. This presentation will highlight how physical education serves as a powerful tool to address the escalating health and mental health challenges among high schoolers today. By intertwining physical activity with personal growth, this approach aims to bolster confidence and self-esteem. Central to this approach is the transformation of traditional sports-focused physical education into a fitness-based paradigm. This presentation will illustrate how this approach

aligns with Catholic teaching and offers an inclusive platform for all students. By transcending the limitations of sports-centric methods, this ensures that students not only embrace exercise but also carry these habits into their adult lives. This will enrich educators' understanding of how physical education can integrate faith, science and holistic student development, fostering a generation equipped with health, resilience and a strong moral compass.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

3:15 – 4:30 PM

**Professional Learning  
Breakout Sessions #2**

LEARNING TRACK:  
**Centered in Christ**

**Ministering to Whole Families**

Steve Angrisano

We spend a great deal of time catechizing young people about God, who will return home to no experiences of faith in God. We are sowing seeds in shallow soil. What we must do, what Pope Francis is urging us to do,

is evangelize families as we catechize their children. Come discover strategies to reach and engage entire families with a compelling message of the Gospel.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

**Catholic School Athletic Programs: An Essential Place to Integrate Faith, Culture and Life**

Max T. Engel, Ph.D.;  
Ronald D. Fussell, Ed.D.

Are sports in your school a place where student athletes, coaches and support staff integrate faith, culture and life? Benchmark 2.6 of the revised *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools, Second Edition* (NSBECS) states: "Catholic culture and faith are expressed in the school through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music, and architecture, as well as all extra-curricular and co-curricular activities" [emphasis added]. Further, Standard 3 asserts, in part, that "An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities both within and outside the classroom for Christ-centered student faith

formation..." The NSBECS recognize that extra-curricular activities and experiences outside the classroom, such as sports, are essential for Catholic school identity and faith formation. In light of this, this conversational session, designed for athletic coaches and school leaders responsible for faculty and staff formation, will present the fundamental theological and philosophical premises for a Catholic approach to sports and demonstrate how these Catholic principles can be incorporated into every facet of a school's athletic program. Examples and anecdotes will illustrate concrete practices for coaches to implement with their athletes.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

**Let's Pray, Learn and Celebrate the Truths of Our Catholic Faith**

John Burland

Australian educator and composer will demonstrate practical and engaging activities that support teachers as they accompany students on their journey of faith in the elementary classroom. You will learn a variety of engaging songs that deepen understanding, add enjoyment to learning, increase knowledge and foster celebration. These songs and associated activities will enrich and energize faith formation across a range of catechetical themes including scripture, doctrine, the liturgical year, Catholic prayer and sacraments. They will support children as they learn the core beliefs of our faith and move deeper into understanding God's love for them. Join us as we joyfully move our bodies and raise our voices in songs that help us to pray, learn and celebrate our Catholic faith.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*



## Providing Specialized Preparation for Counselors in Catholic Schools

Timothy J. Cook, Ph.D.; Jan Powers, Ph.D.; Jiwon Kim, Ph.D.

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School counselors are needed now more than ever. Providing Catholic school counselors, the specialized formation they need to be effective in the Catholic school context is essential. We conducted a study that addressed this research question: What competencies (e.g., understanding, incorporating) and topics do Catholic school principals and school counselors believe are important for school counselors to fully contribute to the educational and faith-based mission of Catholic schools? Online surveys were developed using the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools from NSBECS and research-based, mission-centered competencies and topics. The surveys were sent to the 40 principals and 54 school counselors at the schools in one mid-size U.S. diocese that employs school counselors. The survey response rates were 87.5% for principals and 91% for school counselors. Come and learn about the study findings and how the responses from principals and school counselors compare. Engage in conversation about the mission-centered role of school counselors in Catholic schools, the corresponding competencies and recommendations that emerged from the study. Recommendations include designing mission-centered professional development opportunities and building networks of school counselors to support them in their complex and evolving role in support of Catholic school mission. *NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

## Transforming Education: Implementing the Global Compact for a Sustainable Future

Gerald Cattaro; Timothy Uhl

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Join us for an insightful session that explores the Global Compact on Education, a transformative initiative envisioned by Pope Francis. We will delve into the eight commitments of the Global Compact and examine their application at the diocesan level. Discover how this global framework calls for placing human persons at the center, empowering young voices, promoting inclusivity and nurturing the integral role of the family. Explore the vital connection between the economy, ecology and education, and how safeguarding our common home is intertwined with providing quality education for all.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

### LEARNING TRACK: Characterized by Excellence

#### Catholic Schools and The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): Partners in Progress

Jessica Couey; Mike Fassbach; M.S., Matthew Snyder; William Ward, Ph.D.

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The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only nationally representative assessment of what students in public and private schools know and can do in various subjects. Catholic school participation is essential for the accurate reporting of national and private school results. The presenters will provide updates to the NAEP program for schools, highlight recent and historical results for students and demonstrate various

NAEP tools available to members of the Catholic school community to learn more about student performance.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

#### School Enrollment as an Essential Vitality Process: Ten Proven Strategies that Build and Sustain Your Marketing and Branding Process

Bernard Dumond

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As Catholic schools exist in a competitive marketplace of educational options, creating and executing a daily, monthly and annual strategic enrollment growth plan is essential for sustainable growth. Mr. Dumond illustrates, based on his experience in working with numerous Catholic schools, the ten most effective strategies that every school must implement to make enrollment growth a true reality.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

#### Debate Across the Curriculum/ Evidence-Based Learning: Instructional Development Workshop

Daniel Lingel

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This workshop will introduce the theory, research and practice of debate across the curriculum emphasizing learning and across all disciplines and grade levels. Participants will receive practical examples of demonstrating how instructional methods can be incorporated and adapted to align with teachers', courses', departments', and diocesan-level curricula structures. The workshop will highlight and showcase the significant academic and life skills fostered by debate across the curriculum and evidence-based learning. These skills include research, organization,

persuasion, advocacy, critical thinking, active listening, note-taking, teamwork and, notably, heightened engagement. Learn how to create positive and engaging classroom environments where students feel empowered and enjoy learning.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Implementing a Professional Learning Community in a Catholic School: Setting High Expectations, Providing Support and Being Accountable**

Caryl Unseld; Claire Fanelli; Laura Blake; Carrie Pearson

Attendees will experience a strategic and practical approach to implementing a professional learning community in a Catholic school. Participants will learn about the positive impact a professional learning community can have on a school by strengthening the connections to each other and as a faith-based community, deepening a commitment to providing a high-quality education steeped in the gospel values and instilling the collective belief that collaboration in faith development and learning is a unifying school theme.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

#### **LEARNING TRACK:**

### **Committing to a Successful Tomorrow**

#### **AI for All: Control a Robot with Your First Machine Learning Model**

Zee Ann Poerio; Tom Lauwers, Ph.D.

Today's students are excited to use and explore Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the classroom. Join "AI for All" to peek under the hood of AI with other like-

minded, curious educators. We'll discuss AI's impacts inside and outside of the classroom while we build and train our own image recognition model. We'll program our models to control a real robot, programming it to respond to different images. Participants will leave with a toolkit of free AI and robotics resources ready to be used right away. Dive into AI and learn how you can bring it into your classroom to delight ALL of your students as they develop creativity, collaboration and problem-solving skills.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

#### **Nurturing Well-Being: Practical Strategies for Catholic Educators**

Jennifer Antkowiak

Given the increasing challenges facing educators today, it's more important now than ever before to prioritize self-care. This session is designed to empower attendees with the knowledge and tools they need to thrive in their vital roles within the Catholic education community. In this interactive workshop, attendees will learn tailored self-care practices and be guided through a self-care assessment, where they'll gain valuable insights into areas of their well-being that may need nurturing. Attendees will also receive expert guidance on creating a personalized Wellness Action Plan, where they'll set clear, achievable goals and outline practical steps to ensure that self-care becomes an integral part of their daily routine.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

#### **Middle School Mayhem Transformed**

Sr. Patricia McCormack, IHM, Ed.D.

Despite heroic teacher efforts, COVID adversely affected school socialization. If immaturity, inability to focus, impulsivity, lack of accountability and disruptive behavior impedes class productivity in your school, this session will illustrate how one middle school reversed the COVID effect and increased self-control, autonomy and industry. Participants will benefit from handout material.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

#### **Building an Admissions and Retention Mindset Across Your Campus**

Cristy McNay, Ed.D.; Kristin Moore

We will explore practical and fun ways leaders can engage teachers and staff across campus to use their unique gifts to grow enrollment and increase retention. With practical tips, hands-on tools and "a-ha" moments, we will shine a light on the treasure of a Catholic education and how we can all work together to build excitement about our schools.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

#### **Update, Innovate, Engage: Creating a STREAM-Infused Classroom**

Stefanie Horgan; Kayla Dellinger  
*Archangel Education + Technology*

Are you tired of the same old traditional educational activities that seem to repeat year after year? It's time to breathe new life into your teaching methods and captivate your students' imaginations! Join us for an enlightening speaking engagement where we will

empower you with the knowledge and tools to rejuvenate your classroom experience. In this dynamic and interactive session, we will explore how to infuse technology and modern resources into your teaching repertoire. Discover how to seamlessly integrate cutting-edge tools and timeless techniques to create hands-on, cross-curricular learning experiences that will leave both you and your students inspired.  
*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

LEARNING TRACK:  
**Connecting with Community**

**Coping with Post COVID Parents**  
Carol Cimino, SSJ, Ed.D.

If parents exhibited anxiety and fear before COVID, it was even more evident afterwards. Examine parent behaviors and their cause, while offering some practical considerations for dealing with parents and enhancing their partnership with the Catholic school.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

**Strategies for Restorative Family-Centered Catechesis**  
Katherine Bazin

Faith blooms when nourished in the home. However, instituting new patterns and faith-filled routines can be a challenge for new families, recently returning or out of synch in their practice of the faith. This session reviews strategies for engaging the whole family in restorative family-centered catechesis. You will receive an overview of characteristics demonstrated by parents who have successfully transmitted the faith to their children and learn research-based

strategies for supporting families through periods of asynchronous conversion. You will learn best practices and approaches for nourishing families experiencing tension due to religious differences. Restorative family-centered catechesis practices invite all families to engage in intentional faith-filled dialogues designed to aid their lived practice of faith.  
*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

LEARNING TRACK:  
**Leading the Way**

PANEL  
**Priests and Our Schools**

Rev. Peter M. J. Stravinskas, Ph.D. STD; Rev. Michael Davis, M.A., M.Div., M.Ed.; Rev. John Belmonte, SJ, Ph.D.

This session will consider the role of the priest in our schools from a variety of possible perspectives: pastor, parochial vicar, school administrator, high school chaplain or teacher. Special attention will be given to the interrelatedness of those positions with school administrators, faculty, parents and diocesan officials. Panelists are veteran pastors and high school administrators.  
*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

**Effective Board Management for Catholic School Leaders**  
Christopher Martin; Dan Ferris

Recent data suggests that 80% of all Catholic schools utilize a governance model that includes a board—be it advisory, specified, independent or otherwise. However, we now know there are boards, and then there are BOARDS. Participants will hear a brief history of the evolution of Catholic school

governance, helping school leaders to better understand the type of board in operation at their school. Participants will also hear from school leaders and board members on best practices—and what not to do—as it relates to board activation and management. Tools and resources to expand one's board, establish and launch committees, and run effective meetings will be presented and shared. Leaders will walk away knowing how a trained board can help them become more effective leaders, while also arming them with ways to engage the board as active servant leaders working to support all aspects of the school.  
*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

**Leveraging Standards (NSBECS 2.0) to Strategically Support School Improvement and Sustainability**  
Debra Sullivan

Whether your school is a sustainable micro-school, a school with a waiting list or somewhere in the middle, the NSBECS 2.0 can (and should) be used strategically to support continuous improvement efforts on all fronts for the school. This session will address how the NSBECS 2.0 can be used to ensure common vision and focus across the school's constituencies to support the continuous improvement work essential to any sustainable Catholic school, no matter how big or small.  
*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

## Teacher Retention and Recruitment

Jane Bleasdale, Ph.D.

Teacher recruitment and retention continues to be a struggle in K-12 schools across the U.S. In this workshop researchers and practitioners from the University of San Francisco Catholic Educational Leadership Program will share research, data, current trends and best practices in building teacher pipelines. The workshop will also share practices in effective recruitment and retention of teachers committed to mission and identity of our Catholic schools.  
*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

## Building Up Leadership Capacity in your System

Jodi McLawhorn, M.Ed.

The director of Leadership Formation for the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) in the Archdiocese of Chicago will lead school leaders through unique and innovative ways to distribute leadership in their buildings. This work is based upon the Aspiring Leaders Program that Jodi facilitates monthly with teachers and staff members who aspire to become leaders in their buildings, thus easing the leadership burden on OCS principals. The Aspiring Leaders Program focuses on empowering teachers and staff to become spiritual leaders, instructional leaders, operational leaders and cultural leaders. Participants will get the opportunity to discuss their leadership needs/ programs and learn from other leaders, learn how to identify their leadership needs, outline a leadership plan for their school and identify creative compensation possibilities.  
*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

## LEARNING TRACK:

## Serving All Students

### Dignity and Solidarity: A Distinctly Catholic Approach to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Emmy Robison

Diversity, equity and inclusion are buzzwords representing important values in all schools and workplaces. Unfortunately, these topics have become politicized and thus approaching them in many communities requires a delicate approach. Learn about how one Texas school leader took a distinctly Catholic approach to these topics, grounding work in Catholic Social Teaching and scripture. Participants will walk away with a new lens with which to lead discussions with community members as they seek to build a more just and inclusive world.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

### Empowering Students to be the Boss of Their Brains

Colleen Santoni, MAT;  
Carrie Bonnett

Do you have students who struggle with time management, organization and planning for projects and assignments? Educators can maximize learning while minimizing frustration by teaching students the brain science behind executive function skills and integrating inclusive strategies essential for all students to succeed in the classroom and beyond. Learn more about strategies based on the newest research in neuroscience and education and how they can enhance success in your classroom.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### Let's Talk It Out: Increasing School Safety by Equipping Students with Practical Skills to Solve Conflicts in Healthy and Productive Ways

Joy Roberts, M.A.; Whitney Stovall, M.S.; Julie Widman, M.S.

*Friendly*

Ready to talk it out? Watching relationships blossom in our students is one of the greatest gifts from God, but when tensions rise it can feel a bit like Spaghetti Day in the school cafeteria—messy! From classroom skirmishes and text message tiffs to playground problems and lunchroom squabbles, conflict is a part of life. The good news is that navigating tension is not only teachable, but it creates richness and depth to relationships; God hardwired us to weather the tough stuff! Teaching conflict resolution skills can empower students to be their own problem-solvers, and it can reduce incidents of unkindness, bullying, discipline referrals, violence and more. Join us as we discuss how we can help students learn healthy communication skills, problem-solving strategies and the importance of forgiveness. Together, we can help students learn to talk it out.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*



## Overview of Equitable Services Under Title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary School Act (ESEA)

Jenay Morrisey

The U.S. Department of Education will provide an overview of guidance addressing the equitable services provisions for eligible private school students and teachers under Title VIII of the ESEA. Topics will include implementation requirements for all Title VIII covered programs and strategies to help private school officials engage in timely and meaningful consultation.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

## Unique and Unrepeatable: Serving All God's Children in Catholic Schools

Janette Boazman, M.S., Ph.D.;  
Michael Boyle, Ph.D.

This session makes the case for Catholic schools to "reach out to the margins" and serve students with disabilities as well as those students with giftedness. The Catholic Church believes that

every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person. All learners are "unique and unrepeatable." Yet, there are several groups of learners that do not "fit" in the mainstream of instruction and programming in Catholic schools. Catholic school leaders are called to move beyond student development for this world. Every student has a destiny to live with God in the world to come. It is up to those in Catholic education to help all students develop their potential fully in our earthly world, be meaningful and impactful contributors to this world and prepare them to fulfill their destiny of an eternal heavenly life. In the absence of programming for these "atypical" learners, they are marginalized and excluded from the ministry of the Catholic school. Practical strategies as well as examples of policies, procedures and protocols will be discussed.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

1:30 – 2:45 PM

## Professional Learning Breakout Session #3

### LEARNING TRACK: Centered in Christ

#### Embracing Grace: Discerning, Accepting and Deploying Your Spiritual Gifts

Michael Zelenka

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, Paul encourages his student, "For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control" (2 Timothy 1:6-7). As ministers of Catholic education, Paul's words to Timothy should also inspire us to "stir into flame the gift of God" that we have received and to use this gift in service of others. Focusing on the idea of a charism, participants will prayerfully consider the "gift of God" that they have received, humbly accept it and sacrificially deploy it through their ministries. Using Mother Mary as the model and example of this approach to embracing grace, participants will spend time reflecting on their personal charisms, considering what stands in the way of fully accepting these supernatural gifts and designing strategies to offer these gifts in service to God and others.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*



## **Becoming a Retreat Master: 10 Tips to Designing a Meaningful, Memorable Ministry**

Chris Storm, M.A.

Retreats can be a powerful element in any catechetical program, but leading them can be daunting. Drawing from best practices in youth ministry and Catholic education, participants will explore ways to make retreats both experiential and reflective. Begin with the foundations (setting realistic goals, group structuring) and then get creative with session design, theme and even STREAM integration. New retreat leaders will come away with tools to help craft the right retreat for their communities and experienced retreat masters will learn ways to diversify an established ministry.  
*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

### LEARNING TRACK: **Characterized by Excellence**

#### **Developing STREAM Integrated Units**

Silvia Kenna, M.S.;  
Gabriel Cambert, M.Ed.

Traditionally, schools have taught subjects in isolation; however, we know that that is not how the real world works. Mimicking the real world, STREAM Integration is one way to prepare future Catholic leaders to be problem-solvers in our world. Participants will learn effective strategies for designing and implementing STREAM units of study that inspire and engage students. They will explore what is meant by STREAM integration, learn key design elements, as well as gain access to planning resources and model units. Participants will also hear tips and strategies for implementing these projects in isolation, as collaborative

projects with other teachers or as school-wide initiatives. The presenters are senior fellows of the University of Notre Dame STEM Trustee Fellowship Program and have experience designing and implementing these lessons for children from age two through eighth grade.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

#### **Lifestyle Wellness: Innovating Physical and Health Education to Engage the Whole Child**

Kristin Patterson

Health is wealth. Middle and high school teachers are encouraged to rethink their physical and health education classes to meet the needs of post-pandemic students through a faith-based setting. Kristin Patterson uses her certifications as an American Red Cross Instructor, National Exercise Group Fitness Trainer and Youth Mental Health First-Aid citizen to motivate and engage her high school students at a high school in Virginia Beach, VA. Attendants may look forward to learning and applying the eight dimensions of wellness to structure their curriculum for academic excellence, how to teach sensitive topics (Digital Literacy, Drug Education and Mental Health) while incorporating the Catholic faith, and discover authentic assessments, in various learning styles that make learning fun! After all, physical and health education are not just classes...it's a lifestyle!  
*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

#### **PRAISES: Practicing Restoration and Integrating Social Emotional Skills**

Lynne Lang, MHM, MRP

Learn about this successful research project integrating

social-emotional competencies with virtue-based restorative discipline. Developed for the Diocese of Wichita, PRAISES was designed to be used in virtue circles as part of the initiative developed for Catholic schools. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and virtue-based decision-making come together in a middle school curriculum that emphasizes virtue and the six basic human emotions. Outcomes show a deeper empathy connection and meaningful application of virtues into everyday life. Come and learn strategies for building social-emotional skills with any grade, any age. Even adults! This work builds on the foundation of Virtue-Based Restorative Discipline (VBRD), developed in St. Louis, MO, to reduce bullying and disruptive behaviors in Catholic schools.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

#### **What If? Build Your Stage!**

April Moore, Ed.S.

Close your eyes and picture your classroom... What do you see? What do you hear? How do you feel? What if you were a student walking down the hall of a new school and you could choose your new classroom? Would you pick yours? In today's dynamic educational landscape, one of the most pressing challenges educators face is keeping students motivated and engaged in the learning process. Motivation is defined as the process that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. Motivation is what causes us to act. When we can help students become self-motivated, the level of learning moves to a whole new level! Through excitement, positive



relationships and student-centered lessons this is an achievable task! We as educators must lead by example and build a stage for our students to grow to their full potential. Optimism and positivity are contagious—WHAT IF we changed up how we approach day-to-day teaching and focused on the excitement of learning!  
*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

LEARNING TRACK:

## Committing to a Successful Tomorrow

### Academic Recovery: Impact on Achievement Gaps and Student Growth

Catherine Welch, Ph.D.;  
Stephen Dunbar, Ph.D.

Research on learning loss and recovery has been arguably inconclusive in the sense that findings have ranged widely. Some estimates of achievement have led researchers to infer that a full recovery could take years, whereas other analysts have presented evidence of progress similar to what would be expected during a normal school year (Center for Research on Education Outcomes, 2020; Renaissance Learning, 2021; Schwartz, 2021). A more consistent concern about learning loss and recovery has been evidenced by the markedly greater impact on the widening of achievement gaps (Calfas, 2021). Academic recovery can be defined in many ways, but achievement gap differences and growth measures are two reliable and appropriate approaches to describing recovery. This session will present comprehensive data comparing Catholic school performance to public school performance before (2019) and after COVID (2021, 2022 and

2023) in reading and mathematics across grades 3 to 11. Overall, the change in the achievement gap between the two types of schools has widened since 2019, with Catholic school performance outpacing that of public school performance. In addition, growth in reading and mathematics for students in Catholic schools has exceeded expectations at a higher level than student growth in public schools.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### Catholic School Development/ Advancement: Understanding the True Meaning

Frank Donaldson

For years, Catholic schools have relied upon tuition, subsidies and fundraising events to balance the budget; many lean heavily on those areas today. While this approach is mostly “transactional,” Catholic schools need to move or continue to move their focus to a more “relational” culture. To do that, Catholic schools need to understand the true meaning of Catholic development/ advancement and be able to put the right steps/stages (the foundation) that will lead to people wanting to invest in the future of their Catholic school. It begins with understanding the difference between fundraising and development and then proceeds to establishing the steps (cadence) that need to be taken to build a Culture of Philanthropy.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

### Pathways to the Promise of a Future of Faith in Action

Donna Kiel, Ed.D.;  
Molly Cinnamon, Ed.D.

The future of Catholic schools is dependent on creating a pipeline

of faith-driven leaders who will continue the legacy of Catholic faith and academic excellence. The Catholic Future Leader program developed by DePaul University creates that pipeline for any school by leveraging the potential brilliance of middle and high school students and engaging them in a learning experience that provides distinctive skills in Catholic leadership while transforming the school culture with students as researchers. In the program, university faculty train students as researchers who develop innovative solutions to enliven and secure their Catholic school. The program integrates into existing curriculum to enliven learning for the students, the teacher, and the school. Students visit a university campus and work with professors to create research on enlivening Catholic schools. The program is a template for any Catholic school looking for student-engaged innovation that creates connections with universities, families and the community.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

### Public Policy Issues and Federal Education Benefits for Students and Teachers

Sr. Dale McDonald, PBVM, Ph.D.

Navigating the current political landscape of education policy, this presentation will focus on issues and concerns surfacing in federal education legislation, guidance documents and court decisions and their potential effect on Catholic school teachers and students. Topics will include maximizing equitable participation in federal education programs, school choice, religious liberty issues along with questions from participants.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

## Organizational Development and Change: Managing Expectations and Creating Stakeholders

Justin A. Camp, Ph.D.

This session will discuss the recent adoption of a new Student Information System (SIS) Learning Management System (LMS), recruiting, website and fundraising across an entire school. Discussions will cover change decision processes, human capital realization, organizational effectiveness, change management, stakeholder cultivation, creation and maintenance. Based on the recent article Change Management = Changing Mindset from Blackbaud.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

### LEARNING TRACK:

## Connecting with Community

### From Theory to Practice: How Catholic Social Justice Class Can Build Collaborative Community Connections

Michaela Bruzzese, M.Div.;  
Charles Rodgers

The rich tapestry of Catholic Social Teaching includes complex social issues such as criminal justice, immigration and poverty. In addition, recent social movements like Black Lives Matter, Me Too and others demand new approaches in our classrooms, ones that allow students to connect with disenfranchised individuals (“the least of these”) not as beneficiaries but as equal partners in the struggle for justice. This session will offer detailed examples of how connecting with people affected by these issues can result in student commitment to working together to overcome

social inequities. By integrating guest speakers, and even class “co-teachers,” abstract issues are brought from head to heart. As a concrete example of the power of connection and collaboration, Charles Rodgers, featured in the OPRAH Network documentary *Serving Life* and St. Pius X High School teacher, Michaela Bruzzese, will share the enormous impact of the program on students, the powerful connections they have made and surprise endings to their efforts.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

### Weaving a Richer Tapestry: Inviting, Welcoming and Supporting Teachers of Color in Catholic Schools

John Beltramo, Ph.D.; Antonio Felix, Ed.D.; Héctor Martínez

Our session outlines the blessings and cultural richness bestowed upon Catholic schools by ethnically, racially and linguistically diverse teachers. We then lead attendees in a workshop-style exploration of practical and research-based strategies that school leaders can take to recruit, welcome, support and develop teachers of color in their own dioceses and school sites. We also offer illustrative examples of these strategies, and we then share first-hand accounts of current Catholic school teachers of color who have participated in them. Throughout the session, we invite attendees to reflect on the extent to which their schools already utilize these strategies and how they could more intentionally and effectively do so in the future.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

## Deacons and Catholic Schools: Building Bridges

Dcn. Michael Loeffler, M.A.

Deacons have been described as a bridge between the secular and sacred worlds, having one foot in each. In a growing number of dioceses, deacons bring their professional education and experience into the Church, serving as chancellors, parish managers and finance directors, for example. While some deacons do currently serve as teachers, principals and superintendents, this is largely an untapped realm of possibilities. Discuss two complementary movements: (1) Encouraging deacons to consider teaching and ministering in Catholic schools and (2) encouraging Catholic school teachers and leaders to consider discerning a call to become deacons. Deacon Michael Loeffler will share his experiences in both worlds and will discuss ways that schools, parishes and dioceses can foster the growth of diaconal ministry in Catholic education.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*



LEARNING TRACK:  
**Leading the Way**

PANEL

**Under the Microscope:  
A Highly Successful Inner-City  
Regional School**

Suzanne Vertosick, M.M.Ed., BME;  
Nick Bayat, Ed.D.; Dr. Mary Anne  
Battaglia; David Barr; Rosanne  
Kwiatkowski

The Pittsburgh City Regional Catholic Elementary Schools, Inc. is a corporation created six years ago by the Diocese of Pittsburgh to oversee three Catholic elementary schools within the city and in nearby Wilkinsburg. These three Catholic elementary schools collectively enroll a student body of nearly 500 who are described as follows: 1) economically disadvantaged in that ALL students are eligible for free and reduced lunches under the criteria set by the Community Eligibility Provision of the Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010, and 2) the students are primarily African-American and multi-racial but are able to consistently: average 95% daily attendance; 96% graduation rate from high school in four years; nearly all grade 8 graduates attend the

diocesan Catholic high schools; 88% attend college and/or post-secondary education. A panel of Catholic school experts, including the executive director of the Extra Mile Education Foundation, the retired superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Pittsburgh, the school principals and University of Pittsburgh education experts will put the workings of the governance board and these remarkable educational outcomes “under the microscope” as it delivers a thorough analysis of the pros and cons of this regionalization model, especially with inner-city, urban schools.  
*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

**Resilience and Well-Being:  
Tools to Support Flourishing for  
Teachers and Students**

Judy Madden, M.A.

Since their inception, Catholic schools have nimbly responded to the needs of their communities. Catholic schooling is, in the words of Blessed Basil Moreau, “the art of helping young people to completeness” and is animated by the conviction that each child possesses inherent God-

given dignity. Students’ abilities to succeed academically and personally are strongly correlated with their emotional and social intelligence, and their ability to manage these domains is strongly informed by their teachers’ skills. Grounded in Gospel narratives and Visio Divina, we will examine ways to support student flourishing in the classroom by strengthening teachers’ and leaders’ cognitive agility and addressing effective SEL strategies. We will outline how to embody and model resilience skills and SEL tools in the classroom, and in doing so, empower everyone in the classroom to transform their unproductive thoughts into creative problem-solving, enlivening them further to be the person God created them to be.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

**Departmentalization in  
Elementary Schools: An  
Innovative and Community-  
Driven Learning Model**

John Amann, M.A.

While departmentalization traditionally happens in middle and high schools, this form of organization and learning is an excellent opportunity for elementary schools. This system creates structures where teachers can specialize in their content areas of strength and also have the same students for up to three years. A fully departmentalized school creates deeper communities of learning and support for all students and families. This innovative model also allows schools to differentiate from other schools and better market themselves.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*



## **Student Leader Academy: Building Character, Growing Leaders**

Mary Schaupp; Abbie Withbroe;  
Jamie Sheehy

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This session will introduce participants to a forward-thinking, proven, faith-based student leadership program designed for K-12 Catholic schools called Student Leader Academy. The session will focus on the K-8 program which requires just one lead teacher to implement and has three components:

1) 6-8 Leadership Lessons: Lesson plans for grades 6, 7 and 8 to learn about leadership competencies and virtues. Lessons are 30 minutes, low prep and can be done whenever it fits in student and teacher schedules; 2) Leadership Club: The Middle School Leadership Club helps students learn and strengthen leadership competencies and virtues as they prep short lessons for K-5 classrooms; 3) K-5 Leadership Lessons: K-5 teachers are offered the opportunity for Leadership Club student members to come into their classroom and teach interactive leadership lessons, modeling servant leadership. Participants will leave with access to the full K-8 and/or 9-12 Student Leader Academy program which includes a facilitator's guide, scope and sequence, monthly agendas and lesson plans. Students and teachers rave about the program. It is easy for a teacher to adopt and provides connection for elementary and middle school teachers. Students have demonstrated significant growth in confidence, flexibility, positivity and engagement in school as a result of their participation in Student Leader Academy.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

## **Forming New Leaders**

Sharon Willmes

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The Archdiocese of Cincinnati has developed a New Leader Mentorship Program for its new principals in years one to three. The goal of the program is to strengthen, nurture and cultivate the leadership skills, mindset and knowledge of these newest leaders. The director of leadership development and professional growth meets individually with the new principals twice a month to tailor the coaching to the needs, growth areas and strengths of the leader. In addition, the new principal group meets monthly to learn, dialogue as a group and support each other. There are also sessions held with the year two and year three principal groups focusing on professional learning. Finally, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati has an Aspiring Catholic School Leaders Residency program with the goal of increasing the leadership pipeline of exceptional Catholic school leaders who learn, in collaboration with existing leaders in our schools, to build a shared knowledge of best practices in spiritual, operational and academic leadership among cohort members.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

### **LEARNING TRACK:**

## **Serving All Students**

### **Finish Your Scheduling Puzzle One "Peace" at a Time**

Lauren Carr, M.Ed.

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Creating a schoolwide schedule that fits your student, teacher and facility needs can be a challenge—regardless of grade level or academic support needed. Learn various methods for creating a "peaceful" schedule while still

managing all the puzzle pieces.  
*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

## **Enlightening Nourishment and Compassion for Young Children's Minds, Hearts and Souls Using Spiritual Literacy**

Kathleen Harris, Ph.D.

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The issue of mental health in young children is an increasing problem in society, and one that is rarely addressed properly. More than ever, mental health has been on the minds of early childhood teachers over the past year. Early childhood teachers are likely to come across children who have experienced trauma on a regular basis. These traumas may include absence of attachment with a loving adult, early grief and loss, anxiety, depression and/or emotional and social neglect. How can we provide sufficient sustenance for the growth of a child's mind, heart and soul or spiritual sense of self? This workshop will define and examine how promoting spiritual literacy can endorse a holistic curriculum that focuses on the whole child and the interconnectedness among the mind, heart and soul. The importance of mindfulness will be explored with practices for improving spiritual well-being through its effects on mental health. A holistic and spiritually responsive curriculum for educators and health professionals will be introduced including a section for families with spiritual literacy strategies for relieving anxiety, depression and stress and developing self-acceptance, resiliency and emotional and spiritual strategies for children.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*



**Make Room for Reconciliation: Supporting Belonging and Positive Behavior for All Students**

Sandria Morten, Ed.D.

Teachers and administrators report a rise in student behavior post-pandemic which has significantly impacted student learning, school culture and teacher morale. Responding to student behavior can dominate the time and emotional energy of teachers and administrators alike, as they attempt to individually respond to each situation. This session is designed to help school leaders use collaborative planning time and coaching to build the capacity of teachers to develop positive relationships with students, prevent undesired behaviors and respond productively to behavior incidents. Time will be spent considering processes for understanding the causes of student behavior and responding with targeted interventions. This approach aligns with our Catholic faith, prioritizing discipleship, reconciliation and transformation.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

**See Me, Hear Me, Feel Me—Living Faith Through the Arts**

Mark Siolek, Ed.D.

Catholic faith is a full-bodied experience. The stimulation of our senses sparks memories of our faith-filled experiences. A sight, sound and/or smell can transport us back to the feelings of that moment. In this interactive workshop, we will explore ways to integrate visual arts, music, architecture, dramatic arts and even culinary arts into religious education.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

**There’s No Substitute for the Human Connection, Saving Lives Peer-to-Peer.**

Jennifer Roberts, Ed.D., LPC-S, CSC; Greg Hudnall

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth 10-18 according to the most recent data released in the CDC’s Youth Behavior Survey. Seven out of ten youth will tell a peer they are struggling before they tell an adult. This session will share the latest data post-pandemic on youth suicide, explore the neurobiological implications of adolescent brain development,

in particular the relational brain and the impacts of the peer-to-peer connection. Participants will have the opportunity to learn how Hope Squads across the country are standing in the gap, peer-to-peer, as a conduit of support, while bringing mental health awareness and connectedness to students, faculty and families from grades 4-12.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

**Enhancing Learning Through Personalized Vocabulary Instruction: A Research-Based Approach**

Ellen O. Edmonds  
William H. Sadlier

In today’s dynamic educational landscape, personalized learning has gained prominence as an adaptable and evidence-based pedagogical approach. An integral facet of effective personalized learning is vocabulary instruction, with substantial research confirming its pivotal role in academic success (e.g., Beck et al., 2013; Graves, 2016). This session explores the concept of personalized learning through adaptive vocabulary instruction, leveraging research-based strategies to evolve and optimize the learning process. Our presentation will delve into practical applications of research findings, emphasizing the role of data-informed decisions, pedagogical adaptability and inclusive practices (e.g., Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; National Reading Panel, 2000). We will showcase the tangible benefits of personalized vocabulary instruction, backed by research, for diverse student populations. Join us to discover how to harness the potential of research-driven, personalized vocabulary instruction to elevate learning outcomes for all students.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

3:15 – 4:30 PM

**Professional Learning  
Breakout Sessions #4**

LEARNING TRACK:

**Centered in Christ**

**Catholic Spirituality**

Beth Roeder, D.Min.

This presentation will look at the rich resource of Catholic spirituality. Catholic spirituality can be used in the classroom to deepen faith, help with promoting peace and give opportunities to spend time with God; building a relationship with God.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

**Faith Rally: Eucharistic Adoration, Praise and Worship Music, Faith Families and More**  
Joan Latto

Especially during the Eucharistic Revival, we come together in faith as a school community, let the Catholic identity flourish, and increase our devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. All of this can be done by having a school-wide Faith Rally! "The Eucharist is the heart and the summit of the Church's life..." (CCC 1407). What is a Faith Rally? What are Faith Families? How do I integrate Faith Families and a Faith Rally

into the school year? How does the experience of a Faith Rally enrich and deepen students' understanding of the Catholic faith? I will share video clips of a Faith Rally (praise and worship music, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, catechesis and more) and give session participants specific guidelines and materials to bring this exciting event to their schools. Leave with all of the necessary tools and inspiration to make a Faith Rally an integral part of the school year, strengthening devotion to the Blessed Sacrament within the school community.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

**Planting the Seeds of Faith Through a Vibrant Campus Ministry Program**

Brooks Conlan; Sue Sonnier; Christy Drake

Are you ready for an adventure and to witness your students' hearts set on fire to spread God's love? Then join us for this awesome talk and get your program started this year. A vibrant campus ministry program in an EC-8 school is crucial to shaping the Catholic culture, enhancing Catholic identity, and continuing the evangelization of the school community. With over 30 years of combined ministry

experience, we will share our campus ministry programs and how we developed them, as well as their impact on our school community. We are ready to share our journey, both successes as well as challenges, so come and join us as we continue to build God's Kingdom one Catholic School at a time.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

**Ut Fidem: Helping Students Keep the Faith Beyond High School**  
Addison Croegaert

In partnership with the Holy Spirit, Ut Fidem seeks to strengthen the future of the Catholic Church by investing in those who are at the most decisive point in their Catholic journey. According to St. Mary's Press, 74% of former Catholics stopped identifying as Catholic between the ages of 10 and 20, with a median age of 13. Investing in the youth of the Church has never been more critical. Ut Fidem strives to develop high school students into intentional disciples who will keep the faith for the rest of their lives, and especially through college. Ut Fidem supports students through weekly discipleship groups led by adult faith mentors. Groups grow their devotion to personal prayer, the sacramental life, understanding Church teachings and enter into the lifestyle of an on-fire Catholic. By the end of year six at Dowling Catholic High School, Ut Fidem grew to involve 58 active small groups, or 341 students, which represented over one-fourth of the school's student body. Additionally, according to an external study done by C1C Consulting, Ut Fidem alumni were 59% more likely to attend Mass four or more times a month than non-Ut Fidem alumni in their senior year of college.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*



## Answering Today's Questions: New Priorities in Religious Education

Joseph White, Ph.D.  
*Our Sunday Visitor*

How do we present the Good News of Jesus to students in a post-Christian society? How can we hand on a Christian vision of the human person as it becomes increasingly counter-cultural? How do we prepare our students to live a life of discipleship and share the example of Jesus with others, both in word and in action? How has the growth of technology impacted the way students think about religion and spirituality? This session, facilitated by a seasoned child and adolescent psychologist and religious educator, will discuss creative and effective ways to respond to today's pressing needs in religious education.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

## LEARNING TRACK: Characterized by Excellence

### Engaging Educators in Combating Student Disengagement

Christie Bonfiglio, Ph.D.

Student engagement is a complex variable with a profound impact on student success. Given its importance, educators are concerned with the growing levels of 'disengagement' in their classrooms. Although there are varied descriptions of this concept, the critical questions for any educator include: What contributes to disengagement? And more importantly, how do we combat it? In this interactive session, student engagement and its contributing factors will be defined. Practical, yet tactical strategies for the

Catholic classroom will be explored in an engaging format to provide a strategic plan for easy implementation.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### Feedback that Promotes Teaching and Learning

Patrick Triplett, Ph.D.;  
Kim Anderson, Ed.D.

Feedback as a pedagogical tool promotes higher level thinking, student engagement and student autonomy—it also makes students, not the work, the subjects of their learning narrative. Feedback should provide information to the student about how they are doing, where they are going and how they get there, it should spur action for the student. Teachers should use feedback to inform their plans and adjustments.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### Curriculum from Scratch

Laura Blicharz, M.A.

Calling all small private schools and singletons! Need to work on curriculum development, but don't have a curriculum director? Not to fear! Learn how to kickstart your school's curriculum development! Receive templates, timelines and more to get your school started on the road to establishing an effective and viable curriculum you can showcase to prospective parents and families!

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

## LEARNING TRACK:

## Committing to a Successful Tomorrow

### PANEL

#### Teaching Holocaust

Stefani F. Sobol-Pastor, Ph.D.

Take a direct look at the necessity of Holocaust and genocide education in current curriculum offerings to work together toward prevention of cultural violence and mass atrocities. Focus on the use of students' curiosity and the arts, cross-curricular teaching methods and cooperative communication with established groups for material assistance. Hear about various ways to teach about the Holocaust and genocide, what to teach and how to implement lessons into your curriculum.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

#### Engaging AI for Intelligence Augmentation

Susan Morrissey; Brian Smith

The emergence of new generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, Stable Diffusion, and DALL-E, has highlighted the rapid pace of technological change and its potential impact on education. Since ChatGPT's release in late 2022, articles in the news and academic publications have suggested both enthusiasm and fear about AI. The reality is that educators need to consider a range of ways that these tools could impact teaching and learning. In this workshop, we will explore emerging AI technologies and consider what they might mean for education. We'll focus on intelligence amplification—how AI tools can positively extend our abilities to think and learn. We hope to provide leaders with valuable insights into the potential of AI as intelligence amplifiers

and ways to use these tools ethically and effectively in K-12 education.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Beyond Fundraising: Building a Culture of Philanthropy in Your School**

Patrick Tiernan

This session will explain the necessary steps for your school to build a thriving culture of philanthropy. Development at its best is an emotionally engaging endeavor that is both an art and a science. Most schools struggle with fundraising efficiency often resulting in burnout and minimal results. By maximizing various methods of communication with a cycle of informing, reporting and asking, participants will learn what their community needs to build their mission through specific and segmented appeals. Topics will include developing donor relationships, structuring a robust annual fund program, day of giving campaigns and exploring planned giving options.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

### **P.A.C.E. (Providing Access to Catholic Education)**

Fr. Jim Lee; Dana Lashley; Roseann Feldmann

In 1884, a group of visionary Providence sisters established the first Catholic school in the Olympia, WA area. In the late 1920s, this Catholic school became part of St. Michael Parish. In 1951, the parish built a new school of eight classrooms and a convent. In 1956, a gym and four more classrooms were added. In the late 1990s, a vision of a "Family of Families" took root under the direction of Father Jim Lee and stewardship as a way

of life became fundamental in the parish, with the ultimate goal of funding all parish ministries through Sunday offerings. The last ministry to be fully funded is the parish school; however, in 2021 the parish froze tuition, last year the parish decreased tuition by 10.3%, and this year the parish decreased tuition by 14.8% for a total decrease in tuition over the last two years of 25.1%! Learn how nurturing a collaborative process between parish and school leadership and changing the Sunday experience encouraged faithful financial stewardship of all parishioners and made the P.A.C.E. dream a reality.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

### **Planning to Thrive: Designing a Roadmap for Today's Catholic School**

Daniel R. Baillargeon, Ph.D.; Daniel Breen

Strategic planning is an essential element of securing a Catholic school's institutional vitality. Catholic school leaders handle many day-to-day responsibilities and issues that arise which can lead them to practice reactionary leadership regularly. Building a good strategic plan helps principals make decisions that will impact the future of the school, engage the community in supporting the mission and create a road map that will lead to excellence in all aspects of school life.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

**LEARNING TRACK:**

## **Connecting with Community**

### **How Our Catholic Social Teaching Class Transformed into a Service-Learning Community Course**

Mandi Sonnenberg, Ed.D.; Adrianna Knifong

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and service-learning standards share a profound synergy, as both are grounded in principles of justice, compassion and community engagement. CST provides a moral framework deeply rooted in Catholic faith and doctrine, emphasizing the dignity of every human person, the importance of the common good and the call to care for the marginalized. These principles align seamlessly with service-learning standards, which guide the planning and execution of experiences.

Hear St. Teresa Academy's journey from transforming a CST class into a CST service-learning course for all our juniors based on research and reflection. We will share curriculum, assessments, agency training and a how-to guide while noting the challenges and successes. Catholic Social Teaching and service-learning standards share a strong moral and ethical foundation, both seeking to instill values of compassion, social justice and responsible citizenship in students. When integrated effectively, they create a powerful educational framework that prepares students to live out their faith while actively contributing to the betterment of society.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*



## The Evangelization Team: Parish and School Working Together

Julie Delaney

A parish with a school? A school with a parish? Or a parish school? Which best describes your school and parish? In an era of declining enrollments and church attendance, strengthening the relationship between the school and parish(es) is a win for the entire community. Learn strategies to strengthen the partnership between parish(es) and school and increase the evangelization capacity for your parish(es) and school. Participants will also develop an individualized plan to put strategies into place tailored to meet their parish-school situation. Dr. Delaney's presentation is based on research, experience in working with schools and parishes across the county and 35 plus years of experience in Catholic education.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

### LEARNING TRACK: Leading the Way

#### PANEL

#### State of Catholic Education

Join a panel of national educational leaders to discuss important topics that impact Catholic education.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

#### The Spiritual CEO

Rob Birdsell; Kent Hickey

A presentation for Catholic school leaders on practical ways to provide spiritual leadership for their school. Many heads of Catholic schools are lay people who have not been trained in spirituality. We know that leadership has a primary role

in establishing and maintaining a strong Catholic identity in a school. Less than five years ago there were five lay people leading one of the 28 Jesuit universities. Today there are only five Jesuits leading these universities. This remarkable change from religious to lay leadership has also happened in Catholic K-12 schools, albeit not as dramatically but over a longer period. Today there are 61 lay people leading one of the 91 Jesuit pre-secondary or secondary schools. According to NCEA, today 98% of the professional staff in Catholic schools are lay people. That compares to 52% who were lay people in 1970. When a lay person becomes the president or principal of a Catholic school they become the spiritual leader of the institution, not just the academic or business leader. During the transition from a religious to a lay leadership, the institution has the opportunity to symbolically show the school community the transfer of the spiritual leadership. Birdsell goes on to share some ways schools or dioceses can commission a new leader in their spiritual role. Participants will learn practical and innovative practices to spiritually lead a Catholic school.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

#### Instructional Coaching: Let's differentiate PD for Teachers

Donna Moss

#### FACTS

Have you ever had a great coach? The teacher-centered PD option of instructional coaching meets each teacher's individual needs in a way that traditional style PD can't. With the goal of improving both teacher practice and student achievement, teachers work

closely with their coach to learn and implement research-based strategies. Explore the benefits of providing coaching to teachers either 1:1 or in small teams of 2-3 teachers. Participants will learn what the research tells us about coaching, why coaching works, how coaching can contribute to teacher retention and how it can be part of a more effective schoolwide PD plan.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

#### Developing Your Leadership Strengths in a VUCA World

Jennifer Bigelow, Ph.D.

We live and work in a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world and our schools are perfect examples of this type of system. This session will help you develop your leadership strengths in a VUCA world by managing your own capacity and elevating your team.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

### LEARNING TRACK: Serving All Students

#### St. Anthony School Programs - Inclusivity and Beyond

Korin H. McMillen, M.A.; Anka Gataric

St. Anthony School Programs offers support and opportunities for students with special needs in select Catholic schools within the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Comprehensive programming includes many facets to create a successful, positive, school experience for students, such as specially designed instruction, replacement curriculums, accommodations and modifications to grade-level material, as well as speech and occupational therapy when eligible. Staff

are comprised of certified special education teachers, as well as paraprofessionals at the elementary level, and job coaches at the high school level. Our programs have one or two, classrooms in each of our partner schools, and these classrooms serve as the hub for special services and where our staff collaborate to meet the needs of our students. Student programming is guided by an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which is customized to the St. Anthony's program and the goals of the student. We focus on inclusion experiences, social skills, vocational skills and faith formation in all aspects of our programs. We utilize a teaming approach to all things, from instruction to social programming, to vocational aspirations. We utilize strategies and practices that provide optimal learning for students, while continuing to assist in their emotional and spiritual development, rooted in our faith.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

### **Literacy for English Language Learners - Best Practices**

Gretchen Wolfe Anselmo, M.S.

This session will explore research-based instruction methods that have been shown to be effective in building literacy among English Language Learners (ELLs). Culturally linguistically sustaining and responsive practices to create inclusive classrooms will also be explored.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Building Resilience in Kids**

Christine Gibson

Resilience, grit, tenacity, perseverance...where does it come from? How can we as

educators help grow these traits in our children? Join us for tips, tricks and discussion on how to encourage resilience in the classroom and in life.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Empowering Every Catholic School: The Roadmap to Success through MTSS**

Emily Kleintop, Ed.D.; Sarah Kerins, Ed.D.; Susan Parker

The Diocese of Allentown administrators will share their experience in implementation of a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) model for the success of all students. The presenters sought to improve the continuum of services in special education to provide for developing the whole-child and preserving the dignity of all learners. The continuum ranges from the provision of accommodations and modifications in general education settings to stand-alone special learning centers, as well as enrichment and gifted education. To develop this framework, the Diocese of Allentown created the Child Success Leadership Council to support the implementation of MTSS using: a benchmark assessment for data collection, school level monthly team meetings and guidance and resources from the Diocesan Leadership Team. The Council sought to dispel myths around special education and gifted education, gain a better understanding of remediation and intensive interventions versus modifications and identify when and why an academic evaluation would be sought.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Flourishing Vocationally: How to Help High School Students Discover Strengths and Discern Careers**

Julia Klausli, Ph.D.

Discerning possible careers and vocations is essential for life-long flourishing. This session provides a holistic and practical guide for educators and guidance counselors to help students take steps toward informed vocational discernment. Building on the Catholic-Christian vision of the flourishing person and research in career counseling, the session provides a guide for career exploration illustrating the significance of factors such as career interest, family background, faith, values, personality, and validated aptitude testing like the Highlands Ability Battery.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

Thursday, April 4, 2024

**8 - 9:15 AM**

**Professional Learning  
Breakout Sessions #5**

LEARNING TRACK:

**Centered in Christ**

### **Creating a Culture of Service Learning**

Liz Goldman

Offering service-learning opportunities for students at all grade levels helps to create disciples who learn to put their faith into action. This session will explore how and why schools can offer school wide service projects that students of all ages will enjoy. We will discuss ways our students can be the hands and feet of Jesus.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

## Faith: More Than a Class

Matt Kresich

Attending a Catholic school no longer assures a lifelong disciple. A significant portion of former Catholics have a Catholic school as their alma mater. How can we, as educators, respond? The answer is far from new. This international speaker has youth ministry at his core. You will learn how every educator plays an integral role in the faith life of their students. Through engaging with their own journeys, educators will learn how to authentically be a witness of Jesus Christ. Faith becomes less a theoretical idea and more a community of believers. Getting there can be hard, but that is why we are on the journey together.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

## In the Image and Likeness of God: Engaging with Catholic Social Teachings and Restorative Practices

Julie Hendry, MCSL

Through engagement with Catholic Social Teachings and the principles of restorative practices, participants will have the opportunity to experience the connections between these two frameworks and what they have in common—the foundational principle of the God-given dignity we all share. Participants will learn practices that tie our faith to the social science of restorative practices while focusing on best practices around community building, service learning and virtue literacy.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

## Sparking: Holistically Integrating the Catholic Faith into your School

Jim Schultz

What makes Catholic schools different from other schools? The answer is not the liturgy or the sacraments, and it is not that Catholic schools celebrate Christmas or Easter. Catholic schools are distinguished by their unique paradigm of seeing the world, the entire world, through the eyes of Christ. Sparking the faith is the evangelical mission of every Catholic school and it is not simply accomplished through one Mass or through the parish priest. Instead, Catholic schools need a method of sparking to truly educate the whole child, the whole faculty and the whole community in the fire of the Catholic faith. Illuminate strategies and tactics for implementing holistic faith education in a school system and help identify gaps where changes need to be made for authentic faith to flourish. Participants will be introduced to faith ARCS, SPARK teachers, religious intellectual planning and family engagement as means to help spark the faith in their school. Together we can not only spark the faith but light the fire of Christ's love for all to see.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

## Making Every Class Catholic

Brett Salkeld

The Church asks Catholic school educators to put the integration of faith and reason at the heart of individual subjects. What does this mean in practical terms? How do we teach math, art or science from a Catholic point of view? First, we need to recognize that the presuppositions underlying



any approach to a subject are never neutral. Then we are in a position to ask how a Catholic understanding can inform our teaching and practice in every subject and transform our classrooms.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

## LEARNING TRACK: Characterized by Excellence

### A Spirit-Led Compass: Empowering Students and Teachers to Catalyze Innovations in Teaching and Learning Through Action Research

Terra Caputo, Ph.D.; Anthony Fior Ed.D.; Cindy Reagan; Thomas Yarcusko; Michael Polito; Owen McDonald

Catholic schools have long been heralded as hubs of academic excellence. This session will share one school's journey to cultivate deeper experiences of academic excellence and engagement through the creation of an action research center that empowers students and teachers to collaborate as researchers and study high-impact strategies for teaching and learning in Catholic school contexts. Intersections

between Ignatian pedagogy and mind, brain, education science; the value of action research for better understanding students' dynamic contexts and better meeting them where they are; and the mission-centered process for building learning communities that spark deeper learning will be discussed.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Active Learning in the Middle School Classroom**

Sarah DeGreene Turner, M.Ed.

With the schedule format and curriculum expectations of a typical middle school, we too often move away from effective strategies commonly used in elementary classrooms. Active learning strategies improve engagement, knowledge retention and classroom culture with the added benefit of supporting classroom management. These strategies will bring new life to established routines, invigorating teachers and students alike.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Building a Beta Team for Better Readers and Writers**

Rachel Edelman, M.A.;  
Carissa Maddox, Ed.D.

The session will focus on English-Language Arts curriculum adoption for elementary and middle school. We will outline the process of determining the criteria of success for the school, reviewing programs that met the criteria and establishing a beta team of teachers to implement the curriculum in the first year. We will focus on the elements that we were looking for including diverse representation of texts and authors, knowledge-building content, many and varied

opportunities for reading, writing and discussion connected to text, and the ability to have students read full texts. Additionally, we will focus on the professional development and support offered to the beta team in year one of adoption, highlighting the key successes and lessons learned.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Data Teams: Unravelling the Power of Collaborative Inquiry for Continuous Improvement**

Cherae Nash

*Catapult Learning*

Schools are increasingly using data to improve outcomes for students. Often, schools miss the opportunity to pair collecting and analyzing data with collaborative inquiry. Join us as we unravel the transformative power of curiosity within data teams. In this dynamic exploration, we'll delve into the intricacies of inquiry-driven approaches that increase a team's capacity to problem-solve and make strategic decisions. Using Catapult Learning's model of data teams, participants will learn about the three phases of data teams, steps to initiate data teams and strategies to build teams that engage in collaborative work to continuously improve outcomes. This session will include opportunities for Q & A.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Milestones, Trip Steps and Chocolate Broccoli**

Jan Bryan

Almost any review of math assessment data, especially at the national level, highlights the much-needed emphasis on effective and empirically validated math instruction, opportunities for student practice and assessment

that yields insights to skilled and caring teachers. Review where our nation is in mathematics and insights from Renaissance Star Math data to examine math power evident in Catholic schools. Continue with an analysis of the four math milestones; the make-it-or-break-it moments in teaching and learning math. Review resources and strategies to address these milestones. Evaluate each math scholar's sense of belonging in the math community, as some may seek chocolate broccoli rather than understand that math knowledge is evident and measurable from birth. Regardless of a learner's sense of belonging, each one, with rare exception, is born a math person. Guide them to experience the best moments, which usually occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

#### **LEARNING TRACK:**

### **Committing to a Successful Tomorrow**

PANEL

#### **CAAC Discussion: Continuous Improvement, School Accreditation and More**

Daryl Hagan, Ed.D.; Mary Camp; Andrew Kremer, Ph.D.; Greg Dhuyvetter; Theresa Bowser; Ashley Altizer, Ed.D.

The Catholic Accreditation Agency Council (CAAC) members invite you to attend a session where your questions get answered! We will discuss continuous improvement within the school and classroom, what's new in accreditation, Catholic identity and much more.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

**Oral Histories and Connections:  
How the Past informs the  
Present through Interviews with  
Doctors John Convey, Merylann  
Schuttloffell and Leonard  
DeFiore**

Melissa Mitchell, Ed.D.;  
Cynthia Sanders, Ph.D.

The Catholic University of America (CUA) has a long history of excellence in Catholic teacher education. Part of that history includes the work of Dr. John Convey, Dr. Merylann Schuttloffell and Dr. Leonard DeFiore, who are also long-time members of NCEA. Their collective work, conducted between 1970s - 2018, continues to serve students, the CUA community and research in Catholic education in the United States. CUA is currently in the process of renewing our teacher education programs. As a part of engaging in this work, we want to connect with previous faculty leaders as we build for the future. The proposed session will feature interviews with Drs. Convey, Schuttloffell and DeFiore that are informing our work. Oral histories and interviews allow us to explore the rich history and wealth of research that was conducted by the team during their tenure at CUA. This session will feature a synthesis of the interviews and a delightful discussion with Drs. Convey, Schuttloffell and DeFiore, with an interactive discussion and actionable takeaways to inform how oral histories can serve to make meaningful connections between the past and present for Catholic schools and communities. *NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

**Catholic School Revenue Best  
Practices and the Importance of  
Philanthropy**

Angela Gunderson;  
Steve Michalek; Dawn Handwerker

All Catholic elementary and secondary schools face budgetary issues. We will examine best practices from understanding revenue sources, how to incorporate (and embrace) "school choice," where and how fundraising/development should be properly utilized and everything in between.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational  
Vitality*

**Technology Integration to Reach  
all Learners K-8**

Melissa Lindner, M. Ed., M.P.A

Have you ever wanted to incorporate technology in your classroom but panic and say, "I want to learn or use this tool, but I just don't know where to start?" Then come learn about some tools to integrate technology for learners in the K-8 classroom as well as an introduction to how to approach artificial intelligence to embrace teaching how to use it instead of just banning it. Hands-on time to extend beyond the NCEA conference with the ability to connect with the group after the session.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic  
Excellence*

**LEARNING TRACK:  
Connecting with  
Community**

**It Begins with Us: Creating a  
Compassionate Culture with  
Each Other, Students and  
Parents**

Jodee Blanco

How the adults at a school  
treat each other, students

and parents, especially during stressful situations, sets the bar for students. Communication isn't just about words. It's also about body language, facial expressions, attitude and demeanor. Children are like sponges. They absorb and learn from the behavior of the adults at school just like they do at home. In this engaging session, Jodee Blanco will provide participants a tool kit full of simple, practical strategies for becoming more intuitive, compassionate communicators in even the most challenging of circumstances, and create and sustain a school culture that respects, nourishes and celebrates everyone.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and  
Catholic Identity*

**LEARNING TRACK:  
Leading the Way**

**Calming an Anxious  
Organization: Lead with  
Conviction**

Melanie B. Palmisano, Ed.D.

All organizations have challenges, but some seem to experience a culture of anxiety that inhibits growth and improvement. It can be difficult for a leader to determine how to calm anxious waters. Leaders will understand how to lead with conviction so that they can be more effective in navigating challenging times while making a huge difference in outcomes. Leading with conviction prepares us to ride the waves of chaos and sabotage. Come learn to stay calm, stay the course and stay connected as you act boldly within increasing complexity and escalating change.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and  
Leadership*

## Implications of Changes in Religious Sponsorship for P-12 Catholic Schools

Fr. Tom Simonds, SJ, Ed.D.;  
Mike Daniels, Ed.D.

As some religious orders plan for a future with fewer members, they are rethinking how they will sponsor Catholic schools and sustain the charism of the schools. Through presentations and breakout table discussions, participants will develop strategies to address changes to religious sponsorship in their schools.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

## The Diocesan Response to Critical Incidents in Schools

Bruce E. Varick

A critical incident can occur at any time in any school. Are our schools prepared? This session will provide a framework for the diocese to support schools during times of crisis. The framework includes understanding the components of a comprehensive emergency operations plan, identifying essential elements to responding effectively, assessing needs of individual schools, and preparing to mobilize diocesan resources and personnel to support school communities in crisis.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

## Communicate Like A Champion: How to Build Trust with Your Board and Leadership

Rob Bridges; Scott Barron;  
Tammy Barron

Communication habits are the single most important predictor of a leader's success, and the best leaders understand that HOW you communicate trumps



WHAT you communicate. The laws of the grapevine provide practical techniques that will have an immediate impact on your communication habits and how you are perceived by faculty, staff, parents, donors and your entire ecosystem. Great leaders are great communicators and we need both in our schools. Learn ways to build trust and engagement in both your personal and professional life.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

## Systems for Instructional Improvement in Catholic Schools

Eileen McLaughlin; Joseph Dolan;  
David Corvi

Since the fall of 2019, participants in the Lynch Leadership Academy (LLA) RCAB Leaders Academy have dived deep into the skills and knowledge required to be effective instructional leaders in their schools. LLA's work focuses on developing leaders with strong instructional knowledge and skills who can disrupt inequity in their schools and systems. LLA

has partnered with the RCAB Catholic Schools Office to provide professional development and coaching to build instructional leadership capacity. We focus on defining a vision for instructional excellence and leading others to implement practices that make that vision a reality. It is becoming increasingly clear in research and examples of successful urban schools that the learning of adults is essential for school improvement. Adult learning, then, is essential for student learning, particularly if teachers work together in teams to continuously improve their instructional practice. Additionally, a rigorous curriculum and an integrated approach to data-driven instruction are essential to increase student achievement. School leaders have learned how to establish systems and structures to support adult learning in service of ambitious teaching and learning for all of the students in their schools.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

LEARNING TRACK:

## Serving All Students

### How to Meaningfully Include Children with Autism in Your Classroom

Lawrence Sutton, Ph.D.

It is estimated that 1-36 school aged children have an autism spectrum disorder. Many of these children can meaningfully succeed in a typical classroom with often simple and concrete accommodations. The purpose of this session will be on how to recognize children with autism and how to effectively educate them in a typical classroom.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### Know What to Do, Do What You Know: Executive Function in the Classroom

Michelle Lia, Ed.D.

Teachers have high expectations and want each student to be successful. This success requires planning beyond the content. This interactive session will share eight areas of executive function (EF). Participants will learn what each EF skill might look like in

the classroom and then they will be invited to reflect and identify how these EF skills currently look or might look in their own classrooms.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### Teaching to the Adolescent Brain

Terence Houlihan; Eileen C. Houlihan

This lively and engaging session considers the cognitive and developmental context of today's adolescent learner. Using cutting edge research in educational and cognitive neuroscience and experiential activities, attendees will learn the most effective strategies for proactive classrooms, enhancing executive skills and connecting with their students.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### Virtue is Catholic Social Emotional Learning

Sr. John Dominic Rasmussen;  
Karen Villa, Ph.D.

*Openlight Media*

Virtue for centuries has been central to human growth and development and is a treasure of the Catholic faith. We will review how the use of the theological and the cardinal virtues coincides with the YES brain fundamentals for childhood development outlined by interpersonal neurobiologist, Dr. Dan Siegel, and how the virtues correspond to the CASEL five core competencies of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness. We review how placing virtue education within Catholic teaching, a Christian anthropology and sacramental living creates a social-emotional learning curriculum that integrates fully the dignity and wholeness of the child as God intended. We will address how the theological virtues of faith, hope and love facilitate a child feeling safe, seen, soothed and secure within the holding environment of the classroom and school. We will also review how the four cardinal/moral virtues of temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice promote neuroplasticity across the developmental span from K through high school leading to mental health, secure attachments and human flourishing. Lastly, we will discuss how creating a "still point of grace" and using virtue to keep students in the River of Grace facilitates behavioral and learning outcomes in the classroom and beyond.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*



Thursday, April 4, 2024

9:45 – 11 AM

**Professional Learning  
Breakout Session #6**

LEARNING TRACK:  
**Centered in Christ**

**Hearts of Mercy: Designing and  
Implementing Gospel-Inspired  
Service-Learning Programs**

Mary Beth May, M.Div.;  
Hope Zelmer

“Hearts of Mercy” focuses on Christian service-learning programs at Catholic high schools. This session will explore the theological foundations that inspire and shape service-learning programming. The session will also serve as a guide for anyone interested in starting or reimagining service-learning programs at their own school. High school campus ministers Hope Zelmer and Mary Beth May will share their firsthand experiences of redesigning and implementing the Christian Service Program at Fenwick High School in Oak Park, IL. Many resources exist to assist high school campus ministers with retreat programming, but there are few Catholic resources available to guide high school personnel through the process of designing and implementing service-learning programs. Our session seeks to fill that gap so that we can share our insights and knowledge with other campus ministers and theology teachers. The session will also include time for audience members to share their own experiences and best practices with the group. This session will encourage and give practical tools and advice to audience members so that they can provide quality service-learning opportunities at

their local Catholic high schools.  
*NSBECS Domain: Mission and  
Catholic Identity*

**Integrating Faith Across the  
Curriculum**

Monica Kowalski, Ph.D.

Catholic schools are called to integrate faith throughout the curriculum, but teachers are not always sure how to do this outside of religion class. This session will introduce a framework for thinking about how the Catholic faith can be integrated into any subject by focusing on WHY, HOW and WHAT students learn in schools. Participants will reflect on ways their schools currently succeed in this mission and brainstorm new ideas to implement.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and  
Catholic Identity*

**Pilgrims on a Journey: Planning  
Retreats that Build Community  
and Draw Students to Christ**

Emily Appert

We will explore the retreat program built by the middle school staff at our Catholic school in Washington State. Themes will include back-to-school retreats, end-of-year retreats and retreats for the various liturgical seasons. Come and see how we built a vibrant Catholic community in our school and city.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and  
Catholic Identity*

LEARNING TRACK:

**Characterized by  
Excellence**

**Leveraging the Strengths of  
Catholic Schools to Build a  
Strong Data Culture**

Julie Dallavis, Ph.D.; Frankie  
(Mary Frances) Jones, Ph.D.

Data-informed leadership promotes a cycle of inquiry in which leaders engage teachers in “problems of practice” which they explore together through data, resulting in a course of action based on evidence and shared analysis. This session aims to equip principals with the knowledge and strategies to be more data-informed and to involve their teachers in these efforts. Specifically, we highlight key insights from research on building a strong data culture and the characteristics of Catholic schools that can serve as the foundation for this important work. Session leaders will lead participants through a guided reflection on their own school data context with the goal of identifying possible next steps in developing their school’s data culture.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic  
Excellence*

**Math Party! Building Student  
Engagement and Developing  
Number Sense in Middle School  
Math**

Erin E. Whalen

Math is not a spectator sport. Students must be active participants to learn mathematical content truly, and number sense is the foundation on which all other content is built. Explore ways to help students develop number sense and get excited about math through games, brainteasers, manipulatives, thinking tasks and more. This interactive session will allow time for you to try out the



activities and discuss them with those around you. The session is geared toward students in middle school but can be adapted for older or younger students. Let's have some fun and make math creative, engaging and accessible to all!

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Teaching Math for Deep Understanding for K-12 Teachers**

Michelle Kozakiewicz  
*Catapult Learning*

The math standards emphasize conceptual understanding as the foundation for procedural fluency and application. Teachers can accelerate recovery by focusing on these important components of math teaching. Participants in this workshop will:

- Break down what "deep understanding of math" really means and why it matters
- Structure math learning as a sequence of stages
- Represent math using concrete, representational and symbolic forms for a range of topics

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **The Senior Capstone Project and Post High School Readiness**

Andrea Williamson

In 2020, 66% of high school graduates planned to attend college post-graduation, however, less than 1/2 of students taking the SAT or ACT in 2020 were deemed college-ready. Discuss the impact a senior capstone program can have on the college writing readiness of high school students. Also, we will discuss how a school can begin implementing a capstone experience as a component of the senior year along with ways to connect it to

Catholic Church teachings.  
*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Catholic Identity Standards: Using Pillars of Priestly Formation in Catholic Education**

Christopher Uhler;  
Fr. Michael Kapperman

This presentation focuses on the different elements of formation as outlined by the Church that aid in forming humans to be fully alive. Looking at forming our students in five areas—religious, spiritual, apostolic, human and intellectual—we seek to create lifelong, Catholic missionary disciples who are well-integrated and effective people and incredible witnesses to the Gospel.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

#### **LEARNING TRACK:**

### **Committing to a Successful Tomorrow**

### **Care for Creation in High School Classrooms**

Emma Doerfler, M.Ed.

In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis writes, "Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to build a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded." As Catholic high school teachers, we share the urgency of young people who seek meaningful change and who desire hope for the future in our time of environmental crisis. We focus on a three-part approach to encourage educators to respond to the call to care for God's creation through our work in Catholic schools. First, we will reflect on why creation care an integral part of our work as Catholic educators is and how we see this work as necessary to the

future vitality of Catholic schools. Second, since we believe that teachers can integrate lessons about environmental sustainability in all high school content areas, we will share stories from the classrooms of teachers in Catholic schools around our country who are committed to educating their students about care for creation in the context of English, math, social studies and theology classes. Finally, we hope to highlight the excellent work that many teachers and students are already doing by offering practical examples and strategies for implementing more sustainable practices on high school campuses.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

### **Embracing Innovation: Artificial Intelligence in Catholic Education**

Annabel Dotzman, M.Ed.;  
Anthony Dunn

Join us for an engaging session that explores the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Catholic education. Discover how AI can enhance personalized learning, support teachers, and streamline administrative tasks, all while aligning with the mission of Catholic education. This session will provide practical insights, ethical considerations and real-world examples that empower Catholic school administrators to harness the benefits of AI while preserving the integrity of our educational mission.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

## **We've Been Here Before: How Catholic Schools Have Grappled with Mission and Identity in the Past**

Michael Rizzi

This session will provide a historical overview of Catholic education in the United States, showing how Catholic schools have wrestled with questions about their mission and religious identity. What distinguishes them from non-Catholic schools? How do they offer an education of equal quality to the public schools without losing their religious identity? These questions were just as common in the 1800s as they are today. Many Catholic school educators wrongly assume that these are new issues or that Catholic schools used to have everything perfectly "figured out," but previous generations struggled with the same problems for over 200 years. The presentation will also offer some tried-and-true strategies for success from history.  
*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

### **LEARNING TRACK: Connecting with Community**

#### **A Culture of Belonging: What it Means for Student Retention and Attrition**

Jennifer Haley; Charlie Lytle  
*Blackbaud*

Discover data-driven insights and proven strategies that drive student retention and foster a culture of belonging in private schools. Join former director of enrollment and institutional advancement, to explore why families choose to stay at or leave a school, how to evaluate your attrition and cost-per-enrollment and best practices for forming long-term bonds that build community with students and their

families.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational  
Vitality*

#### **Fiat Mentorship Program: Mary's Yes to God**

Nikki Powell

How do you create a sense of community and belonging when you have students coming from 50 different schools/districts? Oakland Catholic High School has developed a mentorship program called Fiat. Fiat means "YES" and we named this program after Mary's "YES" to God. Fiat is a program for freshmen to seek comfort and wisdom from senior student mentors who have already gone through the same experiences as a freshman in a new environment. Attendees will learn how to implement a similar program in their high school as an opportunity to create a sense of community where all students feel safe, welcomed and loved.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

### **LEARNING TRACK: Leading the Way**

PANEL

#### **The COHORT School Board: A PK-8 Governance Model for Success and Accountability**

Llewellyn Young, Ph.D.; Mandy  
Thronas-Brown; Beverly Sandobal

To help prevent school closures, the Hawaii Catholic Schools Office created a governance model for PK-8 parochial schools called the COHORT Board. The model brought together at least three separate schools under one board with formally delegated responsibility from each pastor to hold school administration accountable for finance and institutional advancement. Two of the schools were on the brink of

closure at the onset of the pilot but are now considered "thriving" schools. The other participating school was not at risk of closure but struggled with its enrollment and advancement initiatives, and as a result of its participation with the COHORT Board, experienced consistent enrollment growth every year since the Board's inception and has met all its strategic planning goals in the process. The panel will provide an explanation of the model and how it impacted the governance of the three participating schools.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

#### **Cultivating Talent Continued: Exploring Innovative Educator Pipelines Strategies from Recruitment to Retention**

Michael T. O'Connor, Ph.D.

Recruiting and retaining excellent educators and school leaders is a critical and ongoing issue in our Catholic schools and systems. Building upon the Cultivating Talent report from Boston College (Ospino & Wyttenbach, 2022) this collaborative session goes deeper into educator pipelines in Catholic education. The session will provide a guided examination to identify pipelines "leaks," explore innovative recruitment and retention strategies implemented across the U.S., and review research on educator pipelines for thoughtful design of pipelines strategies in your Catholic school or system. Participants will engage with a pipelines diagnostic tool and concrete examples of policies and practices, collaborating to put strategy into action with a distinctive mission-informed approach. The presenter will share research, resources and tools and will make all

session resources available to participants in real-time (and for future reference) via a shared Google Drive folder. Select printed materials, particularly the pipelines diagnostic tool, will be provided. Intended for leaders or any educators in Catholic schools and systems working to support human capital and talent strategies.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

### **Formation for Mission: Building Vibrant Educational Communities**

Sarah Laitinen; Tom Southard

Catholic schools that are sponsored by religious congregations have a deep sense of identity and connectedness with mission. In the Lasallian region of North America, we have mission formation programs that strengthen Lasallian identity and mission in the hearts and minds of Lasallian educators in schools sponsored by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. This deeper sense of belonging allows for educators to commit more deeply to the mission. As school leaders, how do you bring faculty, staff, students and families into learning about and connecting with the mission? Drawing from the Lasallian tradition and other religious congregations, in this session participants will learn of practical strategies and formation program models to keep the mission at the forefront in their educational communities, so the mission remains vibrant for all involved.

*NSBECS Domain: Mission and Catholic Identity*

### **Leading the Way: Building Leadership Capacity One Program at a Time**

Justyna King, Ph.D.;  
Kelly Surapaneni

How is the Archdiocese of Seattle pioneering leadership development from the inside out? The Archdiocese of Seattle is committed to the NSBECS (*National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*). The Office for Catholic Schools (OCS) in Seattle has created goals in its strategic vision to ensure alignment with the four domains of the NSBECS. Of all the various initiatives that our OCS has embraced in the last decade, the one most comprehensive has been the dedication to building leadership capacity (BLC) within our own Catholic schools. By 2023, the OCS helped facilitate 30+ different BLC groups; from new teacher supports, to vice principal consortiums, to teacher-leader development, there is a group for every Catholic school employee in our archdiocese.

One notable BLC group that has yielded an incredible springboarding of Catholic school leaders is the GRACE program. Growing Reflective Authentic Catholic Educators (GRACE) supports robust leadership development. Currently, GRACE supports 87% of our 74 Catholic schools with over 120 teacher leaders enrolled in 2023. The majority of our Catholic school principals hired in the last five years have been graduates of the GRACE program.

*NSBECS Domain: Governance and Leadership*

### **LEARNING TRACK:**

## **Serving All Students**

### **Data + Student Study Teams + Collaboration = Success**

Jennifer Insua

When data analysis and collaboration among teachers and staff in student study teams are combined, your students will be met with success! Administrators and teachers will be equipped with an approach to determine student needs using a data-based, team approach. From their success with student study teams, the presenters will share examples of the who, what, when, where, why and how these can be implemented in any school. Student study teams will ensure all students, including those of diverse needs, are successful in your school setting.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

### **Dyslexia and Dysgraphia: What Catholic School Educators Need to Know**

Pamela Patnode, Ed.D., ObISB

Although dyslexia and dysgraphia are common challenges among students, not all Catholic school educators are trained to recognize the signs nor know how to help. This informative session will teach you the signs to watch for, the myths to ignore and the session includes simulation exercises so that you can know what it's like to have dyslexia and dysgraphia. You will leave this session with greater knowledge and understanding.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

**From Inclusion to Belonging:  
Lessons Learned on a  
Continuing 25-year Journey**

Joseph E. Vorbach III, Ph.D.

Presenters will share experiences from the Diocese of Arlington, VA, related to consistent growth in expanded services for students with intellectual disabilities in diocesan schools. Opportunities seized and challenges encountered will be covered to give attendees a sense of the diocesan experience over 25 years. The discussion will focus on the importance of listening, networking, leadership, mindset and optimizing resources for greatest impact. From only one high school offering options for students with disabilities in 2000, there are now 19 (out of 41) schools serving students with intellectual disabilities, including all four of the high schools.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

**Planning for the Whole Child:  
Practices, Frameworks and  
Immediate Solutions for Catholic  
Education**

Sean Smith

The demands on educators in today's 21st century appear to increase annually. Meeting the needs of the whole child in collaboration with our colleagues, parents/family members and our greater Catholic community is essential to our instructional, behavioral, social and emotional efforts. This interactive session will feature specific tips, tools and strategies to plan and design classroom instruction to meet the learner variability our students are increasingly bringing to the K-12 classroom. Concentrating on ways to further plan and design for the varied demands is critical. We will consider potential

barriers impacting instruction and ways to address them. To develop our students into expert learners, we will identify ways to develop motivated, purposeful, knowledgeable, strategic and goal-directed students. Universal Design for Learning Framework (UDL) is a powerful approach because it helps one anticipate for all learners. Learn three principles: multiple means of engagement, representation and action and expression, and then continue into specific ways to operationalize various guidelines and checkpoints into our classroom. Attendees will learn about the UDL Design Cycle and how Catholic school educators have utilized the component of this cycle to design their instructional goals, identify flexible materials and methods that offer options to student learning and various forms of assessment that reflect accurate monitoring of students' progress. Gain a clear understanding of how Catholic school educators have and can implement the UDL Framework to tackle both learner and environmental barriers, promoting a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

**Academic and Behavioral  
Interventions, Accommodations  
and Modifications: Gospel and  
Legal Implications**

Sr. Angie Shaughnessy, SCN, JD, Ph.D.

Today's students, like students in other times, may require academic and behavioral accommodations and modifications. This presentation will identify: (1) legal issues and requirements concerning the education of students

with special needs and (2) Gospel imperatives stemming from Jesus' mandate to let the little children come unto Him. Intersections of the two will be identified and discussed. Areas of possible conflict will be noted and suggestions for navigating these areas will be made. Practical suggestions for ensuring compliance with both civil law and gospel mandates will be offered.  
*NSBECS Domain: Academic Excellence*

**Crisis Response and  
Preparedness for Catholic  
Schools**

Cynthia Ryals

Effective managing of school crisis events often reflects the way past events were handled. Experts in school safety have deconstructed past school crisis events to reveal valuable, lifesaving lessons. Various disciplines involved in school crisis responses also contribute unique perspectives for quick and decisive intervention, rescue and post-vention techniques. This session will highlight how past school crisis events and practical viewpoints from various disciplines can provide attendees with key takeaways for enhancing school crisis responses with faculty and staff.

*NSBECS Domain: Operational Vitality*

