

FALL CONFERENCE WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

WORKSHOP BLOCK 1 (9:30 - 10:45 a.m.)

Amplifying Student Voices for School and Classroom Improvement

Presenter: *Kari Nelsestuen, Co-Founder, Community Design Partners*

Location: *CERAS 308*

When adults design with students instead of for students to make change, powerful shifts in learning are possible. In this session, we'll explore a framework for enlisting students as partners in improving classrooms and schools. You'll learn a powerful activity that you can use at the start of the school year to engage students in collaborative design work. We'll also explore a library of resources to help you start and/or expand your "student-powered" approach to change.

Assessments With Students at the Center: High-Quality Performance Assessment

Presenter: *Roilyn Graves, Assessment Design Partner, Envision Learning Partners*

Location: *Student Services*

We know that one area where schools can improve students' experiences is engaging them in rigorous, authentic assessments that provide opportunities for students to lead their own learning experiences. Through performance assessments, students learn how to reflect, revise, and communicate in ways that strengthen learning outcomes. Participants will learn the characteristics of performance assessment and observe students engaged in a defense of learning.

Cultivating Belonging for Students with Learning Disabilities through a Buddy Program

Presenter: *Oscar Gonzalez, Director of Equity and Inclusivity, Graland Country Day School*

Location: *CERAS 300*

Our school partnered with Challenge Success to implement a buddy program connecting Middle and Lower School students with learning disabilities. The buddy program allows older students to help younger ones see obstacles as shared challenges, fostering confidence and reducing stigma by sharing experiences and resources. This dialogue promotes a supportive and inclusive environment, empowering students to navigate school with resilience and empathy, and building a sense of belonging that extends beyond the classroom.

De-Pathologizing Neuro-Diversity: A Solution-Oriented Way of Reframing Learning Differences

Presenter: *Erica Fur, Educational Consultant*

Location: *CERAS 527*

In this session, participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of neurodiversity and learning differences and will explore the crucial distinction between cognitive ability and cognitive processing.

Through interactive activities, participants will learn how to communicate with students, families, and teachers in a manner that reduces worry and fosters hope and possibility.

Leveraging a Learning Model for Student Empowerment and Success

Presenter: *Daisy Pellant, Head of School, Kehillah Jewish High School*

Location: *CERAS 302*

It is incumbent upon us as teachers and students to understand learning and learners. Our role as educators, regardless of the content or age-group we teach, is to build capacity for better learning in support of human development. This workshop reviews a model of learning that focuses on identifying where learning is getting stuck and offers strategies to overcome these obstacles. Come ready to interactively learn about learning!

“Not Another Initiative!” – 3 Ways to Embed SEL in School Culture and Make It Stick

Presenter: *Joseph Tchen, Program Manager, The Institute for Social Emotional Learning*

Location: *CERAS 108*

This experiential session will focus on strategies to build an equity-rooted, whole-community approach to well-being and social and emotional learning (SEL) that sticks over time. We will explore the principles of high-impact, low-prep SEL curriculum resources and approaches that cultivate teacher and student engagement for this work. The session will also focus on the critical importance of adult, parent and caregiver SEL and well-being to supercharge a collective vision for SEL.

Rigor Redefined: 10 Teaching Habits for Surface, Deep, and Transfer Learning

Presenter: *Michael McDowell, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Hinge Education*

Location: *CERAS 101*

This session will provide educators with actionable insights into fostering deeper comprehension and the ability to apply knowledge in new contexts. By adopting ten teaching and learning habits, participants will learn how to cultivate an environment that moves beyond superficial understanding, promoting critical thinking skills and adaptability. We will delve into the principles of dispositional learning, surface learning, deep learning, and transfer learning, offering a comprehensive framework to guide educators in redefining rigor in their classrooms.

Student-Driven Learning: A Future-Focused Approach to Teaching and Learning

Presenter: *Kader Adjout, Director of Teaching, Learning, and Innovation, Beaver Country Day School*

Location: *Paul Brest West*

In times of generative AI, machine learning, and easy access to knowledge, how can students be in the driver’s seat of their learning experience? In our school, student-directed projects are at the core of our approach. Students are active explorers driven to answer an essential question they’ve created. As they design their learning experience, they become problem-solvers and critical thinkers, content experts, and collaborators. Hear about how our school’s journey to enact this change fundamentally shifted the perception of what school could be.

Tech-Savvy Teaching: AI for Engaged Learning

Presenter: Denise Pope, Co-Founder and Strategic Advisor and Drew Schrader, School Data Partner, Challenge Success

Location: Paul Brest East

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to evolve and expand, how can we best ensure it is being used to enhance rather than hinder student learning? In this hands-on session, we will discuss relevant research and current data related to student use of AI and engagement in learning. Join us to explore specific ways you can use AI to adapt lessons and assignments to spark student interest and spur deeper thinking while minimizing the risks associated with AI use in the classroom.

Unleashing Student Potential: Releasing Pressure through Real-Time Support

Presenter: Maria Berrera, CEO and Founder, and Jennifer Tripp, Head of District Partnerships, Clayful

Location: CERAS 204

At home and at school, students face an array of stressors while often not being equipped with the tools to manage them. Through interactive discussions and practical coaching tools provided by Clayful, educators will learn methods for helping students release pressure, leading to improved focus, engagement, and well-being. By understanding how to facilitate real-time support, participants will leave with practical ideas for how to foster a more supportive and responsive school climate.

WORKSHOP BLOCK 2 (11:15 - 12:30 p.m.)

The ABCs of Social, Emotional, and Academic Well-Being

Presenter: Andi Jackson, Middle School Teacher, Cupertino Union School District and Owner of EngagED Consulting

Location: Paul Brest East

If we want our students to thrive socially and emotionally, we need to integrate autonomy, belonging, and competence into the day-to-day practices of our classrooms. Such an approach can shift our focus from managing student behaviors to helping students gain the confidence and skills to make their own decisions and become contributing members of their communities.

Brave Conversations with Youth on Race, Gender, Identity, Difference, and Bias

Presenter: Melissa Andersen, Education Director & Rebecca Slaby, Executive Director, AmazeWorks

Location: CERAS 204

Engaging young people in conversations about complex topics such as race, gender, identity, differences, and bias is crucial for fostering empathy and building cultures of belonging. This workshop will equip educators with practical tools to approach these conversations in ways that meet the needs of adolescent learners. Participants will practice modeling vulnerability and courage, and will discuss how to create safe spaces for open dialogue.

Breaking Barriers and Building Connections: A Peer-to-Peer Approach

Presenter: Alexis Mele, School Counselor and Megan Humphreys, Student Support Specialist, Laguna Beach High School. Including students, Audrey Calef, Ryan Cheng, and Ariana Ghane

Location: CERAS 300

Want to create a powerful peer-helping program at your school but not sure where to start? In this session, you will learn about one school's journey to create a thriving peer-helping program, The Student Support Collective (SSC). Hear directly from student leaders about their experiences designing and running the SSC, and learn actionable, practical strategies for developing your own program.

Community, Connection, and Restorative Discipline

Presenter: Soundhari Balaguru, Clinical Psychologist and Founder, Integrated SEL

Location: CERAS 527

In this session, you will learn how to create classrooms and schools where students and staff establish how they will support each other and hold each other accountable. You'll experience a community circle, learn a framework to empower student voice in creating classroom 'rules', engage in self-reflection, examine racial disproportionality in discipline, and discuss a student scenario leading to a peace (harm repair) circle.

Cultivating Connection: Centering Relationships in the Classroom and Beyond

Presenter: Maggie Steele, Head of Training & Curriculum, Peace in Schools

Location: Student Services

Relationships are central to everything we do as a school, yet we often lack the skills to navigate the challenges that arise. In this workshop, we will introduce a powerful tool designed to foster conscious and compassionate communication within school communities. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on specific challenges they face and explore practices that help shift their approach from trying to control situations to cultivating genuine connections.

Facing the Fears of Feedback

Presenter: Roxanne Stansbury, Head of School, The Alexander Dawson School at Rainbow Mountain

Location: Paul Brest West

Student feedback and success are inextricably related. Growth, discovery, and motivation do not exist without feedback. While many of us understand the essential need for this honest exchange, the practice of giving and receiving feedback elicits sweaty palms and an elevated heart rate. This workshop sets the stage for an engaging partner activity that dissects the art of feedback into applicable and effective strategies. Join us for an interactive scenario that will transform the stress of feedback into a positive, eye-opening experience. Participants will gain communication strategies that deepen relational trust and increase the comfort of delivering and receiving feedback.

A Healthier Approach to College Admissions

Presenter: *Kim Cawkwell, Director of Programs and Margaret Dunlap, Senior School Design Partner, Challenge Success*

Location: *CERAS 101*

The college admissions process can be a source of stress and anxiety for students and parents/caregivers alike. This research-based workshop addresses many of the important questions we hear from families, such as: What do college rankings really measure? Are students who attend more selective colleges better off later in life? What is “fit” and why does it matter? We will emphasize the importance of students discovering their own path to success that matches their unique goals and interests. Participants will learn practical strategies to help reduce unnecessary pressure around the college admissions process and ways to support their student’s overall well-being and readiness for life in college and beyond.

Putting Students First: Designing Collaborative School Systems

Presenter: *Jennifer Harrison, Principal, Matt Ireland, Jordan Moe, Teachers, Legacy Magnet Academy*

Location: *CERAS 302*

What becomes possible when we configure our school-wide systems around the central question, “What is best for all students?” Join us as we explore the transformative power of integrating systems that benefit all students. We’ll discuss strategies for soliciting student input (surveys, shadow day, fishbowls, pitches, student-led initiatives), utilizing an iterative process in schoolwide decision-making, and increasing buy-in from all community members.

Redesigning Learning in the Classroom: A Studio-Based Approach

Presenter: *Michael Prater, Director of High School Education, Tessellations and Paula Garza Gonzalez, Learning Experience Designer, NuVuX*

Location: *CERAS 308*

We believe that it is time to transition from classrooms that are teacher-centered to ones that are student-driven. In studio based-learning, students move from passive consumers to active participants in their learning journey. When students pursue projects they care about, they feel dignified, empowered, and motivated. Our workshop demonstrates how integrating studio-based learning into the school day enhances durable skills while reinforcing curricular content mastery, making learning more relevant.

Reimagining Wellness in Schools

Presenter: *Jessica Colvin, Founder, SWELL - Schools Well*

Location: *CERAS 108*

How can a school-based Wellness Center give students access to the tools, resources and support they need for healthy development, social emotional wellness, and academic success? In this workshop, we’ll explore the steps schools can take to prepare for, implement, and evaluate effective Wellness Centers on campus. Come learn about how Wellness Centers align with the 3-tiered model of support

(MTSS) and work to elevate youth voice, expand community partnerships, and promote health and wellness on campus.

WORKSHOP BLOCKS 3 & 4 (1:30 - 2:05 p.m. | 2:10 - 2:45 p.m.)

Amplifying Student Voice with the Arts

Presenter: *Kyle Holmes, Co-Creator of Ranked, A Musical*

Location: *CERAS 101*

In this session, we'll investigate how creative outlets like theatre and music impact youth mental health. Drawing from his experience co-creating the musical, Ranked, Kyle will demonstrate how the collaborative process gave students a platform to discuss academic pressures and other issues affecting their well-being.

Empowering New and Veteran Teachers' Voices

Presenter: *William Heidenfeldt, Associate Principal - Curriculum and Instruction, Salesian College Preparatory*

Location: *CERAS 204*

In this research-based workshop, participants will consider how to use data to reimagine school structures and to expand practices that elevate both educator and student agency. Learn how an ongoing cycle of inquiry led one school to redesign networks of support among students, faculty, staff, and administration.

Get a C.L.U.E.! The Inner Game of Engagement, Belonging, and Well-Being

Presenter: *Alan Vann Gardner, Leadership Consultant and Lily Pan*

Location: *CERAS 108*

How often do we – due to busyness or stress – react impulsively or lose composure? ! In this interactive workshop, we'll learn how to Get a C.L.U.E. (Center, Line Up, Engage), through practices from mindfulness, aikido, SEL, and somatics to cultivate a sense of embodied presence. These practices are foundational for mastering our inner game so we can work together to design and implement systemic, sustainable school change.

Heart to Heart: A Student-Created Community Engagement Event

Presenter: *Arthur Creighton and Janeen Creighton, Advisors of the Unity Club, John F Kennedy Middle College; Anousha Baqai and Kassi Ibrahim, Students, John F Kennedy Middle College*

Location: *CERAS 527*

Learn how a group of students created an on-campus event to help parents/caregivers and students deepen their connections. During this half-day experience, families participated in activities to remind them of the importance of intentionally nurturing strong, healthy relationships between adults and teens. In this workshop, the student leaders will describe the conception, planning, and execution of this remarkably successful event.

Keys to Strengthening Wellness, Engagement, and Belonging through Our Family & Staff Book Club

Presenter: Michael Keller, Director of Social Emotional Support and Cara Borkovec, M.A., Family Support Specialist, Laguna Beach Unified School District

Location: CERAS 107

Our Parenting Book Club aims to deepen community knowledge, strengthen connections, and promote healthy youth development. This ten-week series held multiple times a year has included over 350 participants, and has created powerful opportunities for parents, caregivers, and educators to connect through meaningful dialogue.

(EDUCATORS/ADMIN ONLY)

Learning Toolkit: Demystifying Accommodations & Advancing Self-Advocacy

Presenter: Alyson Kaneshiro, Founder, Learning Specialist LLC

Location: CERAS 300

When students have learning accommodations, it's critical that they first understand what these accommodations are and how they help them learn. Often, accommodation plans use inaccessible language, creating barriers to understanding and self-advocacy. The Learning Toolkit Strategy ensures students' voices are heard and helps them understand their learning profiles. In this session, we will share a model for creating student-friendly plans and conducting learning partnership meetings, along with practical tips for implementation.

Success Strategies that Drive Inclusive Community Engagement

Presenter: Daphne Dickens-King, CEO, 21st Century Commerce, Inc.

Location: CERAS 302

Creating a sustainable, inclusive environment where everyone feels valued, including diverse families, is a worthy, yet achievable goal. Explore real-world strategies to help school leaders, families and students increase inclusive engagement in school organizations, activities, and events.

Transdisciplinary Inquiry: Students as Explorers!

Presenter: Kader Adjout, Director of Teaching, Learning, and Innovation, Beaver Country Day School

Location: CERAS 308

Students often learn in isolated silos, but when given the chance to explore, they draw from various disciplines and go beyond departmental constraints to understand issues. In this spotlight, we'll share approaches for promoting transdisciplinary inquiry through action-oriented, collaborative exploration of authentic tasks, fostering student agency, choice, and interest. This nonlinear approach enables deeper learning as students construct, make meaning, and transfer knowledge, viewing the world through multiple lenses. Join us to discuss and share ideas that promote student inquiry through an integrated approach to learning.