# Less Tired. More Inspired. - Igniting Passion, Purpose, and Practice

# DEKALB COUNTY-WIDE INSTITUTE

Together We Teach. Together We Thrive.

## DEKALB HIGH SCHOOL

## October 9, 2026

# Welcome to County-Wide Institute Day!

Amanda Christensen

Carmen Siragusa

Welcome, educators and colleagues! For the past two years, the DeKalb Regional Office of Education and our County-wide Institute Planning Committee have worked together to create a day focused on learning, connection, and renewal. We are grateful to everyone who helped make today possible.

A special thank-you goes to DeKalb CUSD 428 for welcoming us into their facilities, to the school administrators who encouraged their staff to share their expertise, and to our presenters who generously volunteered their time and talents to share their passion for teaching and learning.

We are especially grateful to our County-wide Institute Committee, whose countless hours of planning, collaboration, and attention to detail have helped bring this day together while ensuring that the voices of educators and stakeholders were represented throughout the process. This year's theme, "Less Tired. More Inspired. — Igniting Passion, Purpose, and Practice," was selected by our Hinckley-Big Rock representatives and designed to complement today's keynote message from Phil Januszewski.

We are also pleased to welcome Dr. Eric Junco, who will explore the power of belonging and its impact on student engagement in the classroom.

We recognize and value the expertise, talent, and knowledge our educators bring to their schools each day. Our hope is that today's learning is practical, relevant, and immediately useful — but that you also leave with something just as important: time to collaborate, refresh, refuel, and re-ignite your passion and purpose for the work you do on behalf of students.

Finally, with gratitude, we would also like to take a moment to recognize Regional Superintendent Amanda Christensen, who will retire in December. We are deeply grateful for Amanda's years of dedicated service to the DeKalb Regional Office of Education, our educators, and the students and communities we serve. Her leadership, relationships, and commitment to education have made a lasting difference in our county. Amanda, thank you for your years of service, your leadership, and the many ways you have championed educators and students. We wish you all the very best in this next chapter.

Thank you for being here and for continuing to invest in yourself, your colleagues, and your students.

***We hope you leave today Less Tired and More Inspired!***

Carmen Siragusa
Assistant Regional Superintendent

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# GENERAL COUNTY-WIDE INSTITUTE INFORMATION

A Nursing/ Lactation station will be set up in A181 (The Nurse's Office) for anyone who needs it.

Choose **EVENT** for Wi-Fi

Doors open at 7 a.m. Use the main entrance. Sessions begin promptly at 8 a.m. Participants MUST wear their school district ID badge during the Institute.

Parking at DeKalb High School is limited. Participants are encouraged to carpool, if possible. Overflow parking is available in the Christ Community Church parking lot on Dresser Road. Reserved parking is available for presenters only; it is marked by signs and orange cones. DeKalb employees should park in the back lot at DHS.

## Continental Breakfast

**Breakfast and coffee will be available in the cafeteria until 10:30 a.m. Food cannot be taken out of the cafeteria. Thank you!**

Please bring your own water bottle. There are filling stations throughout the building.

**Fire Marshall regulations limit room capacity!**

The maximum number allowed in each room is limited to the number of chairs. If a session is full , please choose a different session to attend.

**Professional Development Credits:**

In order to receive your Professional Development credits, please complete the **ISBE** evaluation ***before you leave.*** Credit will be awarded at the completion of the Institute. Participants must attend the full day for credit. The ROE's CWI evaluation is online at:

**https://forms.gle/tN2p1NZE3m1KuyrV6**

# Keynote Speaker

## Phil Januszewski

## "Less Tired. More Inspired."

**Session 1:**

**Elementary teachers**

8-9:30, DHS Auditorium

**Session 2:**

**High School teachers**

9:40-11:10, DHS Auditorium

**Session 3:**

**Middle School teachers and Related Services**

11:20-12:50, DHS Auditorium

Phil Januszewski is a nationally recognized keynote speaker who empowers the "givers" of the world to flourish personally so they can create greater impact professionally; all while avoiding burnout, boredom, and cynicism. A 20-year educator turned full-time motivator, Phil blends science, storytelling, and humor to inspire audiences to recharge their energy and reignite their purpose. With a background in chemistry, a master's in teaching leadership, and a certification in positive education, he lives out his mission of creating and spreading happiness through motivation, education, and entertainment; all with a little extra tattoo ink and a whole lot of heart.

# Featured speaker:

# Dr. Eric Junco

## "Why Belonging, Why Now? Cultivating Spaces for Connection"

## Forum Room

8-9:30
9:40-11:10
11:20-12:50

**Belonging is a powerful driver of student motivation, well-being, and persistence. This workshop examines how subtle classroom signals shape identity and performance. Through student stories and practical tools, participants will learn strategies to reduce stereotype threat, address imposter feelings, and design daily routines that foster connection, confidence, and inclusion.**

Dr. Eric Junco is an Assistant Professor in the College of Education at Northern Illinois University. He teaches a range of under-graduate and graduate courses, including Teaching Science Methods, Classroom Management for Elementary Educators, and Communities of Care: SEL, Trauma-Awareness and Community-Connected Teaching. His research focuses on how identity, safety, and community shape learning, and how educators can design classrooms that foster connection and student voice.

# 8:00-9:30 a.m.
# DOUBLE SESSIONS (90 minutes each)

## Keynote speaker: Phil Januszewski - Auditorium

## Elementary Teachers

## Featured speaker: Dr. Eric Junco - Forum Room

### The 3 Circle Model: Simple Ways to Incorporate FFA and SAE into Classroom Instruction for Affiliated Membership

This presentation will assist ag teachers wishing to incorporate FFA and SAE into classroom instruction. Participants will have time to share ideas, learn from other agriculture teachers, explore new technologies and create a plan to implement the 3 Circle Model in their program.

**Room N113**

**Sarah Petersen, D428**

**Grades 6-12, Ag teachers**

### Breathing and Blinking: An Intersection of PTSD and TBI

This presentation examines PTSD and traumatic brain injury (mTBI) and the challenge of concussion complications. This session reviews the effect of trauma on cognitive development, symptomology of PTSD and mTBI, the effect on learning and behavior, and an exploration of newer treatment approaches for students dealing with TBI.

**Room W212**

**Nancy Mullen, Youth Outlook and Tidepool Communications**

**All grades, teachers, Student Services**

### The Rewiring of America: John Haidt's "Anxious Generation" and "Amazing Generation"

Come explore the much-talked-about bestsellers by author John Haidt, "The Anxious Generation" and the newly-released "Amazing Generation." See how Haidt is changing the way people feel about technology, and more specifically, smart phones and tablets, due to their addictive and potentially dangerous nature.

**Room E209**

**Melissa Irick. D426, and Mimi Ojaghi, DeKalb ROE**

**All grades, all educators**

### Behavioral Management Through the Development of Meaningful Relationships

Managing behavior in the classroom and school setting can prove to be quite stressful, especially when working with our more difficult children. Teachers who work specifically with students who have emotional and behavioral disorders have found that meaningful relationships are often the best supporter of behavioral management.

**Room E207/213**

**Julian McElroy, Brad Becker and Jonathan Moore, D428**

**All grades, all educators**

### Is It Just Trending?: Reframing Neurodivergence

"It seems like everyone thinks they have autism or ADHD now!" Join the conversation about the prevalence of neurodivergence, supports for students, and explore your own biases and misunderstandings about neurodivergence. "But I'm not a special ed teacher." Not to worry! This session focuses on low-support need diagnoses.

**Room W208**

**Gretchen Sprinkle, D428**

**All grades, all educators**

### AI as Your Creative Thought Partner: Storytelling in Google Workspace

Transform how students demonstrate their learning by turning standard Google tools into a vibrant creative studio. We will use Google Gemini as a collaborative thought partner to help students move from initial ideas to structured project plans. Participants will then learn to bridge those brainstorms into visual and cinematic projects using the specialized features of Google Vids, Slides, and more!

**Room W206**

**Ben Sondgeroth, LTC Illnois**

**All grades, all educators**

# 8:00-9:30 a.m.
# DOUBLE SESSIONS (90 minutes each)

## Creating Connection: Building Hope-Filled, Resiliency-Oriented Adoption & Foster Friendly Schools™

When a child with a complex family story walks into your school, what without words signals belonging? Students impacted by adoption, foster care, and kinship care are in every building — often in every classroom — yet common routines can unintentionally exclude those navigating grief, identity shifts, and instability. Schools can be powerful partners in healing. This session equips K-12 educators with practical, MTSS-aligned strategies to build hope-filled, resiliency-oriented, adoption- and foster-informed environments. Participants will explore how relational trauma shapes behavior and learning, redesign everyday practices, strengthen tiered support, and enhance caregiver collaboration to create emotionally safe, belonging-centered schools. Also relevant for students navigating divorce, newcomer transitions, and military-connected family changes, this session leaves participants equipped with actionable tools for sustainable impact.

**Room W112**
**Laura Adams and Claudia Berman, iCARE4 Adoptive & Foster Families**
**All grades, all educators**

## Unlock the Architecture of Learning

Bridge the gap between neuroscience and the classroom by exploring high quality instruction through the lens of cognitive science. Master strategies to manage cognitive load, spark deep engagement, and align your teaching with how the student brain processes and retains information.

**Room E110**
**Molly Tucker and Andrea Sheahan, D427; and Lisa Winters, D430**
**All grades, all educators**

## Mapping Polarities for Classroom Management and Team Development

Polarity Mapping is an evidence-based frame work for managing complex organizational dynamics. Participants will examine core components of polarity maps, analyze common team-based tensions, and explore indicators of imbalance to develop practical strategies to enhance team efficacy and classroom management.

**Room E208**
**Shannon Kaecker, Adventure Works of DeKalb County**
**Grades 6-12, Administrators, teachers, Special Education, School Counselors, Social Workers**

## Build Your Own Classroom AI Tutor

Learn how to design and implement your own AI tutor to support K-12 students. This session demonstrates practical strategies for enhancing content understanding, vocabulary development, and writing skills through structured prompts, guided interaction, and responsible AI use in everyday classroom instruction.

**Room E211**
**Caio Gomes, D428**
**Grades 4-12, all educators**

## Intuitive Mark Making, and Non-Objective Painting

An art lesson that spans all modalities, and subject matters. We let our intuition lead the art creating an abstract masterpiece that pulls math, science, creativity, and life experience out on the paper.

**Room N122**
**Lisa Beynon, D424**
**All grades, Fine Arts, Special Education, Counselors, Social Workers, Psychologists**

## Signs of Child Abuse and Handling Disclosures

This presentation helps participants recognize common signs of child abuse and understand how to respond safely and appropriately to disclosures. It emphasizes listening, believing the child, mandated reporting responsibilities, and connecting children to support and protection.

**Room E204**
**Beth Ganion and Jasmine Pease, Safe Passage**
**All grades, all educators**

## Active Learning: Strengthening Instruction and Engaging Students

In this interactive workshop, K–12 educators will explore practical, evidence-based strategies that strengthen instruction and increase student engagement through frequent opportunities to respond (OTR). Participants will learn how high-engagement instructional practices strengthen explicit instruction, boost understanding, and improve overall student outcomes across content areas and grade levels.

**Room E106**
**Susan Brewick, DeKalb ROE**
**All grades, all educators**

# 8:00-9:30 a.m.
# DOUBLE SESSIONS (90 minutes each)

## The Power of Aerobic Exercise

In this research-based presentation, Dr. Ben Mueller explores a powerful question: Can exercise help undo the effects of a poor diet? Drawing on scientific studies in exercise physiology and health, he explains how regular aerobic activity can improve heart health, insulin sensitivity, brain function, and overall well-being — even in individuals with less-than-ideal nutrition habits. Through clear explanations and real-world examples, he highlights what exercise can and cannot offset when it comes to diet. He emphasizes how movement acts as a protective factor against chronic disease, while also reinforcing that optimal health comes from combining both exercise and sound nutrition. This talk leaves audiences with practical, research-backed strategies to take control of their health — starting with simply moving more.

**Room E109**

**Dr. Ben Mueller, D429**

**All grades, all educators**

## A Roadmap to Truly Inclusive Schools for LGBTQ+ Students

This workshop focuses on creating inclusive schools for LGBTQ+ students and families, starting with an overview of affirming LGBTQ+ terminology, key best practices (such as gender support plans), and LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum to foster inclusive learning environments.

**Room W114**

**Elexis Richardson and Bri Cada, Youth Outlook**

**All grades, all educators**

## Understanding EL Identification

Learn more about the Home Language Survey, Screening and SIS data entry for English Learners.

**Room W209**

**Lauren Ligammari, Illinois State Board of Education**

**All grades, Administrators, ESL/ELL**

## Minimizing Misbehavior, Maximizing Learning: Tier 1 Behavior Fixes for Common Classroom Struggles

This session helps educators reduce common classroom behavior challenges using practical Tier 1 behavior supports. Participants will learn to avoid the misbehavior trap, define and teach clear expectations, prevent problem behavior, provide behavior-specific praise and corrections, and use cooperative behavior games to improve engagement and learning.

**Room E108**

**Amanda Borosh, Northern Illinois University**

**All grades, all educators**

## AI In Education

This presentation focuses on how teachers can use AI. Topics include generative AI, chatbots, and prompting basics. The audience will explore AI platforms and create outputs, like rubrics, assignments, lesson plans, differentiated assignments, and more. I will also discuss the ethical and environmental concerns regarding AI and provide useful resources.

**Room E210**

**Maureen Drews, D424**

**Grades 4-12, teachers**

## Engineering the Future

Engineering continues to be a high-demand, high-growth career. Join NIU's Director of STEAM and Associate Dean of the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology to explore a variety of engineering fields and experience the engineering mindset. We'll also discuss ways to help your students engineer their future.

**Room W210**

**Kristin Brynteson and Reinaldo Moraga, Northern Illinois University**

**Grades 6-12, Administrators, teachers, School Counselors, Instructional Coaches and Reading/Math Specialists**

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# 8:00-8:40 a.m.
# SINGLE SESSIONS (40 minutes each)

### Constructive Chaos - Using Personal Inspiration to Create Unique Learning Experiences

From Science to ELA and everywhere in between, inspiration for inquiry-based lesson design is lurking. This session will walk educators through interactive, standards-driven planning that brings learning to life. Join us as we design fun, engaging lessons that keep students on their toes and keep pace with districts' standards.

**Room E104**
**Jessica Winn, Northern Illinois University**
**All grade levels, all educators**

### McKinney Vento 101

This workshop supports school administrators, teachers, and frontline staff in understanding how to meet McKinney-Vento requirements while keeping students and families at the center of decision-making. Participants will learn to identify eligibility, ensure immediate enrollment, reduce barriers to attendance, and follow required procedures consistently and with care. The session emphasizes shared responsibility across school roles, practical compliance guidance, and helps staff confidently support families while meeting state expectations.

**Room E115**
**Monique Shaw, DeKalb ROE**
**All grade levels, all educators**

### Canva for Beginners

Beginner Canva for Teachers is a hands-on workshop designed to help educators create engaging classroom materials with ease. Learn the basics of Canva, including templates, graphics, presentations, worksheets, and time-saving design tips to elevate your lessons — no prior design experience needed.

**Room N121**
**Tricia Schumacher, D428**
**All grade levels, all educators**

### Motivating the Unmotivated Student

This presentation will include reflections on how to change mindsets in unmotivated students based on years of work with students in alternative education and students at risk of dropping out.

**Room W109**
**Jen Gilley, D428**
**Grades 6-12, all educators**

### Scaffolding Instruction to Enhance Independent Learning

This presentation is based on the book "How Scaffolding Works: A Playbook for Supporting and Releasing Responsibility to Students" by Frey, Fisher, and Almarode. It will focus on intentionally putting scaffolds in place, as well as planning for their removal.

**Room W107/113**
**Tracy Beling, D428**
**Grades K-8, Administrators, teachers, Instructional Coaches**

### What do you see when you see me? Beyond the EL Label

While English Learner (EL) is a necessary administrative category that helps with funding and resources, it often acts as a "mask" that hides a student's true potential, assets, and complexity. This presentation invites our educators to "humanize data" and to reflect on whether they see a "problem to be fixed" or a "scholar with a unique perspective."

**Room W111**
**Araceli Lopez and Jose Valenzuela, D428**
**Grades 6-12, Administrators, teachers, ESL/ELL**

### Leading Through the Social Media & Youth Mental Health Crisis

Social media is shaping student attention, behavior, and mental health before the school day begins. Common responses like phone bans miss the root cause. This session explores how these systems influence students and offers prevention-focused strategies that build student agency and healthier technology habits.

**Room W110**
**Jane Kim, Reavis**
**All grade levels, all educators**

# 8:00-8:40 a.m.
# SINGLE SESSIONS (40 minutes each)

## The Mind-Body Connection: Yoga for Educator Wellness and Student Success

Recharge with 30 minutes of restorative yoga for educators, then discover how to bring mindfulness into your classroom. We'll share success stories from Sycamore High School's Mind-Body Fitness course and provide a toolkit of "brain breaks" and regulation tools to improve student focus and transform school culture.

**Dance Studio**
**Kristin Hill and Melissa Roseberg, D427**
**Grades 6-12, all educators**

## Hack the Herd: Launch Student-Led Innovation Challenges in Your Classroom

Student innovation shapes tomorrow's leaders. Learn to facilitate student-led challenges tackling real-world problems like antibiotic resistance in food systems — building critical skills students need post-high school. This hands-on session equips you with resources, templates, and strategies to meet Illinois PWR Act college/career pathway endorsement requirements through authentic, team-based problem-solving.

**Room E219**
**Chrissy Swartz and Becky Swiontek, Northern Illinois University**
**Grades 6-12, teachers**

## Don't @ With Me (Unless We're Connected): Modern Relationship and Engagement Strategies for the Secondary Classroom

This presentation will discuss how building positive student/teacher relationships will naturally lead to more student engagement in the classroom. Participants will be equipped with ready-to-use tools that will prompt positive relationships as well as be informed with the science based evidence behind how positive relationship building between students and teachers leads to success for all and more engagement on the student end.

**Room E218**
**Ashley Hernandez and Kirstie Ruckoldt, D428**
**Grades 6-12, Administrators, teachers, Fine Arts, Special Education, ESL/ELL**

## Creating Published Authors using Student Treasures

This presentation will go in depth about how your students can become their own published authors! We will explain our process in giving student choice and the process it took to become published authors using the website Studentreasures.com. It gets students excited about writing knowing they will become published authors!

**Room E206**
**Amanda Medine and Danelle Cassidy, D428**
**Grades K-8, teachers, Special Education, ESL/ELL**

## Bridges, Not Barriers for Multilingual Learners

Focusing on how to differentiate and support ML's at the secondary level. This will include can-do descriptors, information on push-in model with co-teaching, and strategies that empower 6th-12th grades.

**Room W215**
**Megan Kim, D428**
**Grades 6-12, Administrators, teachers, ESL/ELL, Instructional Coaches, Reading/Math**

## What If...? Scenarios that teach about the consequences of decisions

Participants will use documents and scenarios to learn about decision making in US and World History and how those decisions contain consequences - both positive and/or negative

**Room E107/113**
**Todd Johnson, D426**
**Grades 6-8, High School, teachers, Social Studies**

## Fitness Testing (helping with buy-in)

Introducing a 12-step fitness scale for fitness testing. No longer will scores just be under/in/above the Healthy Fitness Zone as the scale lends added levels for challenging students, seeing individual improvement and goal setting.

**Room W103**
**David Lichamer, D427**
**Grades 4-12, P.E. teachers**

# 8:50-9:30 a.m.
# SINGLE SESSIONS (40 minutes each)

### Teach Happy - Small Steps to Big Joy
Based on the teachings in book “Teach Happy” by Kim Strobel, this session will encourage educators to be reflective about their work, examine their emotional well-being, and develop ways to show up for themselves and their students to bring more success and happiness to both students’ and staff members’ daily lives.
**Room W115**
**Jen Dahlke-Ney, D428**
**All grade levels, all educators**

### The Anxious Generation - The Effects of Phone-Based Childhoods on Students
We will discuss Jonathan Haidt's book, “The Anxious Generation,” and how the "great rewiring" of childhood has impacted the neurological development of students. We will also explain steps adults can take to combat these problems.
**Room W107/113**
**Tracy Beling and Ben Erickson, D428**
**Grades K-8, all educators**

### Project SEARCH: Transitioning from School to Work
Project SEARCH is a School to Work Transition Program that helps young adults with disabilities bridge the unemployment gap in the workforce. This program explains what Project SEARCH is, how it works, who it helps, and the requirements for admission.
**Room W111**
**Tracy Severino and Lisa Lynch, RAMP**
**Grades 6-12, administrators, teachers, Special Education, School Counselors, Social Workers**

### How to Integrate SEL Into Classroom Lessons
Whether you want to learn the SEL content you're already including in your lessons or you want a framework to collaborate with your building School Counselor, this presentation aims to equip participants with the methods and strategies to highlight and emphasize Illinois SEL Learning standards in the classroom.
**Room W108**
**Douglas Porter, D428**
**Grades 6-8, teachers, Student Services**

### DeKalb County Transition Planning Committee Reboot!
Join us to learn about the relaunch of the DeKalb County TPC and how to be a part of our mission. We’ll discuss who we are, our meeting schedule, and our active work to centralize and deliver vital transition resources directly to families and students across the county.
**Room W109**
**Marion Knieling, D428, and Autumn Gabriel, RAMP**
**Grades 6-12, all educators**

### SEL and why we do it
This presentation takes a deeper dive into why Illinois schools do SEL and breaks down the core competencies and shows the data from a school and how MTSS works. I also discuss the Illinois law behind SEL.
**Room E203**
**Rhaldo Schimper, D428**
**All grade levels, all educators**

### Resource Roadmap: Navigating Illinois State Library Literacy Treasures
Empower your classroom with free digital assets! This session explores the Illinois State Library’s databases, which provide access to a large collection of journals, magazines, e-books, and more. Learn about Illinois Center for the Book initiatives and state literacy programs designed to support learning and foster a lifelong love of reading.
**Room E206**
**Kristin Gartke, D425**
**Grades 6-12, teachers, Instructional Coaches, Math and Reading Specialists**

### Leading Responsible AI in Schools with Clarity and Confidence
AI is rapidly entering schools, placing pressure on schools. This session helps leaders understand impacts, examine equity gaps, and develop clear, system-level approaches that support student well-being and responsible use.
**Room W110**
**Jane Kim, Reavis**
**All grade levels, all educators**

# 8:50-9:30 a.m.
# SINGLE SESSIONS (40 minutes each)

### Language Lives Everywhere: Student Empowerment Through Schoolwide Dual Language Practices

This presentation highlights how a dual language school expanded Spanish beyond academics to build belonging and empowerment. By integrating Spanish into shared spaces and daily interactions, we fostered inclusive, low-risk engagement for students and staff, affirmed Latino identity, and strengthened schoolwide community through intentional, practical language practices.

**Room E218**

**Veronica Garcia-Martinez and Zack Price, D428**

**All grades, all educators**

### Grants, Scholarships & Philanthropy

Discover local grant opportunities for your programs; scholarships for your students; and philanthropy trends among young people.

**Room E214**

**Kyle White and Sara Nickels, DeKalb County Community Foundation**

**All grade levels, all educators**

### COMPETE: Simple Sports Psychology Techniques to Help Your Athletes Perform

For COACHES & PARENTS looking for some simple, usable techniques to help their athletes perform when it matters most.

**Room W103**

**Jonathan Liechty, D432**

**Grades 6-12, teachers, coaches**

### AI translation tools for your ELL students: Work Smarter Not Harder

I will present on easy ways to translate documents, web pages at the click of a button for teachers to easily create translated versions of their work so they can create accessibility for their English language learners. Participants are asked to bring their laptops to this session.

**Room W203**

**Kelli Meserole, D428**

**All grades, all educators**

### Level Up: CTE with Modern Tools

Transform your classroom into a dynamic learning environment using EC2, Gimkit, and MarketWatch. This session demonstrates how to leverage gamification and real-time data to boost student engagement. Learn practical strategies for using Formative to track progress while keeping students motivated through competition and real-world simulation.

**Room E219**

**Ryan Read, D428**

**All grades, teachers, fine arts, Instructional Coaches**

### Why are African American students fighting?

This presentation explores the national issue of disproportionate suspension rates among African American students resulting from incidents of physical violence. While these disparities are often examined through the lens of bias, the underlying question—why some African American students resort to physical conflict as a means of resolution—is rarely addressed. This session provides cultural and historical context to better understand why many African American students, other students of color, and economically disadvantaged Caucasian students may turn to physical violence in response to conflict. More importantly, it equips educators with practical strategies and interventions to better support students who are more likely to rely on physical means of conflict resolution.

**Room W214**

**Yoshakia Wilson, D430**

**All grades, Administrators, teachers, Special Education, ESL/ELL, School Counselors, Social Workers**

# 9:40-11:10 a.m.
# DOUBLE SESSIONS (90 minutes each)

## Keynote speaker: Phil Januszewski - Auditorium

High School Teachers

## Featured speaker: Dr. Eric Junco - Forum Room

### Breathing and Blinking: An Intersection of PTSD and TBI

This presentation examines PTSD and traumatic brain injury (mTBI) and the challenge of concussion complications. This session reviews the effect of trauma on cognitive development, symptomology of PTSD and mTBI, the effect on learning and behavior, and an exploration of newer treatment approaches for students dealing with TBI.

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**All grades, all educators**

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**All grades, all educators**

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**Gretchen Sprinkle, D428**

**All grades, all educators**

### Signs of Child Abuse and Handling Disclosures

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**Room E204**

**Beth Ganion and Jasmine Pease, Safe Passage**

**All grades, all educators**

### Active Learning: Strengthening Instruction and Engaging Students

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**Room E106**

**Susan Brewick, DeKalb ROE**

**All grades, all educators**

# 9:40-11:10 a.m.
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## The Power of Aerobic Exercise

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**Room E109**
**Dr. Ben Mueller, D429**
**All grades, all educators**

## From Compliance to Connection: Reframing Classroom Management

Discover how to replace traditional discipline models with restorative, relationship-based approaches.

**Room E211**
**DeAnna Lynn, Shining Light Consulting and Learning, LLC**
**Grades EC/Pre-K to 3, Administrators, teachers, Student Services**

## Understanding TPI and TBE Program Models

Learn more about how students are identified for EL services and the requirements for TBE and TPI programming.

**Room W215**
**Steve Silver and John Crosley-Corcoran, Illinois State Board of Education**
**All grades, Administrators, ESL/ELL**

## The Regulated Classroom: An Overview

The Regulated Classroom is a framework for understanding why dysregulation occurs, understanding how staff and student dysregulation impacts the classroom, and implementing strategies to regulate together, supporting positive student outcomes.

**Room E115**
**Samantha McDavid and Monique Shaw, DeKalb ROE**
**All grades, all educators**

## The R.I.G.O.R. Framework and Reading

Using Fisher and Frye's R.I.G.O.R. Framework, participants will reflect on their own teaching practices, identify areas to focus on, and learn things to consider when making changes in their own practice.

**Room E110**
**Betsy Zimmerman and Jill Springer, D428**
**All grades, teachers**

## Integrating Basic Math Fact Fluency in a Thinking Classroom

Fact fluency doesn't have to mean timed tests and silent, isolated drills. Discover how to leverage Peter Liljedahl's "Building Thinking Classrooms" framework to transform basic operations practice into a dynamic and collaborative process. You will explore how vertical non-permanent surfaces random grouping can help students construct number sense, notice numerical patterns, and achieve automaticity through shared reasoning rather than rote memorization.

**Room E111**
**Emily Weller and Jenn Hilliard, D428**
**Grades K-12, math teachers**

## Your Words Are Fire: Understanding Language, Identity, and Success

Educators will learn strategies to effectively use the language students bring into every classroom to increase student success. This presentation will remind educators that all teachers are language teachers.

**Room W106**
**Maurice McDavid, D428**
**All grades, all educators**

## Building Classroom Communities: Fostering a Culture of Belonging in the Classroom Through Restorative Practices -aka- Belonging for Behavior

Through implementation of these best practices, I have helped to reduce school discipline data by more than 50% in two different schools. We will explore the restorative fundamentals, behavioral supports, and classroom structures which foster a sense of belonging in the classroom with the goal of decreasing negative student behaviors and teacher burnout.

**Room W217**
**Barzeem Vaziri, D428**
**All grades, administrators, teachers, Fine Arts**

# 9:40-11:10 a.m.
# DOUBLE SESSIONS (90 minutes each)

### Transforming Classroom Culture: A Restorative Lens on Classroom Management

How to transform your classroom culture through your management style switching from a punitive approach to a restorative one.

**Room K131**

**Evadne Bowlin, Surray Williams, and DeeDee McNeil, D428**

**Grades EC/Pre-K to 5, all educators**

### Connecting the Dots: Transform Learning Insights into Action

Explore live insights that reveal what each learner needs, design personalized experiences that respond in real time, and leave with AI-enhanced experiences you can use in class tomorrow.

**Room E209**

**Tarah Tesmer and Caroline Tell, SchoolAI**

**Grades K-12, all educators**

### EBF: Technical Understanding & Strategic Application

The objective of the workshop is to provide a deeper understanding of the funding model and with that deeper understanding, expand the ability to engage in strategic planning and communication that encompasses all of the revenue sources necessary to provide for the education of our students. At a time when the importance of our advocacy is ever-increasing, the workshop is expected to better position leaders and their teams to more effectively engage in these conversations.

**Room E108**

**Gary Tipsord, IARSS**

**All grade levels, administrators**

## Need more PD credits or ideas for your classroom?

**The DeKalb County ROE Educational Consultants can work with you on:**

- ✓ Workshops
- ✓ 1:1 Coaching
- ✓ Push-in Lessons
- ✓ Book Studies
- ✓ Educational Research

**E-mail mojaghi@dekalbcounty.org or sbrewick@dekalbcounty.org**

# 9:40-10:20 a.m.
# SINGLE SESSIONS (40 minutes each)

### The Use of Effective Practice
Based on the teachings of Anita Archer, educators will learn about deliberate, spaced, cumulative, and retrieval practice procedures. Ways to systematically design, organize, and introduce independent practice activities and ways to provide effective feedback on student performance will also be discussed.
**Room W115**
**Jen Dahlke-Ney and Joan Bereman, D428**
**Grades K-8, teachers**

### Cross-Language Connections - Moving beyond Cognates and Embedding throughout Units of Instruction
Celebrate the brilliance of multilingual learners! Move beyond simple cognates to unlock students' full linguistic power. This workshop shares dynamic strategies for embedding intentional language connections throughout your units, transforming every student's existing knowledge into a bridge for deep literacy, confidence, and joyful metalinguistic discovery.
**Room E112**
**Michelle Huff and Sonia Enriquez, D428**
**K-5 teachers, administrators, ESL/ELL**

### Dual Language 101
This session is for teachers new to the Dual Language Program. This workshop provides a foundational deep dive into the Three Pillars of Dual Language. Participants will explore the components of the research-backed program model used in D428, experience a target-language simulation, and master "The Bridge" strategies to foster biliteracy and cultural competence without relying on translation.
**Room W111**
**A.J. Crook, D428**
**Grades K-8, teachers, ESL/ELL**

### How to Integrate SEL Into Classroom Lessons
Whether you want to learn the SEL content you're already including in your lessons or you want a framework to collaborate with your building School Counselor, this presentation aims to equip participants with the methods and strategies to highlight and emphasize Illinois SEL Learning standards in the classroom.
**Room W108**
**Douglas Porter, D428**
**Grades 6-8, teachers, Student Services**

### The Anxious Generation - The Effects of Phone-Based Childhoods on Students
We will discuss Jonathan Haidt's book, “The Anxious Generation,” and how the "great rewiring" of childhood has impacted the neurological development of students. We will also explain steps adults can take to combat these problems.
**Room W107/113**
**Tracy Beling and Ben Erickson, D428**
**Grades K-8, all educators**

### Leading Responsible AI in Schools with Clarity and Confidence
AI is rapidly entering schools, placing pressure on schools. This session helps leaders understand impacts, examine equity gaps, and develop clear, system-level approaches that support student well-being and responsible use.
**Room W110**
**Jane Kim, Reavis**
**All grade levels, all educators**

### Creating Published Authors using Student Treasures
This presentation will go in depth about how your students can become their own published authors! We will explain our process in giving student choice and the process it took to become published authors using the website Studentreasures.com. It gets students excited about writing knowing they will become published authors!
**Room E206**
**Amanda Medine and Danelle Cassidy, D428**
**Grades K-8, teachers, Special Education, ESL/ELL**

### Language Lives Everywhere: Student Empowerment Through Schoolwide Dual Language Practices
This presentation highlights how a dual language school expanded Spanish beyond academics to build belonging and empowerment. By integrating Spanish into shared spaces and daily interactions, we fostered inclusive, low-risk engagement for students and staff, affirmed Latino identity, and strengthened schoolwide community through intentional, practical language practices.
**Room E218**
**Veronica Garcia-Martinez and Zack Price, D428**
**All grades, all educators**

# 9:40-10:20 a.m.
# SINGLE SESSIONS (40 minutes each)

### Collaborative Approach to Developing a Clinical Serving Structure at the Elementary Level

The school social workers and school psychologist will share their process in developing a clinical serving structure at a new elementary school. This approach was developed to support the needs of the students both proactively and in crisis using various school data.

**Room W109**

**Katheryne Russell, Mia Alvarez, Kasidi McKeon-Scott, Payton Montgomery, Wendy Bulthuis-Susong, D428**

**Grades K-5, school counselors and social workers**

### Physed 101: Tips and Tricks for Success

Do you need some new ideas? Perhaps a couple of new strategies for success? From strategic seating to instant activities, here are some new ideas for you to try out! Teacher tested and kid approved!

**Room E208**

**Kelly Zerby, D428**

**All grades, Physical Education teachers**

### Culture by Design: Activating Emotionally Intelligent Schools

Culture doesn't happen by chance—it's built with intention. This session explores how principals, staff, students, and community members actively cultivate and sustain emotional intelligence, creating connected, responsive school environments where every role shapes a thriving, people-centered culture.

**Room E107/113**

**Kimber Larson, D425**

**All grade levels, administrators, all educators**

### Bushels of Books: Pairing Books & STEAM Activities

Engage your students with innovative, easy-to-implement activities that pair perfectly with new books about food, farming, gardening, and growing. Participants will reap a heaping harvest of lesson ideas and book recommendations during this interactive, hands-on, minds-on session.

**Room E212**

**Rhodora Collins, DeKalb County Farm Bureau**

**Grades EC-8, teachers, Special Education, Instructional Coaches, Reading Specialists**

### Classroom Engagement from Space Camp

I am a 5th grade teacher who attended Space Academy for Educators at the US Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama, this summer with resources/ideas to share from NASA, Space Camp, and other educators from around the world.

**Room E203**

**Stephanie Vas, D428**

**Grades 4-8, teachers**

### The Mind-Body Connection: Yoga for Educator Wellness and Student Success

Recharge with 30 minutes of restorative yoga for educators, then discover how to bring mindfulness into your classroom. We'll share success stories from Sycamore High School's Mind-Body Fitness course and provide a toolkit of "brain breaks" and regulation tools to improve student focus and transform school culture.

**Dance Studio**

**Kristin Hill and Melissa Roseberg, D427**

**Grades 6-12, all educators**

### Level Up: CTE with Modern Tools

Transform your classroom into a dynamic learning environment using EC2, Gimkit, and MarketWatch. This session demonstrates how to leverage gamification and real-time data to boost student engagement. Learn practical strategies for using Formative to track progress while keeping students motivated through competition and real-world simulation.

**Room E219**

**Ryan Read, D428**

**All grades, teachers, fine arts, Instructional Coaches**

**Don't forget to complete the ISBE and ROE surveys!**

# 10:30-11:10 a.m.
# SINGLE SESSIONS (40 minutes each)

### Seizure recognition and first aid training
Our epilepsy training provides education on different types of seizures, seizure recognition and first aid, seizure action plans, rescue medication administration, and how epilepsy and medication side effects can impact learning, behavior, and daily activities.

**Room E218**
**Erika Fleck and Adrianna Delhotal, Epilepsy Advocacy Network**
**All grade levels, all educators**

### The Heart of the Classroom: Bringing Domain 2 to Life
Explore the four components of Danielson Domain 2 through real classroom practices that consistently earn distinguished evaluations. Learn how intentional routines, relationships, student accountability, and positive classroom culture create an environment that fosters SEL, strong community, respectful behavior, and academic integrity while supporting meaningful student engagement and success.

**Room E212**
**Brittney Chambers and Dan Miller, D428**
**Grades EC/Pre-K to 5, all educators**

### Why are African American students fighting?
This presentation explores the national issue of disproportionate suspension rates among African American students resulting from incidents of physical violence. While these disparities are often examined through the lens of bias, the underlying question—why some African American students resort to physical conflict as a means of resolution—is rarely addressed. This session provides cultural and historical context to better understand why many African American students, other students of color, and economically disadvantaged Caucasian students may turn to physical violence in response to conflict. More importantly, it equips educators with practical strategies and interventions to better support students who are more likely to rely on physical means of conflict resolution.

**Room W214**
**Yoshakia Wilson, D430**
**All grades, Administrators, teachers, Special Education, ESL/ELL, School Counselors, Social Workers**

### Canva for Intermediate Users
Canva for Intermediate Users is a hands-on workshop designed to help educators create engaging classroom materials with ease. Learn more about Canva, including templates, graphics, presentations, worksheets, and time-saving design tips to elevate your lessons — no prior design experience needed.

**Room N121**
**Tricia Schumacher, D428**
**All grade levels, all educators**

### Connected Mindfulness
Learn how mindfulness can be used to make connections with yourself, your classroom, your students and your students with themselves. Mindfulness can help with relationship building and reduce stress within the classroom which can increase positive interactions.

**Room E107/113**
**Catherine Norris, D428**
**All grade levels, all educators**

### Engaging Learners: The Best Use of Kagan's Strategies
Participants will learn about Kagan's strategies and how to implement them in their classrooms.

**Room E214**
**Blythe Pogliano and Shelly Morgan, D430**
**All grade levels, teachers, fine arts, Special Education, ESL/ELL, Instructional Coaches, Reading/Math Specialists**

### Scaffolding Instruction to Enhance Independent Learning
This presentation is based on the book “How Scaffolding Works: A Playbook for Supporting and Releasing Responsibility to Students” by Frey, Fisher, and Almarode. It will focus on intentionally putting scaffolds in place, as well as planning for their removal.

**Room W107/113**
**Tracy Beling, D428**
**Grades K-8, Administrators, teachers, Instructional Coaches**

### NoteBook LM
Learn common ways to utilize Notebook LM throughout your day. *Participating districts must already have access to NoteBook LM.*

**Room E203**
**Sarah Shaefer and Lisa Becker, D428**
**All grade levels, all educators**

# 10:30-11:10 a.m.
# SINGLE SESSIONS (40 minutes each)

### Music to Build Confidence, Inspire and Promote Self-esteem
A presentation of songs, lyrics and singalong music from many genres intended to create a positive classroom atmosphere and build self-esteem as students prepare for the school day.
**Room F107 Black Box Theater**
**Chad Anderson, D430**
**Grades EC to 5, administrators, teachers, fine arts, special education, ESL/ELL, Student Services**

### Moving Minds and Bodies-PE Games for Elementary and Middle School
This session explores engaging physical education games that activate both minds and bodies. Participants will learn activities that build movement skills, teamwork, and cognitive growth for elementary and middle school students with audience participation.
**Gym**
**Bill Morris, Kelly Dimitri and Troy Felton, D432**
**Grades K-8, P.E. teachers**

### Stress Overload and What You Need to Know about It
Learn about the impact stress has on our health and life in and out of the workplace. I also give strategies the audience can use immediately to combat the ill effects of stress in their daily life.
**Room W115**
**Bryce Staker, Olympia Chiropractic and Physical Therapy**
**All grade levels, administrators, all educators**

### Kindergarten: A Balanced Beginning
James R. Wood kindergarten teachers explain how we establish homerooms after school has begun. By observing students during group rotations, we gather vital emotional, social, and academic insights. This allows staff to proactively identify needs and distribute strengths, ultimately creating balanced classrooms that ensure a successful start for every child.
**Room E219**
**Gina Scalf, Wendy Merkel, Kelsey Hansen, Ali Swanson, Christy Pruski and Katie Weeks, D432**
**Grades EC/Pre-K to 3, Administrators, teachers**

### WHY Teach? Preserve Your Passion
Teaching is a true, rewarding job that fills the heart with a deep sense of purpose. Each day we get to share futures and spread joy. Hold fast to the WHY that drives you — let your passion shine, fuel your commitment, and celebrate the powerful difference you make in others!
**Room W108**
**Katie Claypool, D429**
**All grade levels, all educators**

### Teach, Thrive, Repeat: Building a More Sustainable You
Teach, thrive, repeat isn't just a mantra — it's a research-informed approach to sustaining a career in education. Grounded in studies on educator stress, resilience, and retention, this interactive session explores high-impact practices that support mental, emotional, and professional well-being. Participants will leave with evidence-based strategies they can realistically implement to maintain energy, effectiveness, and long-term engagement in their work.
**Room E104**
**Jessica Winn, Northern Illinois University**
**All grade levels, all educators**

### CPR/AED/Choking Training
This session is designed to give educators the up-to-date information from American Heart Association on the topics of all-age CPR, AED & Choking. A fee of $25 per participant will give the educator the 2-year eCard Certification.
**Room N103**
**Bill Reynolds, Sycamore Fire Department**
**All grades, all educators**

### Maximizing Learning with OTR
Making learning sticky is such an important part to student learning. We will implement high-leverage strategies to increase Opportunities to Respond (OTR) in lessons across all content areas. Our goal is to limit the prep load for teachers, so we encourage strategies that are quick and easy to implement. The big whys for OTR - proactive student management, instant data collection and language development. It's a win for everyone!
**Room E112**
**Denise Fleming and Michelle Huff, D428**
**Grades K-8, Administrators, teachers, Instructional Coaches, Reading/Math specialists**

# 11:20 a.m.-12:50 p.m.
# DOUBLE SESSIONS (90 minutes each)

## Keynote speaker: Phil Januszewski - Auditorium

## Middle School Teachers and Related Services

## Featured speaker: Dr. Eric Junco - Forum Room

### Connecting the Dots: Transform Learning Insights into Action

Explore live insights that reveal what each learner needs, design personalized experiences that respond in real time, and leave with AI-enhanced experiences you can use in class tomorrow.

**Room E209**

**Tarah Tesmer and Caroline Tell, SchoolAI**

**Grades K-12, all educators**

### Providing Positive Childhood Experiences through The Basics

This presentation will review adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and positive childhood experiences (PCEs), what The Basics are, and how The Basics support families and staff to provide PCEs.

**Room E115**

**Samantha McDavid and Paul Benson, DeKalb ROE**

**Grades EC/Pre-K to 3, Administrators, teachers, Student Services**

### A Roadmap to Truly Inclusive Schools for LGBTQ+ Students

This workshop focuses on creating inclusive schools for LGBTQ+ students and families, starting with an overview of affirming LGBTQ+ terminology, key best practices (such as gender support plans), and LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum to foster inclusive learning environments.

**Room W114**

**Elexis Richardson and Bri Cada, Youth Outlook**

**All grades, all educators**

### Understanding EL Identification

Learn more about the Home Language Survey, Screening and SIS data entry for English Learners.

**Room W209**

**Lauren Ligammari, Illinois State Board of Education**

**All grades, Administrators, ESL/ELL**

### Building Classroom Communities: Fostering a Culture of Belonging in the Classroom Through Restorative Practices -aka- Belonging for Behavior

Through implementation of these best practices, I have helped to reduce school discipline data by more than 50% in two different schools. We will explore the restorative fundamentals, behavioral supports, and classroom structures which foster a sense of belonging in the classroom with the goal of decreasing negative student behaviors and teacher burnout.

**Room W217**

**Barzeem Vaziri, D428**

**All grades, administrators, teachers, Fine Arts**

### Understanding TPI and TBE Program Models

Learn more about how students are identified for EL services and the requirements for TBE and TPI programming.

**Room W215**

**Steve Silver and John Crosley-Corcoran, Illinois State Board of Education**

**All grades, Administrators, ESL/ELL**

### Transforming Classroom Culture: A Restorative Lens on Classroom Management

How to transform your classroom culture through your management style switching from a punitive approach to a restorative one.

**Room K131**

**Evadne Bowlin, Surray Williams, and DeeDee McNeil, D428**

**Grades EC/Pre-K to 5, all educators**

# 11:20 a.m.-12:50 p.m.
# DOUBLE SESSIONS (90 minutes each)

### The 3 Circle Model: Simple Ways to Incorporate FFA and SAE into Classroom Instruction for Affiliated Membership

This presentation will assist ag teachers wishing to incorporate FFA and SAE into classroom instruction. Participants will have time to share ideas, learn from other agriculture teachers, explore new technologies and create a plan to implement the 3 Circle Model in their program.

**Room N113**
**Sarah Petersen, D428**
**Grades 6-12, Ag teachers**

### Creating Connection: Building Hope-Filled, Resiliency-Oriented Adoption & Foster Friendly Schools™

When a child with a complex family story walks into your school, what without words signals belonging? Students impacted by adoption, foster care, and kinship care are in every building — often in every classroom — yet common routines can unintentionally exclude those navigating grief, identity shifts, and instability. Schools can be powerful partners in healing. This session equips K-12 educators with practical, MTSS-aligned strategies to build hope-filled, resiliency-oriented, adoption- and foster-informed environments. Participants will explore how relational trauma shapes behavior and learning, redesign everyday practices, strengthen tiered support, and enhance caregiver collaboration to create emotionally safe, belonging-centered schools. Also relevant for students navigating divorce, newcomer transitions, and military-connected family changes, this session leaves participants equipped with actionable tools for sustainable impact.

**Room W112**
**Laura Adams and Claudia Berman, iCARE4 Adoptive & Foster Families**
**All grades, all educators**

### AI In Education

This presentation focuses on how teachers can use AI. Topics include generative AI, chatbots, and prompting basics. The audience will explore AI platforms and create outputs, like rubrics, assignments, lesson plans, differentiated assignments, and more. I will also discuss the ethical and environmental concerns regarding AI and provide useful resources.

**Room E210**
**Maureen Drews, D424**
**Grades 4-12, teachers**

### Your Words Are Fire: Understanding Language, Identity, and Success

Educators will learn strategies to effectively use the language students bring into every classroom to increase student success. This presentation will remind educators that all teachers are language teachers.

**Room W106**
**Maurice McDavid, D428**
**All grades, all educators**

### Mapping Polarities for Classroom Management and Team Development

Polarity Mapping is an evidence-based frame work for managing complex organizational dynamics. Participants will examine core components of polarity maps, analyze common team-based tensions, and explore indicators of imbalance to develop practical strategies to enhance team efficacy and classroom management.

**Room E208**
**Shannon Kaecker, Adventure Works of DeKalb County**
**Grades 6-12, Administrators, teachers, Special Education, School Counselors, Social Workers**

### Minimizing Misbehavior, Maximizing Learning: Tier 1 Behavior Fixes for Common Classroom Struggles

This session helps educators reduce common classroom behavior challenges using practical Tier 1 behavior supports. Participants will learn to avoid the misbehavior trap, define and teach clear expectations, prevent problem behavior, provide behavior-specific praise and corrections, and use cooperative behavior games to improve engagement and learning.

**Room E108**
**Amanda Borosh, Northern Illinois University**
**All grades, all educators**

### From Compliance to Connection: Reframing Classroom Management

Discover how to replace traditional discipline models with restorative, relationship-based approaches.

**Room E211**
**DeAnna Lynn, Shining Light Consulting and Learning, LLC**
**Grades EC/Pre-K to 3, Administrators, teachers, Student Services**

# 11:20 a.m.-12:50 p.m.
# DOUBLE SESSIONS (90 minutes each)

### Engineering the Future
Engineering continues to be a high-demand, high-growth career. Join NIU's Director of STEAM and Associate Dean of the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology to explore a variety of engineering fields and experience the engineering mindset. We'll also discuss ways to help your students engineer their future.

**Room W210**

**Kristin Brynteson and Reinaldo Moraga, Northern Illinois University**

**Grades 6-12, Administrators, teachers, School Counselors, Instructional Coaches and Reading/Math Specialists**

### Classroom Commanders - How to Maximize Learning Time Through Structure and Engagement
K-5 Educators, instructional time is a precious commodity. Lost instructional time due to student interruptions, classroom chaos, and lack of motivation significantly impact students' access to the curriculum. This session will help you get your class back on track.

**Room W206**

**Jane Weiss and Dominique Yackley, D428**

**Grades K-5, teachers**

### Stonework Play
Participants will learn about the power of working with stones and their ability to help center individuals through a deeper connection with nature and themselves. Participants will engage in a hands-on experience while learning and following the five steps of Stonework Play.

**Room N122**

**Amanda Donovan, D426**

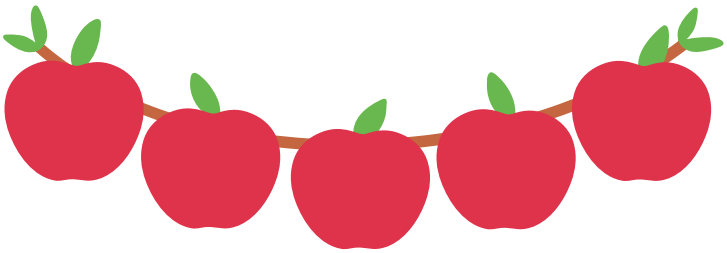
**Grades EC/Pre-K to 5, Teachers, School Counselors, Social Workers**

### Park It with Dr. Parker: Conversations as Catalysts — Centering Literacy for Community Wellness
"Park it" and engage in a live, podcast-style experience where educators unpack literacy as a pathway to student wellness. Through candid conversations with practitioners, this session highlights culturally responsive approaches that elevate identity, amplify voice, and connect literacy to belonging, engagement, and academic success.

**Room E110**

**Amonaquenette Parker, Cherish Olayiwola; Lacey Collingbourne; Kwtay Calvin, D428**

**All grades, all educators**



Thank you for attending our County-Wide Institute! The committee and ROE staff worked hard to plan a great learning opportunity for everyone. Please give your feedback on the ROE evaluation form.

# 11:20 a.m.-Noon
# SINGLE SESSIONS (40 minutes each)

## High School MTSS
This presentation shares how our small high school, with limited resources, developed and implemented a successful MTSS framework. It highlights key structures, data-driven decision making, challenges faced, and lessons learned, offering practical strategies to strengthen student supports and improve outcomes.
**Room W212**
**Ryann Garcia and Shane Darnell, D430**
**Grades 9-12, administrators, teachers, Student Services, Instructional Coaches**

## Holistic Bilingual Assessments
Embrace the full power of your students' diverse linguistic repertoires! In this interactive workshop, you'll discover how to design holistic bilingual assessments that honor every language a child speaks. Shift from deficit-based testing to asset-based practices that capture true proficiency, foster confidence, and celebrate the bilingual learner's complete growth.
**Room E112**
**Michelle Huff and Melissa Baggett, D428**
**K-5 teachers, administrators, ESL/ELL**

## The Biliteracy 'Sizing Chart': A Hands-on Approach to Diagnostic Data and Targeted Support
This workshop teaches educators to use "Biliteracy Sizing Charts" to accurately analyze student data across English and Spanish. Participants learn to distinguish between reading deficiencies and language development needs, ensuring bilingual students are compared to "like" peers rather than monolingual norms.
**Room W111**
**A.J. Crook, D428**
**Grades K-8, teachers, administrators, ESL/ELL**

## Music to Build Confidence, Inspire and Promote Self-esteem
A presentation of songs, lyrics and singalong music from many genres intended to create a positive classroom atmosphere and build self-esteem as students prepare for the school day.
**Room F107 Black Box Theater**
**Chad Anderson, D430**
**Grades EC to 5, administrators, teachers, fine arts, special education, ESL/ELL, Student Services**

## Teach Happy - Small Steps to Big Joy
Based on the teachings in book "Teach Happy" by Kim Strobel, this session will encourage educators to be reflective about their work, examine their emotional well-being, and develop ways to show up for themselves and their students to bring more success and happiness to both students' and staff members' daily lives.
**Room W115**
**Jen Dahlke-Ney, D428**
**All grade levels, all educators**

## Constructive Chaos - Using Personal Inspiration to Create Unique Learning Experiences
From Science to ELA and everywhere in between, inspiration for inquiry-based lesson design is lurking. This session will walk educators through interactive, standards-driven planning that brings learning to life. Join us as we design fun, engaging lessons that keep students on their toes and keep pace with districts' standards.
**Room E104**
**Jessica Winn, Northern Illinois University**
**All grade levels, all educators**

## The Heart of the Classroom: Bringing Domain 2 to Life
Explore the four components of Danielson Domain 2 through real classroom practices that consistently earn distinguished evaluations. Learn how intentional routines, relationships, student accountability, and positive classroom culture create an environment that fosters SEL, strong community, respectful behavior, and academic integrity while supporting meaningful student engagement and success.
**Room E212**
**Brittney Chambers and Dan Miller, D428**
**Grades EC/Pre-K to 5, all educators**

## Grants, Scholarships & Philanthropy
Discover local grant opportunities for your programs; scholarships for your students; and philanthropy trends among young people.
**Room E214**
**Kyle White and Sara Nickels, DeKalb County Community Foundation**
**All grade levels, all educators**

# 11:20 a.m.-Noon
# SINGLE SESSIONS (40 minutes each)

## Canva for Advanced Users

Canva for Advanced Users is a hands-on workshop designed to help educators create engaging classroom materials with ease. Learn advanced techniques in Canva, including templates, graphics, presentations, worksheets, and time-saving design tips to elevate your lessons — no prior design experience needed.

**Room N121**
**Tricia Schumacher, D428**
**All grade levels, all educators**

## Resource Roadmap: Navigating Illinois State Library Literacy Treasures

Empower your classroom with free digital assets! This session explores the Illinois State Library's databases, which provide access to a large collection of journals, magazines, e-books, and more. Learn about Illinois Center for the Book initiatives and state literacy programs designed to support learning and foster a lifelong love of reading.

**Room E206**
**Kristin Gartke, D425**
**Grades 6-12, teachers, Instructional Coaches, Math and Reading Specialists**

## Culture by Design: Activating Emotionally Intelligent Schools

Culture doesn't happen by chance—it's built with intention. This session explores how principals, staff, students, and community members actively cultivate and sustain emotional intelligence, creating connected, responsive school environments where every role shapes a thriving, people-centered culture.

**Room E107/113**
**Kimber Larson, D425**
**All grade levels, administrators, all educators**

## Improve Students' Behavior and Academics with Daily SEL

SEL shouldn't feel like "one more thing" on your plate. Join this engaging, resource-filled session to start transforming your school day without changing your schedule. Learn how implementing SEL daily will improve students' academics and behavior while rejuvenating educators' well-being. Educators of all content areas will leave with implementation-ready strategies.

**Room W109**
**Christine Schweitzer, Regional Office of Education #4**
**All grades, all educators**

## CPR/AED/Choking Training

This session is designed to give educators the up-to-date information from American Heart Association on the topics of all-age CPR, AED & Choking. A fee of $25 per participant will give the educator the 2-year eCard Certification.

**Room N103**
**Bill Reynolds, Sycamore Fire Department**
**All grades, all educators**

## Don't @ With Me (Unless We're Connected): Modern Relationship and Engagement Strategies for the Secondary Classroom

This presentation will discuss how building positive student/teacher relationships will naturally lead to more student engagement in the classroom. Participants will be equipped with ready-to-use tools that will prompt positive relationships as well as be informed with the science based evidence behind how positive relationship building between students and teachers leads to success for all and more engagement on the student end.

**Room E218**
**Ashley Hernandez and Kirstie Ruckoldt, D428**
**Grades 6-12, Administrators, teachers, Fine Arts, Special Education, ESL/ELL**

## Conquering Math Anxiety

Developmental math classes are the most commonly failed classes in school. Even great math students can struggle with math anxiety. Many believe that math anxiety is only in students that do not do well in math or are weak in math, but this is not true. Math anxiety can cause students to underperform and even fail at learning math. The teacher can play an important role in using methods to help students' anxiety toward mathematics and learn math to their full potential. Dr. Ben Mueller will engage the audience in ways to reduce math anxiety in students and get students to peak in their learning of math.

**Room E109**
**Dr. Ben Mueller, D429**
**Grades 4-12, Administrators, teachers, Special Education, Instructional Coaches**

## SEL and why we do it

This presentation takes a deeper dive into why Illinois schools do SEL and breaks down the core competencies and shows the data from a school and how MTSS works. I also discuss the Illinois law behind SEL.

**Room E203**
**Rhaldo Schimper, D428**
**All grade levels, all educators**

# 12:10-12:50 p.m.
# SINGLE SESSIONS (40 minutes each)

## WHY Teach? Preserve Your Passion

Teaching is a true, rewarding job that fills the heart with a deep sense of purpose. Each day we get to share futures and spread joy. Hold fast to the WHY that drives you — let your passion shine, fuel your commitment, and celebrate the powerful difference you make in others!

**Room W108**
**Katie Claypool, D429**
**All grade levels, all educators**

## Bushels of Books: Pairing Books & STEAM Activities

Engage your students with innovative, easy-to-implement activities that pair perfectly with new books about food, farming, gardening, and growing. Participants will reap a heaping harvest of lesson ideas and book recommendations during this interactive, hands-on, minds-on session.

**Room E212**
**Rhodora Collins, DeKalb County Farm Bureau**
**Grades EC-8, teachers, Special Education, Instructional Coaches, Reading Specialists**

## Seizure recognition and first aid training

Our epilepsy training provides education on different types of seizures, seizure recognition and first aid, seizure action plans, rescue medication administration, and how epilepsy and medication side effects can impact learning, behavior, and daily activities.

**Room E218**
**Erika Fleck and Adrianna Delhotal, Epilepsy Advocacy Network**
**All grade levels, all educators**

## Leading Through the Social Media & Youth Mental Health Crisis

Social media is shaping student attention, behavior, and mental health before the school day begins. Common responses like phone bans miss the root cause. This session explores how these systems influence students and offers prevention-focused strategies that build student agency and healthier technology habits.

**Room W110**
**Jane Kim, Reavis**
**All grade levels, all educators**

## Engaging Learners: The Best Use of Kagan's Strategies

Participants will learn about Kagan's strategies and how to implement them in their classrooms.

**Room E214**
**Blythe Pogliano and Shelly Morgan, D430**
**All grade levels, teachers, fine arts, Special Education, ESL/ELL, Instructional Coaches, Reading/Math Specialists**

## COMPETE: Simple Sports Psychology Techniques to Help Your Athletes Perform

For COACHES & PARENTS looking for some simple, usable techniques to help their athletes perform when it matters most.

**Room W103**
**Jonathan Liechty, D432**
**Grades 6-12, teachers, coaches**

## What do you see when you see me? Beyond the EL Label

While English Learner (EL) is a necessary administrative category that helps with funding and resources, it often acts as a "mask" that hides a student's true potential, assets, and complexity. This presentation invites our educators to “humanize data” and to reflect on whether they see a "problem to be fixed" or a "scholar with a unique perspective."

**Room W111**
**Araceli Lopez and Jose Valenzuela, D428**
**Grades 6-12, Administrators, teachers, ESL/ELL**

## Say It Right: Why Accurate Letter Sounds Matter - the Science of Reading Behind Proper Letter Pronunciation

This workshop explores why accurate letter sound pronunciation is critical to early reading development through the lens of the Science of Reading. Educators will learn the brain-based rationale behind precise articulation, identify common errors, and practice simple, high-impact strategies they can immediately apply in phonemic awareness and phonics instruction.

**Room E106**
**Susan Brewick, DeKalb ROE**
**Grades EC to 3, teachers, ESL/ELL, Instructional Coaches, Reading Specialists**

# 12:10-12:50 p.m.
# SINGLE SESSIONS (40 minutes each)

## Conquering Math Anxiety

Developmental math classes are the most commonly failed classes in school. Even great math students can struggle with math anxiety. Many believe that math anxiety is only in students that do not do well in math or are weak in math, but this is not true. Math anxiety can cause students to underperform and even fail at learning math. The teacher can play an important role in using methods to help students' anxiety toward mathematics and learn math to their full potential. Dr. Ben Mueller will engage the audience in ways to reduce math anxiety in students and get students to peak in their learning of math.

**Room E109**
**Dr. Ben Mueller, D429**
**Grades 4-12, Administrators, teachers, Special Education, Instructional Coaches**

## Teach, Thrive, Repeat: Building a More Sustainable You

Teach, thrive, repeat isn't just a mantra — it's a research-informed approach to sustaining a career in education. Grounded in studies on educator stress, resilience, and retention, this interactive session explores high-impact practices that support mental, emotional, and professional well-being. Participants will leave with evidence-based strategies they can realistically implement to maintain energy, effectiveness, and long-term engagement in their work.

**Room E104**
**Jessica Winn, Northern Illinois University**
**All grade levels, all educators**

## Motivating the Unmotivated Student

This presentation will include reflections on how to change mindsets in unmotivated students based on years of work with students in alternative education and students at risk of dropping out.

**Room W109**
**Jen Gilley, D428**
**Grades 6-12, all educators**

## NoteBook LM

Learn common ways to utilize Notebook LM throughout your day. *Participating districts must already have access to NoteBook LM.*

**Room E203**
**Sarah Shaefer and Lisa Becker, D428**
**All grade levels, all educators**

## Understanding Truancy and Attendance Responsibilities

This session reviews truancy requirements, school roles, and attendance expectations, as well as updates to current truancy programming. Participants will learn about procedures, referral processes, and available supports, with a focus on meeting compliance while addressing barriers to attendance and keeping students connected to school.

**Room W107/113**
**Monique Shaw and Vanity Mack, DeKalb ROE**
**All grade levels, all educators**

## Building Thinking Classrooms

Transform your elementary math environment into a vibrant hub of active, collaborative thinking. Grounded in Peter Liljedahl's "Building Thinking Classrooms in Mathematics," this session introduces the core practices of Toolkit 1 – the essential foundation for breaking passive learning habits. Participants will experience the framework firsthand by diving into a rich, non-circular thinking task, stepping into the shoes of students to feel the shift in classroom energy. Together, we will unpack how early structural changes ignite engagement, foster mathematical discourse, and build collective efficacy across all K-5 learning spaces.

**Room E112**
**Denise Flemming, Michelle Huff, Kristen Gineman, Bobbi Stears, Hailey Brown and Janet Roschmann, D428**
**Grades K-5, Administrators, teachers, Instructional Coaches, Math Specialists**

## Tips & Tricks for PFA/E Compliance Monitoring Visits

This session provides practical strategies to prepare for PFA/E compliance monitoring visits, including organizing documentation and understanding key expectations. A workshop portion allows participants to audit current practices and identify next steps, along with a brief "workout" segment focused on actively practicing compliance scenarios and strengthening readiness.

**Room W115**
**Martha Venetucci-Nonni, Alicia Espino and Alison Mlot, D430**
**Grades EC/Pre-K, Administrators, teachers, Special Education**

# 12:10-12:50 p.m.
# SINGLE SESSIONS (40 minutes each)

**Connected Mindfulness**
Learn how mindfulness can be used to make connections with yourself, your classroom, your students and your students with themselves. Mindfulness can help with relationship building and reduce stress within the classroom which can increase positive interactions.
**Room E107/113**
**Catherine Norris, D428**
**All grade levels, all educators**

**CPR/AED/Choking Training**
This session is designed to give educators the up-to-date information from American Heart Association on the topics of all-age CPR, AED & Choking. A fee of $25 per participant will give the educator the 2-year eCard Certification.
**Room N103**
**Bill Reynolds, Sycamore Fire Department**
**All grades, all educators**

# PLCs in the Fieldhouse

## 8:00-8:40 a.m.

Grades 6-8 Bilingual and ESL
Grades 6-12 Social Studies and ELA
Grades 6-12 Art, Music
Grades 6-8 Special Education

## 8:50-9:30 a.m.

Grades 9-12 CTE, ELA, World Languages
Grades 6-12 Math, Science, STEM
Grades PK-12 Counselor, Social Worker, School Psychologist and Nurse

## 9:40-10:20 a.m.

Grades K-8 PE & Health
Library Staff
Grades K-5 Art, Music

## 10:30-11:10 a.m.

Grades PK-5 Special Education
Grades K-8 Reading Specialists
Speech-Language Pathologists

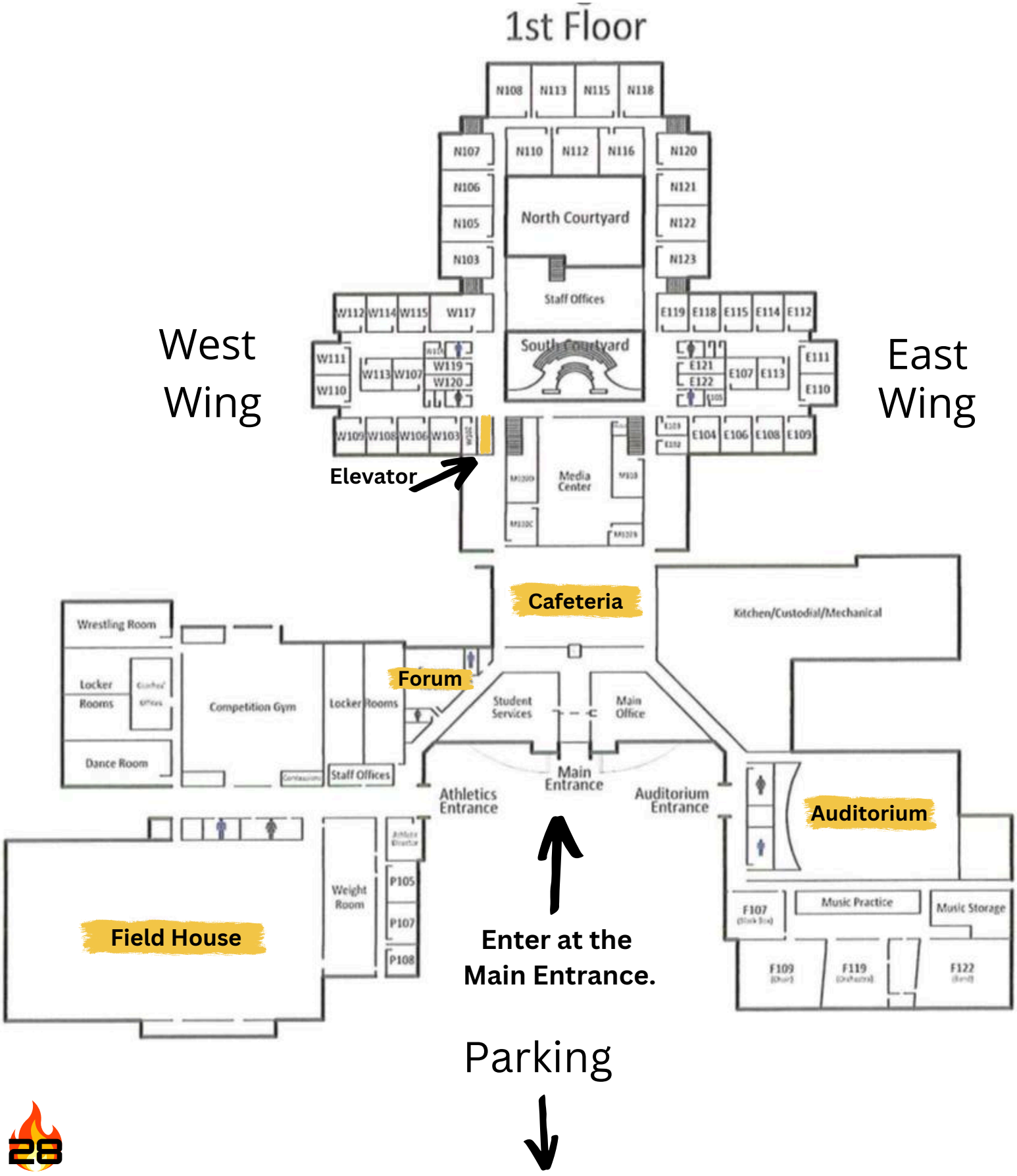
## 11:20 a.m.-Noon

PreK-2
Grades 9-12 Math, PE, Health, Driver's Ed
Grades PK-5 and Grades 9-12 Bilingual and ESL

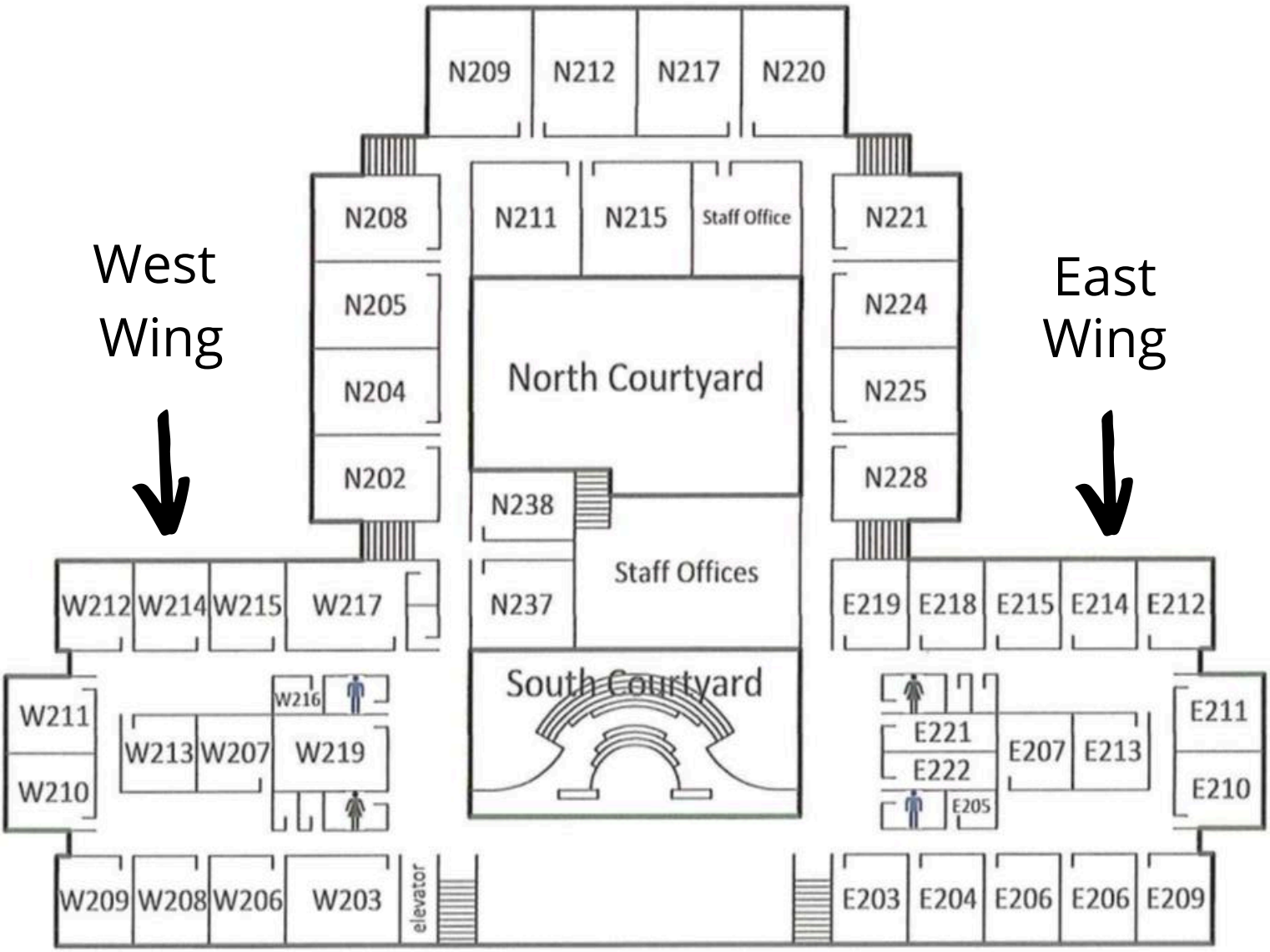
## 12:10-12:50 p.m.

Grades 9-12 Social Studies, FACS
Grades 3-5
Grades 9-12 Special Education

# DeKalb High School



# DeKalb High School 2nd Floor




## A big Thank You to:

**Amanda Christensen, DeKalb County Regional Superintendent**
**Carmen Siragusa, Assistant Superintendent**
**DeKalb County-Wide Institute Committee Members**
**DeKalb High School staff**
**DeKalb ROE staff**
**Presenters and volunteers**