

Mar 4th, 7:00 AM - 7:05 AM

## 2018 NYAR (Savannah) Program

National Youth At Risk Conference

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29th Annual

# NATIONAL YOUTH-AT-RISK CONFERENCE

Savannah, Georgia | March 4-7, 2018



## “Helping Adults Serve Youth”

Hosted by: College of Education at Georgia Southern University



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**Dear Conference Attendees:**

On behalf of the Planning Council, we welcome you to the 29th Annual National Youth-At-Risk (NYAR) Conference sponsored by the College of Education in collaboration with Continuing Education at Georgia Southern University. The conference provides up-to-date comprehensive professional development for adults who serve youth based on the “5H” (Head, Heart, Hands, Health, and Home) strands and is aligned with ESSA, Title I, and Title IIA. Choose from over 120 training sessions providing evidence-based programs and best practices for creating safe, healthy, caring, and intellectually empowering environments that foster the well-being of all youth, especially children and adolescents in poverty. This year, we acknowledge the generous contribution of Gulfstream sponsoring our Sunday keynote speaker, Stedman Graham. Be sure to attend the Monday afternoon “Meet & Greet” featuring comedian, Christopher Pugh (a.k.a. “Big Chris”) and the Skyelite Jazz Combo from the Savannah Arts Academy and also the Tuesday afternoon Poster Reception. Furthermore, take time to see the exhibits, network with your colleagues, and enjoy historic Savannah. Thank you for helping to make the conference a resounding success again this 29th year!



*Dan Rea and Alisa Leckie  
Co-Chairs of the NYAR Conference  
College of Education, Georgia Southern University*

**Conference Mission**

The conference trains adults who serve youth to create safe, healthy, caring, and intellectually empowering educational environments that foster the well-being of all children and adolescents. To accomplish this mission, it offers over 120 presentations by nationally and internationally recognized presenters to over 1200 conference participants from across the United States. In these presentations, participants learn about current research-based educational programs and strategies, which empower young people to overcome at-risk conditions that may threaten their safety, health, emotional needs, and academic achievement. Participants also gain knowledge of proactive solutions and best practices for meeting the serious challenges faced by youth today such as school violence, poverty, learning difficulties, underachievement, achievement gaps, illiteracy, boredom, apathy, low expectations, misbehavior, dropout, drugs, bullying, gangs, teen pregnancy, sexual harassment, racism, and dysfunctional families. Furthermore, participants gain effective educational tools to build strong caring schools, communities, and families, which can meet the diverse needs of all our young people.

**Conference History and Future Vision**

In 1990, the NYAR Conference was founded by the College of Education of Georgia Southern University. Past conference speakers have included nationally and internationally recognized educators and youth advocates such as Geoffrey Canada, Ron Clark, Stedman Graham, Dr. Pedro Noguera, Dr. Eric Jensen, Dr. Ruby Payne, Dr. Crystal Kuykendall, Dr. James Comer, Dr. William Glasser, Dr. James Garbarino, Dr. David Hawkins, Dr. Robert Brooks, Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee Jim Brown, TV celebrity Judge Glenda Hatchett, “Peter, Paul, & Mary” folk singer Peter Yarrow, and several National Teachers of the Year. During the past 29 years, the conference has grown from a regional conference of 150 participants to a national conference of approximately 1200 participants and is beginning to attract participants from several nations. In the next five years, the conference plans to expand to 1400 to 1600 national and international participants and to further enhance the quality and diversity of the conference program and presentations. The co-directors envision the conference as providing national leadership, service, and research for the professional development of educators who serve youth placed at risk.

**5H Conference Strands****I. HEAD: Academic Achievement & Leadership**

Closing achievement gaps and promoting learning for all children and youth especially for high-poverty populations.

**II. HEART: Social & Emotional Skills**

Fostering social and emotional skills and the social climate for all children and youth especially for high-poverty populations.

**III. HANDS: Safety & Violence Prevention**

Preventing violence and ensuring safety for all children and youth especially for high-poverty populations.

**IV. HEALTH: Mental & Physical Health**

Promoting the mental and physical health of all children and youth especially for high-poverty populations.

**V. HOME: Family & Community**

Developing and enhancing family and community support for all children and youth especially for high-poverty populations.

## Overview

The *National Youth-At-Risk Journal* (NYAR Journal) is an open-access and peer-reviewed online journal that publishes educational articles on how to reduce harmful risk conditions and promote the well-being of all youth, especially vulnerable youth in schools, families, and communities. The journal, edited by Dr. Cordelia Zinskie, Dr. Dan Rea, and Dr. Olufunke Adefope, is a publication of the College of Education at Georgia Southern University.

## Interdisciplinary Articles

Focused on the well-being of the whole child, the *NYAR Journal* seeks interdisciplinary articles on fostering the 5Hs: “Head” for intellectual achievement and talents, “Heart” for social and emotional skills, “Hands” for safety and protection, “Health” for physical and mental health, and “Home” for family and community support.

## Call For Submissions

This biannual journal is accepting manuscripts in the following categories: research articles, literature syntheses, practitioner reports, book reviews, and essays. Alternative submissions such as poetry, artwork, and other media will also be considered. Visit the *NYAR Journal* website ([digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/nyar](http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/nyar)) for journal policies including submission guidelines. Please email the editor at [nyarjournal@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:nyarjournal@georgiasouthern.edu) with questions or inquiries.

## Meet the Editors

Check the NYAR Conference Program for an opportunity to meet the editors of the *NYAR Journal* on Monday, March 5 at 1:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Hyatt Ballroom F. This conference session is especially relevant to educators who want to publish practitioner articles for serving youth placed at risk.



## *National Youth-At-Risk Journal*

Spring, 2017, Volume 2(2)

Special Theme: Students and Schools in Poverty

### **Educating Students in Poverty: Building Equity and Capacity with a Holistic Framework and Community School Model**

Dan W. Rea and Cordelia D. Zinskie, Georgia Southern University

### **Interview with Eric Jensen: Enriching Mindsets for Teachers of Students in Poverty**

Dan W. Rea, Georgia Southern University

### **Building a Culture of Hope: Exploring Implicit Biases Against Poverty**

Emily L. Gibson, Vancouver Public Schools; and Robert D. Barr, Boise State University

### **Supporting Students Living Below the Poverty Line**

H. Richard Milner IV, University of Pittsburgh; Heather B. Cunningham, Chatham University; Ira E. Murray, University of Pittsburgh; and Adam Alvarez, University of Pittsburgh

### **Grit and Agency: A Framework for Helping Students in Poverty to Achieve Academic Greatness**

Anindya Kundu, New York University

### **Layers of Estrangement: Social-Emotional and Educational Implications of Homelessness on K-12 Students**

Rajni Shankar-Brown, Stetson University

### **Guided Imagery: A Technique to Benefit Youth at Risk**

Lisa M. Skeens, Ohio University-Lancaster Campus

### **The Poverty Simulation: Increasing Teacher Sensitivity for Students Living in Poverty**

Aviva Goelman Rice, Savannah-Chatham County Public School System; Linda Ann McCall, Armstrong State University; and Jacquelyn E. Ogden, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

### **Book Review: *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates***

Gregory D. Johnston and Amy L. Onofre, Texas Tech University

### **Art Corner: “Our Children, Our World, Our Future”**

George E. Miller II

View *National Youth-At-Risk Journal* at  
[digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/nyar](http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/nyar)



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See what discounts are available here:  
[visitsavannah.com/meetings/show-us-your-badge](http://visitsavannah.com/meetings/show-us-your-badge)



## Complementary WiFi

There is complementary WiFi at the Hyatt.  
No password required.



## Silence Your Phones

During any presentation, please silence your phone.  
If necessary, please remove yourself from the room.



## Parking

Additional parking is available at Whitaker or Bryant Street garages. Show name badge for discount.



## Presenters

We ask that all presenters arrive at their location at least 15 minutes prior to their presentation.



## Speaker Bios

Check out the keynotes, pre-conference and featured speakers on pg 51-62.



## Questions

For questions or information assistance, please visit either registration desk (main lobby or Mezzanine).

## Sunday, March 4

1:00 p.m.

Registration Opens  
Exhibitors Available in Balcony & Lobby Areas

2:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Pre-Conference Workshops

6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Keynote Banquet, Hyatt Regency Ballroom  
Speaker: Stedman Graham

## Monday, March 5

7:30 a.m.

Registration Opens

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.

Continental Breakfast

8:00 a.m.

Exhibits Open

8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

Keynote Presentation, Hyatt Regency Ballroom  
Speaker: Principal Baruti Kafele  
High-Flying Schools Presentation

10:30 - 11:45 a.m.

Session 1 (p 10)

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Lunch on Your Own

1:15 - 2:30 p.m.

Session 2 (p 13)

3:00 - 4:15 p.m.

Session 3 (p 17)

4:45 p.m.

Meet & Greet  
Skyelite Jazz Combo

## Tuesday, March 6

7:30 a.m.

Registration Opens

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.

Continental Breakfast

8:00 a.m.

Exhibits Open

8:30 - 9:45 a.m.

Session 4 (p 22)

10:15 - 11:30 a.m.

Session 5 (p 26)

10:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Poverty Simulation

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch on Your Own

1:00 - 2:15 p.m.

Session 6 (p 30)

2:45 - 4:00 p.m.

Session 7 (p 33)

4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Poster Session Presentation (p 37)

## Wednesday, March 7

7:00 - 8:00 a.m.

Continental Breakfast

7:30 a.m.

Registration Opens

7:45 - 8:00 a.m.

West African Drumming

8:00 a.m.

Exhibits Open

8:00 - 9:15 a.m.

Keynote Presentation, Hyatt Regency Ballroom  
Speaker: Dr. Jane Bluestein

9:45 - 11:00 a.m.

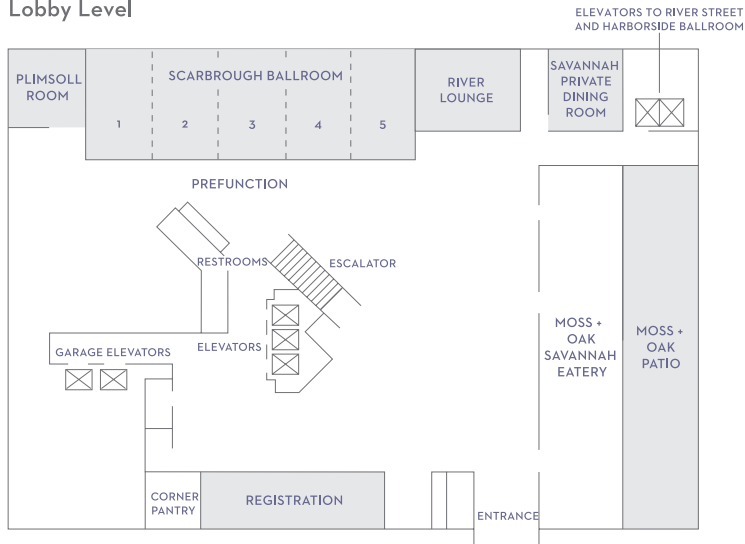
Session 8 (p 44)

11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

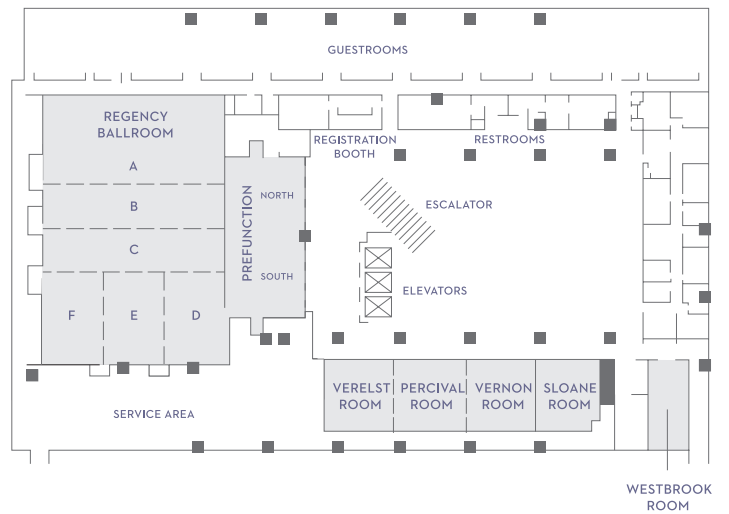
Session 9 (p 47)

# MAP | EXHIBITORS

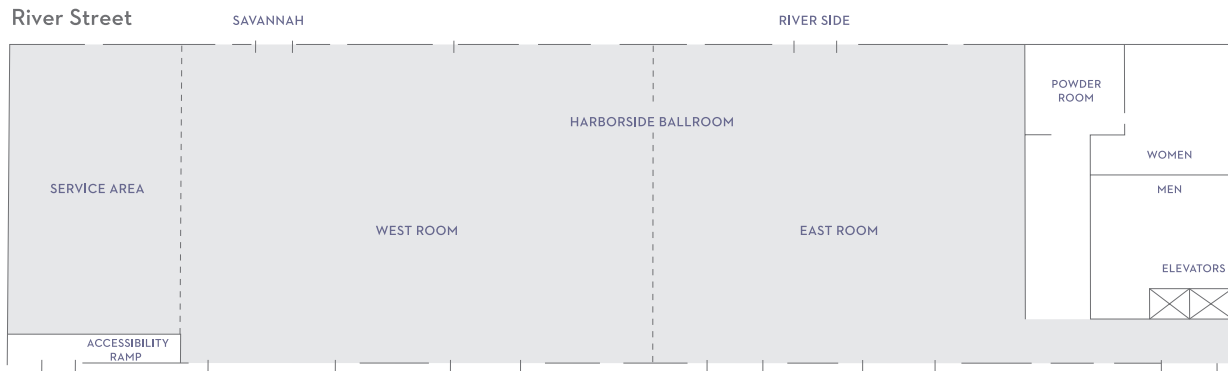
## Lobby Level



## Second Level



## River Street



## Visit our Exhibitors!

*On-site exhibitors are on the second floor.*

University of Kentucky  
 Certified Restraint Training  
 Peach State Health Plan  
 St. Simons by the Sea Hospital  
 American Book Company  
 Foundation for Economic Education  
 Vintage Meets Modern  
 Youth Today

Laurel Heights Hospital  
 Learning Connections  
 Kagan Publishing & Professional Development  
 The Elegant Elephant  
 Math and Movement  
 College of Education, Georgia Southern University  
 LuLaRoe

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 The Empowerment House  
 Screening for Mental Health, Inc.  
 Division of Continuing Education, Georgia Southern University

## Thank you to our Sponsors!



## Continuing Education Units

Conference participants will be awarded 1.50 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for 15.0 hours of participation through Continuing Education at Georgia Southern University. Certificates will be mailed after the conference upon request via the online conference evaluation form.

### This program has been approved by the following:

Counselors: Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia (LPCA).

Marriage and Family Therapists: Georgia Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (GAMFT).

Social Workers: National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

Peace Officers: Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST).

## guidebook

**Download the free guidebook app!**

Available in the App Store and Google Play.



For your convenience, use the guidebook app to create your personal conference schedule and evaluate speakers. You can also get real time updates and notifications about what's going on at the conference.

**Special thanks to Visit Savannah for their support of the National Youth-At-Risk Conference!**



**Joseph Marinelli**  
President, Visit Savannah

## Thanks to the 2018 Planning Council!

**Dr. Dan Rea and Dr. Alisa Leckie**

Co-Chairs of the NYAR Conference

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Bulloch County Public Schools

**Roenia Deloach**

Savannah State University

**Irene Denmark**

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Savannah-Chatham Public Schools

**Jason "Mike" Stubbs**

Alliance for a Healthier Generation

**Dr. Torian White**

Bulloch County Public Schools



## Sunday, March 4

1:00 p.m.

**Check-In (Lobby) | On-Site Registration (Second Floor)**

Exhibitors are Available in Balcony &amp; Lobby Areas

2:30 – 5:30 p.m.

**Pre-Conference Workshops**

Scarborough 1

**‘Calm Down!’ Crisis Management Skills for Educators of ‘At-Risk’ Youth**

*Steve Parese, Ed.D., International Speaker, Author, Wilderness Counselor and Special Educator, SBP Consulting, Danbury, NC*

Staff who work with challenging youth are often called upon to handle a wide range of confusing and frustrating behavioral problems. It can be tempting to react to all misbehavior with strict discipline, but a “one size fits all” approach is often ineffective and alienates students with whom we must build helping relationships. During this practical, highly interactive 3-hour workshop with author and international speaker Dr. Parese, you will: (1) Discuss a logical decision-making model for responding to three different types of problems; (2) explore interventions with deliberately misbehaving youth; (3) examine the impact of high stress, low self-esteem, and prior trauma on emotional misbehavior with youth; (4) identify four predictable phases of an escalating crisis, including specific strategies for each phase; and (5) practice three levels of active listening for de-escalating emotional youth.

Harborside Center  
East**Addressing the Poverty Mindset**

*Hotep, Educational Success Strategist, Make A Way Program, Hustle University, Atlanta, GA*

While many use the words poor and poverty synonymously, they are very different. Poor is a financial condition of having little money. However, poverty is a mindset—a system of beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives. Schools that serve low-income communities tend to face similar and pervasive issues that are actually a result of a poverty mindset. This workshop clarifies what true poverty is, why it exists, how it secretly influences our schools, and most importantly, what we can do to change it permanently!

6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Regency Ballroom

**Grand Keynote Banquet****Master of Ceremonies**

*Dan Rea, Ed.D., Conference Co-Chair, Professor, College of Education, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

**Featuring**

The Fletcher Jazz Ensemble from Duncan U. Fletcher High School  
Under the direction of Mr. Randy Salinas, Duncan U. Fletcher High School, Neptune Beach, FL

**Presentation of 2018 Ron Alt Service Award** (bio on p 63)**Introduction of Keynote Speaker**

*Paul T. Brooksher, Ph.D., Superintendent, Bryan County Schools, Black Creek, GA*

**Identity Leadership: A Roadmap to Professional Success**

*Stedman Graham, Honorary Doctorate, Humanities, Master's, Education; Best Selling Author, Educator, Entrepreneur, S. Graham & Associates, Chicago, IL*

Identity leadership is based on the philosophy that individuals hold the power to their personal and professional success as educators of youth. It begins with the understanding that to lead others, you must first be able to lead your ‘self.’ Participants will learn the principles of identity leadership through The Nine Step Success Process®, which provides a roadmap to realizing your maximum potential and performance for leading and teaching youth placed at risk.

**Monday, March 5****7:30 a.m.****Check-In (Lobby) | On-Site Registration (Second Floor)**

Exhibitors are Available in Balcony &amp; Lobby Areas

**7:30 - 8:30 a.m.****Continental Breakfast****8:00 a.m.****Exhibits Open****8:30 - 10:00 a.m.**

Regency Ballroom

**Opening Session and Keynote****Master of Ceremonies***Jà Hon Vance, Ed.S., Executive Vice President, JV Educational Consultants, Owings Mill, MD***Featuring**

The Windsor Forest High School Chorale

Under the direction of Erica Cahill, Savannah, GA

**National High-Flying Schools Award Presentation***Tom Koballa, Ph.D., Dean, College of Education, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA***2018 High-Flying Schools**

- Caring and Sharing Learning School from Gainesville, FL
- The Arts and College Preparatory Academy from Columbus, OH
- John P. Parker School from Cincinnati, OH

**2018 High-Flying Schools Honorable Mention**

- Liberty High School from Pickens County, SC
- Warren County Middle School from Warrenton, GA
- Morris Street Elementary from Danbury, CT

**Introduction of Keynote Speaker***Ann Levett, Ed.D., Superintendent, Savannah-Chatham County Public School System, Savannah, GA***Closing the Attitude Gap: How to Fire Up Your Students for Excellence***Principal Baruti Kafele, MA, Educational Administration, Education Speaker, Consultant, Author, Principal Kafele Consulting, LLC, Jersey City, NJ*

Principal Kafele asserts that a huge challenge to closing the various gaps in achievement is the assumption that achievement is the only issue of concern for educators. Going beyond a superficial treatment of achievement, he contends that underachievement is a result of the failure to adequately address the "attitude gap" that continues to persist in American classrooms. He makes this assertion for students across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines. Educators will learn practical strategies for closing the attitude gap and firing up their students to eliminate underachievement in their classrooms and schools.

**10:00 - 10:30 a.m.**

Balcony and Lobby

**Visit Exhibitors**

10:30 - 11:45 a.m.

Session 1 | Monday Concurrent Sessions

Ballroom A


**'What's in Your Wallet?' Resisting the Lure of Angry Power Struggles with Challenging Youth**

*Featured Speaker: Steve Parese, Ed.D., International Speaker, Author, Wilderness Counselor and Special Educator, SBP Consulting, Danbury, NC*

Troubled children and youth are often experts at pushing buttons. As educators and support staff, we may sometimes find ourselves taking problems too personally and needlessly escalating conflicts. In this eye-opening workshop with Dr. Parese, we first examine the dynamics of power struggles and then explore five distinct sources of adult anger. Next, we discuss four self-defeating dynamics with youth and expose specific reasons why some of these patterns may be more difficult to manage than others. Finally, we discuss strategies and insights essential to maintaining a professional perspective in challenging situations.

Ballroom B


**Traditional Approaches to Hispanic Academic Success**

*Featured Speaker: Wesley Montoya, Ph.D., Principal, Gilliam School, Denver Public Schools, Denver, CO*

This session presents participants with strategies that highlight the cultural traditions that Hispanic families often teach their children. Dr. Montoya will discuss how to build relationships with Hispanic students and their families, how to provide a family-like atmosphere in school, as well as how to challenge and assist Hispanic students to grow academically by allowing them to work through the process of discovery at their own pace.

Ballroom D

**Mirrors and Maps: Using Young Adult Literature to Navigate Risks and Challenges in Adolescent Life**

*Lesley Roessing, M.Ed., Director, Coastal Savannah Writing Project, Savannah, GA*

Young Adult (YA) literature allows adolescents to mirror themselves in books and allow them to safely discuss and work through their problems by having conversations about how characters handle or mishandle obstacles. Novels can provide maps to navigating the risks and challenges experienced in adolescent life. The presenter, a former middle-grades teacher and author of *No More "Us" and "Them,"* teaches Bibliotherapy and will share the newest YA novels and memoirs that reflect contemporary adolescent lives and help readers work through challenges. The presenter will lead participants through strategies and activities that initiate conversations about issues adolescents face while helping young readers discover alternatives to dealing with risks.

Ballroom E

**Implementing a 5th Quarter Program for Students At Risk: Getting Them to the 3E's—Enrolled, Enlisted, or Employed!**

*Ahmand R. Tinker, Ed.S., Assistant Principal, Coweta County School System, Newnan, GA; and William Silveri, M.A., Assistant Principal, Clayton County Public Schools, Jonesboro, GA*

This presentation outlines a program for students who participate in academic support programs. The program enables these students to prepare and equip themselves to enroll in college, enlist in the military, or be gainfully employed after high school; simply known as the 3E's: Enrolled, Enlisted, or Employed.

Ballroom F

**Interventions that Work: Literacy Interventions for Grade 6-12**

*Tabathia Baldy, Ed.D., Director for Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions/Supports (PBIS), Colquitt County Schools, Moultrie, GA*

In this interactive session, participants will learn three evidence-based literacy strategies/interventions that are free, easy to implement, and are currently being used successfully in grades 6-12 in a Title I school district in rural South Georgia. Participants will leave with the skills to implement these strategies immediately in their own classrooms.

Scarborough 1

**Question-and-Answer Session with Keynote Speaker Baruti Kafele**

*Principal Baruti Kafele, MA, Education Speaker, Consultant, Principal Kafele Consulting, LLC, Jersey City, NJ*

Scarborough 2

**National High-Flying Schools Showcase**

Learn how the 2018 National High-Flying Schools are attaining high academic performance with high poverty and minority student populations. Participant will have an opportunity to interact with the staff of the High-Flying Schools and to ask them questions about the secrets of their success.

- Caring and Sharing Learning School from Gainesville, FL
- The Arts and College Preparatory Academy from Columbus, OH
- John P. Parker School from Cincinnati, OH

Scarborough 3

**The Answer to “Why Do I Need to Know This?”**

*Featured Speaker: Carmen Long, M.Ed., Lead High School Math Teacher, Georgia Connections Academy, Duluth, GA*

Motivating students is a challenge to most educators at some point or another. Students deserve to know why they are being asked to learn concepts or produce evidence of that learning. They are often given empty reasons like, “We must review the standards based curriculum” or “It’s on the test.” These answers are not motivating to a student. The answer to the question “Why do I need to know this?” can be a powerful motivator when the answer provides relevant truth about skills students need to have to succeed after their high school years are over.

Scarborough 4

**Instructional Strategies Impacting Learners At Risk**

*Featured Speaker: Abigail Armstrong, Ed.D., Program Director of Middle Level Education Program, Winthrop University, Gastonia, NC*

In this session, participants will discuss and practice strategies that effectively impact students placed at risk. Participants will discover how to help students learn at higher levels of cognitive demand and to be independent thinkers so they will achieve academically. The instructional practices shared in this presentation will help increase student engagement and rigor and will challenge learners at risk while fostering a supportive learning environment so that they meet high expectations and experience success.

Scarborough 5

**Creating and Sustaining a Positive Learning Environment for Students At Risk**

*Featured Speaker: Aviva Goelman Rice, Ed.D., Coordinator of Professional Learning, Bryan County Schools, Black Creek, GA*

This fast-paced session will help participants uncover the often-overlooked structures of the classroom environment that can negatively affect the achievement of students placed at risk. Teachers will take away multiple strategies that can increase the engagement and cooperation of students who are at the greatest risk for school failure. With concrete examples and evidence-based strategies, this session will support educators who want their classrooms to become learning communities that are inclusive of all students.

Harborside Center  
East**Closing the Achievement Gap for Males of Color**

*Featured Speaker: Jà Hon Vance, Ed.S., Executive Vice President, JV Educational Consultants, Owings Mill, MD*

This presentation focuses on contemporary educational frameworks used to understand instructional quality, student engagement, youth development, parenting, and leadership in racially diverse communities. The presenter shares guiding principles and practices that have led to males of color achieving academic success in the classroom. Educators will learn how to raise achievement levels for males of color, while narrowing the gaps between groups by increasing community, teacher, student, and family engagement in the learning process.

Harborside Center  
West



**'Stop Beating Around the Bush and Get to the Root!' An Examination of How Racist and Classist Structures Produce 'At-Riskness' for Poor Students of Color**

*Featured Speaker: Anthony Outler, Ph.D., Chief Operations Officer, Epic Empowerment Enterprises, Lilburn, GA*

It is no mystery that statistics related to school failure, suspension rates, dropout rates and other indicators used to identify youth-at-risk reveal that poor students of color are disproportionately represented. In spite of legislation, school reforms, and intervention programs, these statistics remain the same, or worsen, year after year. This is due to a reluctance to address the root of the problem. How can we truly remedy the epidemic of "youth-at-risk" if we do not recognize, critique, and dismantle the systemic classist and racist structures that perpetuate "at-riskness" for poor students of color? In this session, we will examine the forces that reproduce inequities and discuss strategies for empowering ourselves, our students, schools and organizations to be champions for social justice.

Percival

**I AM STEM: Starting Your STEM Program from the Ground Up!**

*Natalie S. King, Ph.D., Professor, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA*

In this presentation, Dr. King shares the I AM STEM model for designing and implementing high quality STEM programs from the ground up. Attendees will learn how to successfully leverage community and university resources to engage children in culturally relevant and innovative STEM curricula. This interactive session will benefit executive directors, administrators, curriculum developers, STEM educators, and practitioners or researchers engaged in broadening participation efforts.

Vernon

**Psychological First Aid for the School Community**

*Beverly Smith, Ph.D., Behavior Engagement Specialist, Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta, GA*

Psychological First Aid for the school community is needed to assist in promoting good mental healthcare and to increase awareness for removing barriers to mental health services. An increased awareness of mental health issues promotes empathy, helps in removing stigmas, and increases appropriate responses in a crisis or non-crisis situation. Research indicates there is a need for community care of mental health concerns in order for there to be healthy outcomes for individuals, schools, families, and all other stakeholders. Within the school community, students and adults struggle with mental health issues in silence across the country. The purpose of this session includes (1) increasing the awareness of mental health issues within the school community; (2) increasing the awareness for self and community advocacy; (3) becoming a trauma-responsive school community; and (4) addressing barriers that promote stigmas to enhance guidelines for best practices. Additionally, this session will promote resiliency, well-being, and wholeness by presenting strategies for self-care and self-compassion within an urban school community setting.

Verelst

**Preventing Violence and Ensuring Safety in North Carolina Schools: A Statewide Analysis**

*Edward J. Sabornie, Ph.D., Professor, North Carolina State University, Cary, NC*

This presentation will discuss a study that examined charter versus traditional public schools' crime, violence, and safety in every school in North Carolina (n = 2,595) during the 2015-2016 school year. The dependent variables in the study were specific recorded acts of student crime and violence (n = 16) committed at school (e.g., assault on school personnel, possession of a controlled substance). Results showed significantly lower rates of crime and violence existed in charter versus traditional public schools. Study characteristics, additional findings, and implications of the results will be discussed.

Sloane **21 Ways to Get Over It! Using a Trauma Informed Approach to Help Teens Become Effective Leaders in Their Lives**

*Adair White-johnson, Ph.D., Youth Empowerment Expert, Executive Director, The Empowerment House, Powder Springs, GA*

The purpose of this session will be to share an evidence-based program that focuses on teaching middle and high school students to cope with traumatic events and “setbacks” in their lives. The objective is to share strategies that will help participants create programs that will increase the self-esteem levels of students, reduce feelings of defeat and insignificance and move students toward positive changes in their lives. This session is ideal for middle and high school educators.

Plimsoll **Conversation Techniques for Difficult Parents, Students, Teachers and Administrators**

*Bea Lewis, MS, CEO, Beahive Consulting, LLC, Jacksonville, FL*

Conferences can be difficult when the individuals involved have challenging personalities. Attendees will be introduced to difficult student, parent, teacher/administrator personalities that can take a simple discussion into a battle of wills and non-productivity. The presentation includes indicators and strategies to use to take control of conferences from beginning to conclusion and end with positive outcomes. This presentation is “real talk”, interactive, and entertaining and will provide ideas that can readily be applied into any school conference situation.

Westbrook **“Where is Waldo?” Challenging Our Approach to Equity**

*John Nwosu, Ed.S., Professional School Counselor, Garrett Middle School, Atlanta, GA*

How are Waldo and equity related? “Where is Waldo?” presupposes that Waldo exists. We tend to assume the opposite when it comes to bias and discrimination. We want to believe that “those things” don’t happen “here” even in the face of disparate outcomes. In this experiential session, participants will explore topics designed to reduce discrimination: updates in multicultural and social justice counseling competencies, implicit and explicit bias research, structural marginalization, and tools for increasing equity.

**11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Lunch on Your Own - Explore Savannah!**

**1:15 - 2:30 p.m. Session 2 | Monday Concurrent Sessions**

Ballroom A



**Signs and Solutions: Addressing Gang Activity in Schools** (repeats at 3:00 - 4:15 p.m.)

*Featured Speaker: Daryl Macaluso, Sergeant, Durham Police Department, Durham, NC*

This presentation is for those with an interest in serving students affiliated with gangs or otherwise at risk. This program was specifically designed for school professionals, law enforcement, and parents involved in or interested in school safety. Participants will gain insight into the criminal gang culture. This presentation contains graphic images of gang violence and strong language.

Ballroom B



**Change Your Language, Change Their Lives** (repeats at 3:00 - 4:15 p.m.)

*Featured Speaker: Frank Kros, MSW, JD, President, Transformation Education Institute; CEO and EVP, The Children's Guild; Director, NAREN-TranZed, Transformation Education Institute, Baltimore, MD*

Neuroscience discoveries have revolutionized our understanding of how the brains of our children learn and grow. In particular, brain research reveals how the specific language used by adults who teach, mentor, counsel and parent youth has a much more profound effect on their development than previously realized. Walk away with a new way of talking to youth that builds resilience, promotes intrinsic motivation, enhances cognitive stimulation and creates kaleidoscope thinkers. What you say matters, more than you ever knew!

Ballroom D

**Why Peer Intervention is Viable**

*Cynthia L. Morton, Ed.D., Virtual Learning Support Specialist, Rockdale County Public Schools, Conyers, GA; Antoinette L. Dunstan, Education Specialist, Mentor and Peer Facilitation Coordinator, Rockdale County Public Schools, Conyers, GA; Candice Anderson, Ed.S., School Counselor, Salem High School, Conyers, GA; and Monica Seeley, Ed.S., Graduation Specialist/Peer Leader Coordinator, Rockdale County Public Schools, Conyers, GA*

Welcome to the “Age of Indifference.” Unfortunately, our culture is so busy looking at our own problems and issues that we have systematically stopped caring about others. However, if our culture would embrace a system based on collaboration and compassion, we may lessen many social and psychological issues that impact youth today.

Ballroom E

**The Effect of Transition Programs on the Return to the Community from Residential Juvenile Justice Placement**

*Lacey Ray, M.A.T., Behavior Analyst, University of Georgia, Athens, GA*

This presentation is a literature review of 25 studies evaluating the transitional process from correctional placement into the community by youth ages 10–22. The review emphasizes the connections between engagement, service dosage, academic and vocational training, recidivism, and barriers to reentry with a focus on implications for practitioners.

Ballroom F

**National Youth-At-Risk Journal: Overview and Opportunities**

*Featured Speakers: Cordelia Zinskie, Ph.D., Professor, and Dan Rea, Ed.D., Conference Co-Chair, Professor; Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*



The *National Youth-At-Risk Journal*, sponsored by the College of Education at Georgia Southern University, is a publishing outlet where both researchers and practitioners can learn about and share information regarding youth placed at risk. Editors will provide an overview of the journal, highlight recent issues, and share tips on how to get published. As part of this interactive session, attendees are encouraged to ask questions and/or describe ideas regarding possible journal submissions.

Scarborough 1

**Safe Schools: Addressing Racism, Harassment, Bias and Bullying Through a Youth Development Lens**

(repeats at 3:00 – 4:15 p.m.)

*Featured Speaker: John Vandenburg, MA Ed., Executive Officer, Vanden Corporation, Protect Connect Educate Solutions, Murrieta, CA*



This workshop will examine how a network of students, staff, parents and community members can strategically come together to develop activities that address school climate and the prevention of racism, harassment, bullying, and other acts of school violence. Participants will learn the latest youth development research and trends influencing our school climate and the importance of planning in alignment with these trends when developing Safe School Plans.

Scarborough 2

**The Power of Storytelling: Five Educational Concepts Embraced Through Storytelling**

*Featured Speaker: Chang’aa Mwet, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Minnesota, Duluth, MN*



Motivating stories enkindle longing hearts. Stories thaw out frozen brains getting the creative juices flowing and transforming cold academic concepts into warm invitations to learning, hence making abstract concepts into concrete. Every teacher is a storyteller! Learn tips and techniques on using storytelling in the classroom, including how to sneak it through the backdoor to make learning fun. Examine ways in which stories can illustrate and reinforce concepts through listening and retelling all while improving students’ oral skills.

Scarborough 3



### **The Intentional Student: Strategies to Help Students of Low-Socioeconomic Status Succeed at Post-Secondary Institutions**

*Featured Speaker: Patrick Phillips the Change Agent, MSW, CEO, Atlanta Metropolitan State College, Atlanta, GA*

This presentation is structured in three phases: The Prerequisites, The Process and The Exodus. Attendees will take a journey in the same manner students navigate the college experience: The Prerequisites, areas that are completed and mastered before college, The Process, tasks and areas that are mastered while in college, and The Exodus, areas mastered upon conclusion of college to obtain gainful employment. The target audience for this session is educators, school counselors, mentors, therapists, and school social workers.

Scarborough 4



### **'I Can Stop Anytime I Want to But I Just Don't Want To': Substance Abuse Education and Treatment for Resistant Youth** (repeats at 3:00 - 4:15 p.m.)

*Featured Speaker: Jeremiah Hopes, LPC, CAADC, The Center of Hopes, Warner Robins, GA*

Drug use and abuse among our nation's youth continues to present major concerns. Despite our best efforts, illicit drug markets continue to grow, young people continue to poison their brains and bodies. New synthetic and designer drugs continue to emerge from the lab to the lives of youth. This presentation will present innovative approaches and best practice methods to help educate and treat youth who are highly resistant to substance abuse services. This presentation will also present key strategies to quickly and effectively connect with resistant youth and build a strong therapeutic alliance.

Scarborough 5

### **Engaging Students Through Instructional Games**

*Reggie Carruth, M.Ed., RTI Coach, Rutherford County Schools, La Vergne, TN*

Participants will be given creative tips and tools to learn how to engage youth at risk through instructional games. Students will enjoy exploring hands-on activities that take from everyday games and lessons, and transform them into meaningful, collaborative group exercises.

Harborside Center  
East

### **Behavior is a Symptom...Not the Problem: Getting to the Root** (repeats at 3:00-4:15 pm)

*Featured Speaker: Hotep, Educational Success Strategist, Make A Way Program, Hustle University, Atlanta, GA*

This presentation demystifies the common behavior problems exhibited in schools by first explaining why they occur and then teaching how to change them. This workshop will: (1) share the precursors that lead to behavior problems, (2) suggest how to transform academic and behavioral outcomes, (3) explain what leads to at-risk behaviors and why people repeat the same negative behaviors, and (4) demonstrate how relevance and relationships affect behavior. In the end, attendees will be introduced to what is being called "The New PBIS!"

# National Youth At Risk CONFERENCEWEST

STAY TUNED FOR 2019 CONFERENCE DATES!

SAN ANTONIO, TX

Rural Settings | Urban Settings | School Climate | ESOL Programs | Juvenile Justice



Harborside Center  
West

**A Town Hall Meeting: How to Help Boys of Color Succeed** (lasts from 1:15 – 4:15 p.m.)

*Moderator: Anthony Outler, Ph.D., Chief Operations Officer, Epic Empowerment Enterprises, Lilburn, GA*  
*Panelists: Wesley Montoya, Ph.D., Principal, Gilliam School, Denver Public Schools, Denver, CO; Karla Sapp, Ed.D., Licensed Professional Counselor, U Matter Consulting and Counseling, Midway, GA; Christopher Conner, W.I.L.D. Program Coordinator, Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, Jacksonville, FL; John Nwosu, Ed.S., Professional School Counselor, Garrett Middle School, Atlanta, GA; Amie J. Stearns, Educator, Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, Harrisburg, IL; Margaret Goldman, Psychology Major, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL; Liya Endale, Doctoral Candidate, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA; Molly Ferryman, Title I Coordinator, The Academy of Urban Scholars, Columbus, OH; Roben Taylor, Ed.D., Professor, School of Education, Dalton State College, Dalton, GA; and Sarah Mayberry, Ed.D., Media Specialist, Burdell-Hunt Magnet Elementary School, Macon, GA*

Traditional approaches to increasing achievement and success of young African American and Hispanic males are not working. We must change the pattern where finishing high school is the exception and prison is almost routine. A panel of expert educators and parents discuss how to raise and educate academically successful African American and Hispanic males. Come join our town hall meeting on this important topic. This town hall meeting will begin with a panel discussion after which participants break down into small groups to discuss the panel presentations as well as their particular innovation or intervention related to boys of color. Participants may bring with them 50 copies of a one-page summary of their innovation regarding boys of color. Summaries will be discussed and shared at the second half of the town hall meetings.

Percival

**Motivate My Mindset: Teachers, Parents, and Students Setting Their Minds on Achievement, Growth and Excellence!**

*Stephanie Leggett, Ph.D., Instructional Coach, Clifton Ridge Middle School, Jones County School System, Macon, GA*

We have heard that the “mind is a terrible thing to waste.” This session supports where the ‘Mind is Set Matters Most!’ activities and strategies that K-12 teachers and parents can implement. These activities will enable a diverse student population to have growth mindsets that are set for Achievement, Growth, and Excellence (A.G.E.) despite the subject or task.

Vernon

**The Beacon in Our Journey. Next Step: From Student Voice to Student Action**

*Helen Webster, M.Ed., Staff Development Teacher, Norman L. Coleman, MA, M.Ed., Principal, and Beth Hester, Middle Years Program Coordinator, Montgomery County Public Schools, Silver Springs, MD*

Is it possible to reduce the achievement gap simply by implementing effective instructional practices? Francis Scott Key Middle School in Montgomery County Maryland has learned that building the cultural proficiency of teachers goes beyond classroom practices. The school’s Student Voice Project has transformed ideas about instruction by empowering students’ voices and investing in the infinite power of students’ actions.

Verelst

**From Roadblocks to Bridges**

*Taylor Teichman, Online Resource Specialist, National Sexual Violence Resource Center, Mifflinburg, PA*

The intersection of sexual violence faced by LGBTQ youth who struggle with stable housing is one that is often overlooked. This workshop will educate youth allies on the ways in which this combination creates vulnerability for youth and how we can provide holistic, community-supported services.

Sloane **ACT to Save a Life: Implementing an Evidence-Based Suicide Prevention Program**  
*Meghan Diamon, LCSW, Director of Suicide Prevention, Screening for Mental Health, Wellesley Hills, MA*  
 Youth suicide is a preventable tragedy that can occur when children's mental health needs are unmet. Participants will discuss published research on risk factors for youth suicide, how to implement an evidence-based prevention program, and how to tackle common obstacles that may be encountered. Participants will be prepared to mobilize school staff, parents, and community members to address the critical issues of depression awareness and suicide prevention.

Plimsoll **Working With Kids At Risk and Making a Difference On the Street**  
*Jim C. Taylor, BCBA, Behavioral Analyst, Advanced Behavioral Counselors, Statesboro, GA; Shiann Kilburn, Senior Psychology Major, 100 Collegiate Women of America, and Derrielle M. Brown, Undergraduate, Collegiate 100 Women of America, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*  
 We know that kids living in poverty are four times more likely to drop out of school and five times more likely to go to jail; let's change those odds. Georgia Southern University's The 100 Collegiate Women of America are doing just that. Through mentorship programs in housing projects to creating meaningful relationships with students at risk in schools, change is happening in Statesboro, Georgia. This presentation will share briefly their mission, goals, and objectives, and will focus on what it takes to develop an effective mentoring program. The presenters will share how meaningful relationships are developed, how to build partnerships with schools, and how to increase academic success with youth at risk.

Westbrook **Why Use Norm-Referenced Standardized Tests to Answer: Did I Teach? Did They Learn?**  
*John Hobe, Ed.D., Professor, Georgia Southern University at Armstrong Campus, Savannah, GA*  
 If it is state law that students must attend school, or be homeschooled, until they reach a certain age, then must the state protect them while at public schools? The answer seems self-evident. Indeed, the United States Constitution's 14th Amendment guarantees equal protection under the laws to its citizens. The presenter poses the question: do school practices unintentionally violate this protection? The presentation will focus on two possibilities: (1) Norm-referenced standardized tests (NRSTs) may fail to explain accurately student competence and (2) the Instructional Alignment construct, which explains if we align instruction and assessment conditions, our assessment will accurately explain if we taught and if the students learned.

**2:30 - 3:00 p.m.**  
 Balcony and Lobby

### Visit Exhibitors

**3:00 - 4:15 p.m.**

### Session 3 | Monday Concurrent Sessions

Ballroom A



### Signs and Solutions: Addressing Gang Activity in Schools

*Featured Speaker: Daryl Macaluso, Sergeant, Durham Police Department, Durham, NC*

This presentation is for those with an interest in serving youth with gang affiliations or who are otherwise at risk.. This program was specifically designed for school professionals, law enforcement, and parents involved in or interested in school safety. Participants will gain insight into the criminal gang culture. This presentation contains graphic images of gang violence and strong language.

Ballroom B



### Change Your Language, Change Their Lives

*Featured Speaker: Frank Kros, MSW, JD, President, Transformation Education Institute; CEO and EVP, The Children's Guild; Director, NAREN-TranZed, Transformation Education Institute, Baltimore, MD*

Neuroscience discoveries have revolutionized our understanding of how the brains of our children learn and grow. In particular, brain research reveals how the specific language used by adults who teach, mentor, counsel and parent youth has a much more profound effect on their development than previously realized. Walk away with a new way of talking to youth that builds resilience, promotes intrinsic motivation, enhances cognitive stimulation and creates kaleidoscope thinkers. What you say matters, more than you ever knew!

Ballroom D

**Reviving Realistic Dreams: What a High School Diploma Does for Youth At Risk**

*Patti Huffman, MS, School Counselor, and Mary Ashby, M.Ed., Principal, Wilson County Adult High School, Lebanon, TN*

This non-traditional high school empowers youth at risk to earn a high school diploma as well as revive their dreams that await them beyond high school. Learn what tools and strategies have engendered hope and restored dreams in youths and adults alike. This school welcomes youth at risk and inspires cohorts to graduate college or become career ready on time. By fostering a sense of belonging, safety, success, and hope, “can’t” is transformed into “can” as students realize their dreams.

Ballroom E

**Promoting Resilience and Community in a High-Poverty Urban School**

*Kimberly Mack, Ed.D., Principal, John P. Parker School, Cincinnati, OH; and Pamela Knox, M.Ed., School Community Resource Coordinator, John P. Parker School, Cincinnati, OH*

A high-poverty, low-performing urban school and community learning center—whose population served is 95% African American, 100% on free/reduced lunch, and 30% students with disabilities—experienced a transformation in its consideration of how to develop lifelong learners. The growth mindset and strengths-based characteristics research has been applied to create a school community that yields a student-body focused on their own future success. The strategies that we implemented included parental involvement, community engagement, and shared leadership.

Ballroom F

**Trust Building Tools for Talking with Youth During Times of Conflict**

*Bonnie Springer, Ph.D., Associate Professor, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC; and Andrea Criste, M.Ed., Education Consultant/Trainer, Life Space Crisis Intervention, Atlanta, GA*

This presentation will provide tools and strategies for turning crisis into opportunity. The skills of Life Space Crisis Intervention provide adults with strategies for building trust and connections when faced with the extreme behavior of youth during times of crisis. The strategies center on a meaningful and healing approach, turning crisis into opportunity for youth at risk to develop social responsibility and grow emotionally.

Scarborough 1

**Safe Schools: Addressing Racism, Harassment, Bias and Bullying Through a Youth Development Lens**

*Featured Speaker: John Vandenburg, MA Ed., Executive Officer, Vanden Corporation, Protect Connect Educate Solutions, Murrieta, CA*

This workshop will examine how a network of students, staff, parents and community members can strategically come together to develop activities that address school climate and the prevention of racism, harassment, bullying, and other acts of school violence. Participants will learn the latest youth development research and trends influencing our school climate and the importance of planning in alignment with these trends when developing Safe School Plans.

Scarborough 2

**Transforming High-Risk Classrooms**

*Jeff Dane, Educational Consultant, Certified International Trainer, Kagan Professional Development, Bedford, TX*

Do you want to transform your classroom with ready to use structures that support a growth mindset, peer relationships, and psychological resilience? We will look at four ways to support mindset and a dozen ways to build resiliency. Participants will leave with strategies and structures they can use the next school day.

Scarborough 3



### **Fiery Conversations: Facilitating the Heat Without Getting Burned**

*Featured Speaker: Eric Rowles, MS Ed, CEO/President, Leading to Change, Huntersville, NC*

They are the topics that you just know could cause conflict, but do they really have to lead to physical and verbal drama? These are called “fiery conversations”—and for a reason! Come to this heated, but also healthy, dialogue focused workshop to learn how to facilitate multiple points of view with young people. You will learn not one but five different ways to facilitate fiery conversations and ensure that everyone can speak their mind while agreeing to disagree.

Scarborough 4



### **‘I Can Stop Anytime I Want to But I Just Don’t Want To’: Substance Abuse Education and Treatment for Resistant Youth**

*Featured Speaker: Jeremiah Hopes, LPC, CAADC, Licensed Professional Counselor, The Center of Hopes, Warner Robins, GA*

Drug use and abuse among our nation’s youth continues to present major concerns. Despite our best efforts, illicit drug markets continue to grow, young people continue to poison their brains and bodies. New synthetic and designer drugs continue to emerge from the lab to the lives of youth. This presentation will present innovative approaches and best practice methods to help educate and treat youth who are highly resistant to substance abuse services. This presentation will also present key strategies to quickly and effectively connect with resistant youth and build a strong therapeutic alliance.

Scarborough 5

### **Video Game Music: The Gamification of Music Pedagogy**

*Mark Laughlin, D.M.A., Associate Professor of Music, Georgia Southwestern State University, Americus, GA*

From the first beeps and bleeps of Pong in 1972 to the world’s most-subscribed massively-multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG), World of Warcraft, video games are part of our everyday lives and culture. This presentation will highlight the successes and failures of teaching an online video game music course to the college student at large.

Harborside Center  
East

### **Behavior is a Symptom...Not the Problem: Getting to the Root**

*Featured Speaker: Hotep, Educational Success Strategist, Make A Way Program, Hustle University, Atlanta, GA*

This presentation demystifies the common behavior problems exhibited in schools by first explaining why they occur and then teaching how to change them. This workshop will: (1) share the precursors that lead to behavior problems, (2) suggest how to transform academic and behavioral outcomes,(3) explain what leads to at-risk behaviors and why people repeat the same negative behaviors, and (4) demonstrate how relevance and relationships affect behavior. In the end, attendees will be introduced to what is being called “The New PBIS!”

Percival

### **Changing the Music: Understanding Educational Obstacles for Youth in Foster Care**

*Amie J. Stearns, Educator, Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, Harrisburg, IL*

Due to increased tendency of children in foster care placements to perform poorly in school and to become involved with the juvenile justice system, there is a dire need for school districts to improve support systems for this vulnerable student group. This presentation explores the specific barriers that may hinder educational success for youth in foster care.

- Vernon
- The School of Belonging: A Culture Building Process for Schools and Classrooms**  
*David A. Levine, M.Ed., Director, Teaching Empathy Institute, Stone Ridge, NY*  
 A School of Belonging initiative is a process-oriented approach to professional development that creates cultural practices that embrace social and emotional learning as a cornerstone for a healthy learning community. Many educators with whom I have worked see social and emotional learning as a “thing” or a program; it is neither. Social and emotional learning is a mindset, a consciousness, a way of being. In a School of Belonging, SEL is infused into the fiber of the school through consciousness raising, skill development, and direct application within each interaction that takes place during the school day.
- Verelst
- Sex Trafficking and Social Media: A Teen and Mom Speak Out**  
*Martha Anne Tudor, M.Ed. Candidate in Clinical and Mental Health Counseling, Augusta University, Augusta, GA; and Isabelle Schwartz, High School Student, Davidson Fine Arts School, Augusta, GA*  
 This informative session illuminates the crisis of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) that takes place in our communities and schools. The presenters will demonstrate how traffickers use social media to lure and trap young victims.
- Sloane
- Creating Educational Environments that Nurture Post-Traumatic Growth in Students Overcoming Trauma**  
*Pamela Larde, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Mercer University, Macon, GA*  
 The purpose of this session is to introduce the concept of post-traumatic growth, as well as to offer research-driven strategies designed to support, advocate for, and empower students who are managing traumatic or distressed home and family environments. Results focus on how educators and health professionals can implement strategies and impart coping skills that nurture post-traumatic growth, helping students better integrate into the educational environment and advance to college while managing current or past traumatic experiences.
- Plimsoll
- Contextualizing Ethiopia as a Means of Healing the Black Identity Development of African American Boys**  
*Liya Endale, Doctoral Candidate, and Miles Anthony Irving, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA*  
 This presentation is an overview of a two and a half week international service-learning program that brought a chess team of eight African American boys to a village in Ethiopia to engage in service learning at a local school. The curriculum aimed to help the participants conceptualize race as a core component of self-using the rich history of Ethiopia as a contextualizing factor through experiential learning and cultural immersion.
- Westbrook
- Promoting College Access for High School Students at Risk in Central Florida: A Community-Based Intervention Model**  
*Kelly Astro, MS Ed., Director, Valencia Promise-Take Stock in Children, Valencia College, Orlando, FL*  
 In this interactive session, audience members—which can include high school and college personnel and those interested in higher education advocacy—will have the opportunity to discuss the challenges and rewards of building partnerships in their community that are focused on increasing college access for high school students at risk. We will also explore ways in which other institutions that are underrepresented in these types of prevention initiatives can become active in dropout prevention.

4:45 p.m.

Harborside Center

**Meet & Greet****Master of Ceremonies***Jà Hon Vance, Ed.S., JV Educational Consultants, Owings Mill, MD***Featured Music**

Savannah Arts Academy Skyelite Jazz Combo, led by Michael Nestor, Director of Bands

**Featured Comedian***Christopher Pugh (a.k.a. "Big Chris"), Doctoral Fellow, Instructor, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

Mr. Pugh will challenge and entertain you with a thought-provoking critique of the "mind games" played in academic settings suggesting inadequacies in students. Participants will learn how society has consistently informed students of the importance of a "good" education, so they would be accepted in the general public. What many don't realize is that "school is a sport" that is directly related to our self-worth as a human being, and many people develop a thought process that often mimics societal norms and expectations. After this presentation, participants will be able to understand the difference between school and education and identify ways to empower themselves through everyday life challenges inside and outside of the school setting.

# PBIS

## Southeast Conference on Positive Behavior Interventions and Support

June 4-6, 2018 | Coastal Georgia Center, Savannah, Georgia

### Conference Strands



PBIS Sustainability



ABCs of PBIS

PBIS Individualized  
Intervention

PBIS Mental Health

## REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

DON'T MISS OUT ON KEY THOUGHT LEADERS AND EMERGING TRENDS!

[GeorgiaSouthern.edu/ContEd/sepbis](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu/ContEd/sepbis)

## Tuesday, March 6

**7:30 a.m.**                      **Check-In** (Lobby) | **On-Site Registration** (Second Floor)

**7:30 - 8:30 a.m.**              **Continental Breakfast**

**8:00 a.m.**                      **Exhibits Open**

**8:30 - 9:45 a.m.**              **Session 4 | Tuesday Concurrent Sessions**

Ballroom A



**Increasing African American and Latino Parental Involvement in School** (repeats at 10:15 - 11:30 a.m.)

*Featured Speaker: Rev. Timothy Allen, CEO, Gilead Group, Dorchester, MA*

Parental involvement is one of the leading indicators of students' academic achievement. The lack of parental support frequently found within the African American and Latino communities has often contributed to suspensions, expulsions, and truancy. This interactive seminar will provide participants with useful strategies that can be used to increase the level of parental involvement and help parents understand the importance of their role in their children's academic success.

Ballroom B

**Entrepreneurship Education Empowers Youth to Change their Lives**

*Marianna Brashear, MBA Entrepreneurship, Manager of Curriculum Development & Outreach, Foundation for Economic Education, Atlanta, GA*

This informational session about a fun and exciting hands-on workshop for teens placed at risk focuses on the importance and applications of entrepreneurship. Whether you want to start a business or not, learning the entrepreneurial mindset is necessary for all students no matter their current socioeconomic state or career path. This dynamic workshop can be facilitated by anyone and will inspire students to become self-reliant value creators for society and themselves. Students will feel empowered as they learn invaluable economic concepts, leadership skills, critical and creative thinking, and participate in individual and group projects, which culminate in a shark tank-style competition!

Ballroom D

**New Outlets: Plugging in Makes a Difference**

*Mr. Cary Holman, Ed.S., Principal, and Jennifer Kinsman, Masters of Education, Teacher, LaVergne Middle School, Rutherford County Schools, Murfreesboro, TN*

When working with populations of youth at risk, it is important to establish a climate and culture conducive to their academic and social success. School climate and culture are built by establishing student relationships, offering student engagement activities and listening to student voice. This workshop will give specific tools and strategies that LaVergne Middle School (LMS) has implemented to increase student interests and involvement throughout the school year. LMS has learned how to develop and implement new outlets for students such as the HOUSE character program, climate and culture strategies, student events (Lock-In, Spring Formal, Tailgating), clubs (Drama, Music Entertainment, Media, etc.), and faculty/staff retreats for professional development.

## Ballroom E

**Facilitating Biliteracy Development Through Culturally Efficacious Parental Engagement**

*Summer Pannell, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Ed.S. Program Coordinator, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA; and Ingrid Haynes, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department Chair, and Literacy Consultant, National Literacy Professional Development Consortium, Pearland, TX*

This presentation will focus on data from an engagement literacy program. Presenters will address how the use of non-traditional home engagement and culturally efficacious practices led to the empowerment of culturally and linguistically diverse families. By developing support, leadership, and advocacy, in addition to working with parents to bridge the literacy divide among family members and between the home and school, a sense of community for students, teachers, and family can be established.

## Ballroom F

**Engaging Youth Leaders in Prevention Planning with Developmental Assets, Survey Data, and Social Norms**

*Joe Markiewicz, Senior Consultant/Trainer, Building Stronger Communities, Nicholasville, KY*

This workshop will provide education about the public health model approach as well as risk and protective factors for youth. It will also share best practices on ways to engage youth in classroom settings as well as in large, multi-school student summits designed to address problem behaviors in schools. It will also discuss how student planners can develop student action plans to achieve their goals. Examples of school-based activities and events using youth survey data will be reviewed.

## Scarborough 1

**Computer Games for Motivation**

*Featured Speaker: Dawn White, Ed.D., Instructional Designer, Gwinnett County Public Schools, Duluth, GA*

Motivation is the key factor in the academic success of students. Tapping into students' interests keeps them engaged in learning. One major interest of all students is computer games. Learn how to use computer games to help students improve their academic skills and impact their sense of self-worth. Discover the numerous and free education games available on the Internet and how to use them to transform students at risk into studious learners.

## Scarborough 2

**SPARK: Bad Attitudes Not Bad Kids**

*Featured Speaker: Tom Peterson, Ed.D., Professor, University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA*

Often plagued with problems not of their making, troubled youth find themselves in classrooms where they are quickly labeled as lazy, disruptive, or defiant and quickly erect walls to insulate themselves from what is about to happen. A challenge for even veteran teachers and administrators is how to respond effectively to students whose classroom behavior they find disruptive, disrespectful, irritating, annoying, and a serious threat to classroom etiquette. The SPARK program began with a simple question: What can we do to we solve this problem in our community, inspire defiant youth, and prepare future educators to relate and communicate effectively?

## Scarborough 3

**Strategies to Build Resilience in Students who Have Experienced Trauma**

*Featured Speakers: Eliza M. Hirst, Esq., CWLS, Deputy Child Advocate, Office of the Child Advocate, Wilmington, DE; Teri Lawler, MA, School Psychologist, Red Clay Consolidated School District and CPAC Educational Consultant, New Castle, DE; and Jessica Begley, M.Ed., Training Coordinator, Office of the Child Advocate, Middletown, DE*

In this workshop, participants will learn specific strategies to help engage and connect with students who have been impacted by trauma and toxic stress. Effective tools—with little to no expense—will be presented to build relationships, enhance student engagement, and ultimately improve academic seat time and school achievement.





## Scarborough 4

**What Makes A Bully?**

*Featured Speaker: Jacqueline Y. Smart, Ed.D., Middle School Teacher, Savannah Chatham County School System, Savannah, GA*

The purpose of this presentation is to address strategies on how to improve school climate and culture for youth who are placed at risk in our school systems. A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive and satisfying life. A safe and supportive school climate can help prevent bullying. Safety starts in the classroom.

## Scarborough 5

**Make the Connection and Improve School Climate** (repeats at 10:15 - 11:30 a.m.)

*Featured Speaker: Victor Woods, National Speaker and Published Author, Success International Incorporated, Bloomington, IL*

This presentation is designed for all teachers and administrators prepared to face some inconvenient truths, in an effort to keep their schools free from drug addiction, violence, suicide, and bullying. We will discuss strategies for creating a positive and safe environment for students and staff by bringing together students, educators, families, and communities.

Harborside Center  
East**Engage Me or Enrage! Redefining Images of Young Men of Color** (repeats at 10:15 - 11:30 a.m.)

*Featured Speaker: LaMarr Darnell Shields, Ph.D., Senior Change Agent, The Cambio Group and Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD*

We are losing our boys—not only academically, but also behaviorally and attitudinally—and too often, we fail to see the vulnerable young man who is hiding behind that tough-guy exterior. Boys' under-performance—especially for boys of color and in poverty—is one of this country's biggest barriers to school improvement, and it is tied, at a very basic level, to the disconnect between boys' sense of who they are and what school has to offer them. Turnaround for boys in school starts with understanding their inner lives—the social, emotional, and biochemical drivers of boys' motivation and engagement. This interactive workshop provides the building blocks of success through a powerful examination of male-female brain differences. In addition, Dr. Shields will share his new film, "Beyond Stereotypes," which provides a platform for male students of color to validate important parts of their identities—parts that Black and Latino boys, in American culture, are typically pressured to silence or ignore.

## Percival

**Encouraging Communication, Collaboration, and Ownership of Learning Through the Use of Mobiles**  
*Cynthia C. M. Deaton, Ph.D., Associate Professor, and Sandra M. Linder, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Clemson University, Clemson, SC*

This presentation is geared towards Pre-K-8th Grade teachers who are interested in utilizing technology to support student creativity and understanding of STEM content. We will discuss how to effectively integrate mobile learning in inquiry-based lessons to support students in sharing their understanding of content in meaningful and creative ways. Participants will have a chance to work in groups to participate in iPad activities that can be modified for both formal and informal STEM learning experiences.

## Vernon

**Building the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Capacity for Students, Faculty, and Staff**

*Beverly Smith, Ph.D., Behavioral Engagement Specialist, Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta, GA; and Patricia Ford, Ed.D., Principal, South Atlanta High School, Atlanta, GA*

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process for equipping students and adults with the needed knowledge, attitudes, and skills to appropriately understand and manage emotions. This presentation focuses on enhancing the school culture and climate of a Title I School by intentionally building the SEL capacity of the students, faculty, and staff members. This presentation: (1) increases the awareness of the importance of an inclusive SEL for student and faculty success with a Check and Connect framework, (2) demonstrates value-added in community partnerships for enhanced student learning opportunities, and (3) promotes the relevance of faculty/staff members participating in leadership problem solving to build a positive school climate for students.

- Verelst **Helping Pre-Service Teachers Understand the ‘T’ and ‘Q’ in LGBTQ**  
*George Darden, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, and Jamie B. Lewis, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Georgia Gwinnett College, Lawrenceville, GA*  
 The pre-service teachers we mentor at Georgia Gwinnett College are generally more confused by and less accepting of transgender and queer students than they are of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. This presentation will help teacher educators consider ways that they may lead pre-service teachers to be more sensitive to the needs of transgender and queer youth.
- Sloane **Healthy Transitions: Peer Leadership Among Youth with Behavioral Health Issues**  
*Vickie Harden, Ph.D., Faculty, and Nikki Jones, DSW, Faculty, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN*  
 Healthy Transitions is a system of care model in which youth and young adults lead the development of programming and are instrumental in the way in which services are delivered. This presentation will explore how to embed youth and young adult voices into programming and empower youth and young adults experiencing mental health issues. The presentation informs participants about peer-led support as part of recovery-focused life. Engaging community members, providers, and educators as part of this initiative, and forging opportunities outside of the traditional mental health system are part of the components discussed in this presentation.
- Plimsoll **Are You Real? Fake? What’s the Deal? Effective Parent Involvement Requires REALationships**  
*Ange Anglade, MSW, Program Director, LaShaune Lee, LICSW, Clinical Social Work Coordinator, and Chanel Banks, MSW, Program Coordinator, Christ Child Society, Washington, DC*  
 This session is for administrators, teachers, counselors, and social workers who are interested in developing true partnerships with parents to increase involvement and engagement in student achievement. After school programs and schools are always looking for the “magic” activity that can guarantee interest and increase parental involvement. However, they often overlook an important element: How they are showing up in their relationship with parents. This session will challenge participants to look at their communication and relationship with parents, acknowledging their feelings about families and identifying how these feelings help or hinder their work with families. Participants will receive proven strategies and tools that will help them create true partnerships, gain parent support, and increase involvement.
- Westbrook **Holistic Advising: A Proactive Intervention for Success**  
*Arion Jett-Seals, MSSW, Consultant and Family Resource Youth Services Center Coordinator, Fayette County Public Schools and Holistic Rise: Personal and Professional Development, Lexington, KY*  
 This session will introduce the process and effectiveness of holistic advising. The holistic approach takes into consideration all of the intricacies of a person. Holistic advisors offer both an educational and mentoring experience to advisees. Taking previous advising models and applying a social work case management-like strategy, the presenter creates a more holistic approach by offering wraparound services for students, allowing for a more proactive intervention method. We will discuss meeting the whole student—considering the student’s personal, emotional, cultural, financial, and familial issues before they can become a barrier and negatively influence the student’s educational success.
- 9:45 - 10:15 a.m. Visit Exhibitors**

**10:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Poverty Simulation**

Harborside Center  
West

*Facilitated by: Deonn Stone, Ed.D., Lead Professional Learning Coach and Induction Specialist, Savannah-Chatham County Public School System, Savannah, GA*

Please join us for a rare opportunity to understand what many of our youth living in poverty face on a daily basis. Approximately 32.9 million Americans—11.7 million of whom are children under the age of 18—live in poverty every day. Many more have incomes above the poverty line, but their incomes are still low enough to qualify for programs like Food Stamps and Medicaid. The recent economic downturn has seen unemployment rates rise and the use of emergency food pantries increase. It is difficult for those of us who have enough to understand fully the situations that families living in poverty experience every day; the decisions they have to make; and the fears and frustrations they feel. That is why we are inviting you to walk a mile in the shoes of those facing poverty by participating in the Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS). The CAPS provides participants with the opportunity to assume the role of a low-income family member living on a limited budget. The experience is divided into four 15-minute sessions, each of which represents one week in which you must provide for your family and maintain your home. As one participant commented, “This simulation dramatically demonstrates how much time and energy many families have to give just to survive from day to day.” It quickly dispels the myth “that people would do fine if they would only go out and get a job!”

**Please note:** The Poverty Simulation Session starts at 10:00 a.m. and continues until 12:15 p.m. Space is limited to 80 participants, please register ahead and arrive at the simulation at least ten minutes before start time.

**10:15 - 11:30 a.m.**

**Session 5 | Tuesday Concurrent Sessions**

Ballroom A



**Increasing African American and Latino Parental Involvement in School**

*Featured Speaker: Rev. Timothy Allen, CEO, Gilead Group, Dorchester, MA*

Parental involvement is one of the leading indicators of students’ academic achievement. The lack of parental support frequently found within the African American and Latino communities has often contributed to suspensions, expulsions, and truancy. This interactive seminar will provide participants with useful strategies that can be used to increase the level of parental involvement and help parents understand the importance of their role in their children’s academic success.

Ballroom B



**Reaching the Wounded Student**

*Featured Speaker: Joe Hendershott, Ed.D., President, Hope 4 The Wounded, Inc., Kissimmee, FL*

Based on the presenter’s book *Reaching The Wounded Student*, this session will look at ways to encourage the wounded student to find academic and life success. By looking at the effects of trauma, this practitioner will describe methods for boosting esteem, creating empathic connections, and cultivating community. Other topics discussed will be devising alternative discipline to help students remain in the classroom, increase achievement, and ultimately graduate from high school.

Ballroom D

**Improving Literacy Skills of all Students at the Secondary Level: A Practical Approach**

*Tabathia Baldy, Ed.D., Director for Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions/Supports (PBIS), Colquitt County Schools, Moultrie, GA; Frederick Smith, Sr. Ed.S., Principal, Charlie A. Gray Junior High School, Moultrie, GA; Kristen Harrison, M.Ed., Assistant Principal, Colquitt County Schools, Moultrie, GA; and Betsy Jones, M.A.T., Teacher, Colquitt County High School, Moultrie, GA*

The sheer number of students reading below grade level often overwhelms secondary schools. Sadly, secondary educators are faced with either ignoring the problem or only intervening with a small number of students. In this session designed for educators, participants will learn how one school district is using a systematic approach within their large secondary schools to improve the literacy skills of all students.

## Ballroom E

**Re-imagining RTI: Creating a Multi-Tiered Support System for Secondary Students At Risk**

*Molly Ferryman, Title I Coordinator, The Academy of Urban Scholars, Columbus, OH*

In this hands-on, interactive presentation, secondary administrators, Title I Coordinators, and classroom teachers will not only learn how to establish buy-in for their developing Response to Intervention (RTI) programs, but also how to develop a multi-tiered support system in their schools that successfully identifies students who are at risk and struggling before they experience failure in the classroom. They will also learn how to implement RTI with efficacy and fidelity at the secondary school level, which is essential for increasing student learning and turning around low-performing schools. Participants will take away a wealth of information and materials, which can be used to design a RTI model at the secondary level that incorporates high-quality instruction, frequent progress monitoring, increasingly intense levels of intervention and data-based decision-making. Attendees will also learn how collaboration plays an essential role in identifying, documenting, and evaluating a student's progression through the multi-tiered support system that is RTI.

## Ballroom F

**Addicted Brain: Reducing the Risk for Substance Abuse**

*Dontay Williams, LAPC, Mental Health Counselor, Mercer University, Macon, GA*

This interactive presentation aims to combat the growing epidemic of substance abuse within the community. The presentation is well suited for individuals of all ages. Topics will focus on preventing the risk for substance abuse, raising awareness of the impact of addiction on the individual and family system. Lastly, the presentation will provide participants with relevant skills, resources, and education for overcoming addiction.

## Scarborough 1

**From the Street to the Classroom**

*Featured Speaker: Jim C. Taylor, M.Ed., Behavioral Analyst, Advanced Behavioral Counselors, Statesboro, GA*

This presentation will focus on how we as educators, families, and communities can work together to establish systems to maximize student success. Regardless of the interventions in the classroom, success will be minimal unless interventions also include a family and community approach. This presentation will examine those interventions directed at improving student behavior through culturally aligned classroom interventions, increasing parent involvement, and increasing community involvement. We will examine present school policies and interventions that may inhibit the educational progress of students at risk as well as review partnerships established between educators, parents, and the community that can strengthen appropriate student behavior. Participants will also participate in a group discussion of how they can facilitate a change in methods and approaches presently used to address the issues that occur when the street meets the classroom.

## Scarborough 2

**Your True Colors**

*Michelle Thomas, Ed.D., Superintendent, and Aleta Townsel-Benson, M.Ed., Deputy Superintendent, Richard Allen Schools, Dayton, OH*

The presentation deals with the Heart and Home strands by providing the school with a climate that is conducive to learning in the classroom. It gives the participant a chance to examine their own biases and look at how that may affect students' learning. It explains how cultural diversity is a positive attribute that brings awareness to the students in the classroom thereby creating a unified setting for all. It also gives tips as to how to deal with parents who are minorities by involving them and seeking first to understand them.

Scarborough 3

**Trauma Intervention Strategies for School Counselors: A Collaborative Approach**

*Maegan Vick, M.Ed., Doctoral Student, and Sarah McClausland Flint, M.Ed., Forensic Interviewer, Auburn University, Auburn, AL*

This session focuses on educational and counseling strategies for school counselors working with children who have experienced and displayed trauma symptoms. This includes an emphasis on identifying the manifestation of trauma symptoms in the school setting and understanding how those symptoms influence social, emotional, and academic success. Specific interventions, resources, and strategies will be provided. These interventions will include consideration of elementary, middle, and high school students.

Scarborough 4

**Panel Discussion: Bullying**

*Moderator: Eric Landers, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*  
*Panelists: Jacqueline Y. Smart, Ed.D., Teacher, Savannah Chatham County School System, Savannah, GA; Kay Higgs, M.Ed., Program Manager/Trainer, STARS Nashville, Nashville, TN; Patti Agatston, Ph.D., Licensed Professional Counselor/Consultant, Prevention/Intervention Center, Powder Springs, GA; Anita D. Sanders, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, Gardner Webb University, Gastonia, NC; Robert "Colby" Jones, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, LaGrange College, LaGrange, GA; David A. Levine, M.Ed., Director, Teaching Empathy Institute, Stone Ridge, NY; Keonya Booker, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC; and Jessica Begley, M.Ed., Training Coordinator, Office of the Child Advocate, Middletown, DE*

This panel is set to push the boundaries of typical bullying prevention and propose fresh ideas for solutions in schools. Bullying prevention is one of the most pressing topics in education today. With many instances of school violence linked to bullying, schools are actively seeking practical solutions that can curtail this epidemic.

Scarborough 5

**Make the Connection and Improve School Climate**

*Featured Speaker: Victor Woods, National Speaker and Published Author, Success International Incorporated, Bloomington, IL*

This presentation is designed for all teachers and administrators prepared to face some inconvenient truths, in an effort to keep their schools free from drug addiction, violence, suicide, and bullying. We will discuss strategies for creating a positive and safe environment for students and staff by bringing together students, educators, families, and communities.

Harborside Center East

**Engage Me or Enrage! Redefining Images of Young Men of Color**

*Featured Speaker: LaMarr Darnell Shields, Ph.D., Senior Change Agent, The Cambio Group and Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD*

We are losing our boys—not only academically, but also behaviorally and attitudinally—and too often, we fail to see the vulnerable young man who is hiding behind that tough-guy exterior. Boys' under-performance—especially for boys of color and those in poverty—is one of this country's biggest barriers to school improvement, and it is tied, at a very basic level, to the disconnect between boys' sense of who they are and what school has to offer them. Turnaround for boys in school starts with understanding their inner lives—the social, emotional, and biochemical drivers of boys' motivation and engagement. This interactive workshop provides the building blocks of success through a powerful examination of male-female brain differences. In addition, Dr. Shields will share his new film, "Beyond Stereotypes," that provides a platform for male students of color to validate important parts of their identities—parts that Black and Latino boys, in American culture, have been typically pressured to silence or ignore.

Percival

**Bull's Eye: Hitting the Target for Every Student**

*Dianne Connolly, M.Ed., Pentucket Lake School, Haverhill, MA; and Sara Hastings, M.Ed., Reading Specialist, Haverhill Public School, Haverhill, MA*

Hitting the reading target for every student requires precision, skill, and practice. Learn how a dedicated Professional Learning Community (PLC) of teachers, support staff, administration, and specialist created a targeted Tiered Reading System for all students. Shared mission + shared responsibility = shared success. The Massachusetts Commissioner of Education recognized Pentucket Lake School for their extensive turnaround work and closing the achievement gap. Participants will leave this session with the tools, videos, and training to implement this targeted instruction.

Vernon

**Setting the Stage for Success: Empowering Students At Risk**

*Sarah Mayberry, Ed.D., Media Specialist, Burdell-Hunt Magnet Elementary School, Macon, GA*

Teachers and school leaders will gain an understanding of how students in an inner city, Title I elementary school have used goal setting, data tracking, and leadership habits to empower their learning and set the stage for student success. Participants will also learn how these practices have enabled students to participate in student-led parent conferences.

Verelst

**End Gun Violence: Step Forward Initiative**

*Featured Speakers: Interim Chief Mark Revenew, and Captain Lenny Gunther, Savannah Police Department, Savannah, GA*

Interim Chief Revenew and Captain Gunther use a Community Oriented Policing approach in Savannah-Chatham, reminding citizens that keeping our community safe is a shared responsibility. Learn how the Savannah Police Department is working with youth and families to keep the community safe from gangs, violence, and drugs.

Sloane

**Trauma, Teen Dating Violence, and Academic Achievement: What Can We Do?**

*Adair White-johnson, Ph.D., Youth Empowerment Expert, Executive Director, The Empowerment House, Powder Springs, GA; and Tamiko Lowry-Pugh, CLC, Executive Director, The Still Standing Foundation, Austell, GA*

This presentation is designed to share the scope and impact of teen dating violence on youth and its relationship to academic achievement. The presentation will assist adults who work with youth to become prepared to recognize, prevent, and manage teen dating violence when it occurs in their school, youth group, or organization. We will introduce the F.R.E.E. Formula—a practical model designed to teach educators and teens specific strategies and techniques to combat teen dating violence.

Plimsoll

**Packing Climate Change: Building Positive Culture, Climate, and School Success**

*Tiffany N. Taylor, Ph.D., 2017 GASSP Principal of the Year, Principal, Carver Road Middle School, Griffin, GA*

Does your organization need strategies to tackle climate change? Then this session is right for you. Come listen to the 2017 GASSP Middle School Principal of the Year share strategies for planning a school-wide discipline plan and ways to monitor and measure success with professional learning communities.

Westbrook

**Developing Teacher's Funds of Knowledge of Diverse Adolescents At Risk Through Young Adult Literature**

*Paula Greathouse, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Tennessee Technological University, Mt. Juliet, TN; and Joan F. Kaywell, Ph.D., Professor, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL*

If teachers want to be successful in reaching and teaching all learners, the development of funds of knowledge must continue throughout an entire teacher's career, as classroom demographics are continually changing. This session spotlights the reading of YA literature to develop teachers' funds of knowledge regarding diverse adolescents at risk and how culturally relevant pedagogies can stem from this experience.

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. **Lunch on Your Own - Enjoy Savannah!**

1:00 - 2:15 p.m. **Session 6 | Tuesday Concurrent Sessions**

Ballroom A



**Teaching Diverse Learners the Words They Need to Succeed** (repeats at 2:45 - 4:00 p.m.)

*Featured Speaker: Joanne M. Billingsley, M.Ed., President, Billingsley Education, San Antonio, TX*  
Research tells us that students develop complex language skills, when they talk, read, write, and share ideas about what they are learning. Engaging in open conversation, reading and writing collaboratively, allows students to learn from each other and practice using the academic language. By articulating their thoughts, students make connections to content and to others. In this session, participant will actively engage with strategies that effectively use imagery, gesturing, conversation, and word play as springboards to jumpstart conversations, enhance vocabulary, and develop reading and writing skills. Learn how to reduce stress, improve attitudes, and make reading a lifelong passion!

Ballroom B



**Traditional Approaches to Hispanic Academic Success**

*Featured Speaker: Wesley Montoya, Ph.D., Principal, Gilliam School, Denver Public Schools, Denver, CO*  
This session presents participants with strategies that highlight the cultural traditions that Hispanic families often follow to teach their children. Dr. Montoya will discuss how to build relationships with Hispanic students and their families, how to provide a family like atmosphere in school, as well as how to challenge and assist Hispanic students by allowing them to work through a process of discovery at their own pace to help them grow academically.

Ballroom D

**Implementing the Innovative On Tour STEAM Art Integration Curriculum Program in a Georgia Title I School with Amazing Results**

*Lisa Williams, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent, Thomas County Schools, Thomasville, GA; James Thompson, Ed.S., Principal, Thomas County Schools, Thomasville, GA; Emily Holton, M.Ed. In Art Education, Art Educator, Thomas County School System, Tallahassee, FL; Ronny Green, Ph.D., Professor, Rudo Tsemunhu, Ph.D., Associate Professor, and Bill Truby, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA*

How did a Title I school located in a designated rural Georgia school district implement a Pilot On Tour STEAM Art Integration Curriculum Program to promote a balanced curriculum for Title I students? Findings and leadership practices from this study will be shared and presenters will be available during and after the conference along with supporting handouts.

Ballroom E

**Cultivating Empathy Through Project-Based Civic Action with Early Childhood Students and Students with Special Needs**

*Holly Hilboldt Swain, Ph.D., Clinical Assistant Professor of Early Childhood and Elementary Education, University of Alabama, Ozark, AL*

This session will provide innovative teaching strategies successfully used in Title I classrooms in rural Alabama to foster empathy using project-based teaching of active community service with students in early childhood—specifically with students with special needs. Differentiated examples of teaching volunteerism will be given for practical application of varied lessons designed to meet the multi-needs of inclusive classrooms. Presenters will showcase resources for engaging students in collective social action as attendees take an active role in a range of lessons first demonstrating building empathy inside the classroom and then outside the classroom through civic experiences with community service.

Ballroom F

**Using the Cluster Support Team and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to Provide Wraparound Services in a Large Urban School District**

*Sarah E. Coffey, M.S.Ed., Coordinator of Behavior Support Team, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, Nashville, TN; Lorraine Stallworth, M.A., Coordinator of Restorative Practices, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, Nashville, TN; Tony Majors, Ed.D., Executive Director, Student Services, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, Nashville, TN; Kay Higgs, M.A.Ed., Program Manager/Trainer, STARS Nashville, Nashville, TN; LeTrecia Gloster, Executive Director of School Support and Instruction, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, Nashville, TN; Yvette Carter, M.S., Lead Counselor, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, Nashville, TN; and Keith Ekhaton, LMSW, LSSW, Coordinator of Social Work, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, Nashville, TN*

In this presentation, participants will learn how a large, urban school district utilizes the Cluster Support Team model and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to provide wraparound services to include school counselors, social workers, behavioral analysts, restorative practitioners, and mental health specialists. Participants will receive an overview of support services, and review data from the district.

Scarborough 1

**Building a Better Risk Prevention Model**

*Steven Hornyak, Coordinator of Accountability, Houston County Schools, Perry, GA*

This presentation chronicles the work of Houston County Schools in developing a risk prevention model built on more than ten years of longitudinal student data. In its second year of implementation, Houston At-Risk Profiles (HARP) has proven effective in identifying those students most in need of support and linking them to interventions and supports that lead to improved outcomes and significantly reduced failure.

Scarborough 2

**Panel Discussion: Unmasking Mean Girls**

*Moderator: Mary A. Felton, Ed.D., Assistant Principal, Evans County Schools, Claxton Elementary, Claxton, GA*

*Panelists: Cassandra Campbell, Program Manager, Direct Delivery Bullying Prevention for Girl Scouts, Girls Scouts of Historic Georgia, Savannah, GA; LaShaune Lee, LICSW, Clinical Social Work Coordinator, Christ Child Society, Washington, DC; Phylicia Anderson, MSW, District Behavior Interventionist, Savannah Chatham County Public School System, Savannah, GA; Chanel Banks, MSW, Program Coordinator, Christ Child Society, Washington, DC; Adair White-johnson, Ph.D., Youth Empowerment Expert, Executive Director, The Empowerment House, Powder Springs, GA; Kiana Battle, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Social Work, Middle Georgia State University, Griffin, GA; Antoinette L. Dunstan, Education Specialist, Mentor and Peer Facilitation Coordinator, Rockdale County Public Schools, Conyers, GA; and Natalie S. King, Ph.D., Professor, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA*

This featured panel discusses the prevalence of female juvenile violence; reported incidences of this violence; the life pathways that lead girls to violence; the factors associated with resistance from violent behavior; and implications for families, schools, and communities for ending violent school-girl behavior.

Scarborough 3

**Systemic Perspective of Conduct Disorder in Adolescents**

*Charmayne Adams, MA, Professional Counselor, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN*

This presentation explores the systemic nature of conduct disorder (CD) and the effect it has on individuals, educational settings, and communities. It addresses the systemic nature of the diagnosis through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model and looks at interventions for each layer of the model. This presentation also acknowledges the disproportionate rate of youth at risk, especially male youth of color diagnosed with CD.

Scarborough 4

**You've Got the POWARR! An Integrated Approach to Literacy and STEM**

*Marquita S. Blades, Ed.D., Lead Consultant, Dr. Blades Consulting, Powder Springs, GA*

In this highly engaging session, participants will learn to use the POWARR Method® to encourage the increased use of literacy in STEM courses. The POWARR method is a collaborative approach to writing, which requires students to evaluate their work through questioning, justification, and the application of basic scientific principles.



Scarborough 5



### **Digging Deeper: Understanding the Effects of Poverty on Youth and Collectively Working Towards Justice**

*Featured Speaker: Dr. Rajni Shankar-Brown, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Jessie Ball Chair of Social Justice, Stetson University, DeLand, FL*

Poverty and homelessness, especially for families with school-age children, are significant concerns that merit our immediate attention. Through data, narrative research, and stories, this presentation will discuss the devastating impact of poverty and homelessness on students' academic achievement, social-emotional well-being, and physical health—collectively calling educational stakeholders to intentionally remedy these adverse effects. The presentation will illuminate the complex dynamics of poverty and its myriad effects on students, PreK-12, along with effective strategies to build holistic resilience, address trauma, and support the diverse needs of low-income students. Examples of responsive school-classroom practices, collaborative community initiatives, innovative ideas for promoting healthy development, and increasing the educational opportunities for economically disadvantaged students will be shared. Participants will also receive a handout with practical strategies and a list of additional resources to help facilitate visible impact and positive change!

Percival

### **A Teaching-Learning Grant Initiative: Developing the Critical Literacy Instructional Abilities of Pre-Service Educators**

*Anne Katz, Ph.D., Professor, and Vivian Bynoe, M.L.I.S., Reference and Instruction Librarian, Georgia Southern University, Armstrong Campus, Savannah, GA*

Pre-service educators in a class section of “Exploring Socio-Cultural Perspectives on Diversity in Educational Contexts” were introduced to the concept of critical literacy. Throughout the course of the semester, students were provided with the opportunity to apply their knowledge of this framework through a series of discussions around the young adult novel, *Does My Head Look Big in This?* Guest speakers—in the form of a local high school student who recently began wearing a hijab to school, as well as a visiting scholar who specializes in critical literacy—worked to expand students' perspectives. Results of a pre- and post-test, as well as reflections on strategies that can be utilized in a classroom to teach children and young adults to read from a critical literacy viewpoint, will be shared.

Vernon

### **Working Together: Building K-12/College Mentor Partnerships to Support Students with Learning Differences**

*Tammy Graham, Ed.D., Associate Professor, The Citadel, Charleston, SC; Renee Jefferson, Ph.D., Professor and Assistant Dean for Assessment and Continuous Improvement, The Citadel: The Military College of South Carolina, Charleston, SC; Koy Adam Mai, Cadet, The Citadel - SLDAC (Student Learning Disabilities Association of the Citadel), Charleston, SC; Gage Russell, Sophomore, The Citadel Zucker Family School of Education, Charleston, SC; Ashley Cannon, M.A.T. Special Education, Department Chair and Teacher of Exceptional Children, The Citadel, Charleston, SC; Mary Ile Taylor, Ed.S., Director of Student Success, The Charleston Catholic School, Charleston, SC*

In an interactive discussion with audience members, presenters will share ideas for developing positive mentor-mentee partnerships between K-12 schools and colleges; discuss the impact of two recently established mentor partnerships, as well as perspectives from college student mentors and K-12 teachers of student mentees with learning differences. The presenters will also collaboratively examine data to discuss potential program adaptations and provide mentoring activities that audience members can utilize.

Verelst

### **Shattered Ground: Mental Health Disorders in Children—A Hidden Crisis**

*Yvonne Hefner, Ed.D., Assistant Professor of Special Education, Georgia Gwinnett College, Lawrenceville, GA*

This session will offer teachers an in-depth understanding of mental health disorders, including basic information about these disorders, background information to assist in identifying early warning signs and strategies for supporting students that may suffer from a mental health disorder. Teachers will learn classroom strategies that foster a positive learning environment and help to support these students.

- Sloane **Identifying and Fostering Health in Families**  
*Barbara F. Turnage, Ph.D., Interim Associate Dean, Vickie Harden, Ph.D., Faculty, and Nikki Jones, LCSW, Faculty, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN*  
 Raising children to be healthy participating members of society is not an easy job. This presentation works to accomplish the following: (1) define characteristics of healthy families, (2) discuss strengths of LGBTQ+ families, and (3) provide strategies to work with parental mental health issues. This presentation helps attendees examine notions of family. The intended audience is anyone who works with families.
- Plimsoll **Transforming Youth from Within**  
*Tom Peterson Ed.D., Professor of Critical Theory and Philosophy of Education, Mileigh Rabun, Teacher, and Joshua D. Moore, Graduate Assistant, The University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA*  
 This presentation will share the SPARK Mentoring Program's journey of letting go of traditional behavioral models in working with youth from high-risk backgrounds. We will provide evidenced-based insight into creating a community of acceptance through a program that embraces identity and integrity as a way to connect undergraduate students and defiant youth. This workshop is for any individual who works with youth in any capacity.
- Westbrook **21st Century Teacher Preparation for Youth At Risk**  
*Mark Warner, Ed.D., Professor, Kennesaw State University, Marietta, GA*  
 Students coming from at risk backgrounds and entering schools today differ from those of the past in terms of their technological literacy and educational experiences. Therefore, to influence effectively the learning of all students, educators must discover relevant curriculum that enables constructivist pedagogy, which is "real world," technology rich, and authentically assessed and addresses national content standards. In other words, if educators value youth placed at risk and thoroughly participate in the necessary preparation to teach them, then students and teachers must engage in active, purposeful learning that is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and culturally relevant.

2:15 - 2:45 p.m.

**Visit Exhibitors**

2:45 - 4:00 p.m.

**Session 7 | Tuesday Concurrent Sessions**

Ballroom A

**Teaching Diverse Learners the Words They Need to Succeed***Featured Speaker: Joanne M. Billingsley, M.Ed., President, Billingsley Education, San Antonio, TX*

Research tells us that students develop complex language skills, when they talk, read, write, and share ideas about what they are learning. Engaging in open conversation, reading and writing collaboratively, allows students to learn from each other and practice using the academic language. By articulating their thoughts, students make connections to content and to others. In this session, participant will actively engage with strategies that effectively use imagery, gesturing, conversation, and word play as springboards to jumpstart conversations, enhance vocabulary, and develop reading and writing skills. Learn how to reduce stress, improve attitudes, and make reading a lifelong passion!

Ballroom B

**Collaborating with School Leaders and Librarians**

*Leann Taylor, Ph.D., Lecturer of Instructional Leadership, Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, TN*

The image of the librarian was once generally stereotyped as a spinster, portrayed as a cranky, old, unmarried female whose only importance was to silence the sound of chatter and laughter created by children in the library. This image of the stereotypical librarian has often been reinforced through popular media. For instance, when visualizing a librarian, many envision Mary, George's wife in the 1946 movie "It's a Wonderful Life." The objective of this presentation is to dispel this stereotype using collaborative partnerships between school administrators and librarians.

Ballroom D

**Relate. Motivate. Educate.**

*Libby Parker, Ed.D., Principal, Holy Family School-Huntsville, Huntsville, AL; and Amanda Lemons, Ed.D., Instructional Coach, Buckhorn Middle School, New Market, AL*

We will present K-12 Teachers and Administrators with materials and strategies to develop positive relationships with students and motivate them through the learning cycle and life. We will examine the impact of relationships and motivation on student achievement, especially students at risk. Participants will become familiar with tools and strategies for developing relationships, exploring instructional materials and strategies that promote character and growth mindset, and reviewing assessment strategies and practices that motivate students and encourage growth.

Ballroom E

**Strategic Approaches: Academic Success Strategies for Students At Risk**

*Courtney Plotts, ABD, National Chair, Council For At Risk Student Education and Professional Standards, Tampa, FL*

The interactive session begins with a general introduction to the model of teaching for students at risk and its significance in online classroom culture. Lecture and small group activities are used to illustrate the application of various dimensions of teaching strategies that increase student engagement and positive student outcomes in the classroom. This session closes with questions, answers, and participants' reflections.

Ballroom F

**Panel Discussion: Meeting the Challenges of Rural Education**

*Moderator: Robert Lake, Ed.D., Associate Professor, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*  
*Panelists: Valerie Roberts, Doctorate in Educational Leadership, Superintendent, Stewart County Schools, Lumpkin, GA; Vickie Harden, Ph.D., Faculty, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN; Tabathia Baldy, Ed.D., Director for Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions/Supports (PBIS), Colquitt County Schools, Moultrie, GA; Summer Pannell, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Ed.S. Program Coordinator, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA; and Torian A. White, Ph.D., Principal, Southeast Bulloch Middle School, Brooklet, GA*

Schools in rural areas and small towns face difficult challenges in serving the needs of children and public education. This panel presentation discusses how best to serve the special needs of rural youth and schools. The panel shares successful programs, strategies, and tools for meeting the challenges of rural education.

Scarborough 1

**W.I.L.D. Fire: Reinvigorating and Reimagining the Campaign for Youth Engagement**

*Christopher Conner, BA, English and Sociolinguistics, W.I.L.D. Program Coordinator, Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, Jacksonville, FL*

The Wildlife Immersion and Leadership Development (W.I.L.D.) Program provides paid employment and leadership experiences for culturally diverse teens from under-supported communities in Jacksonville, Florida. Hear from the staff of this award-winning program to learn ways that modernize youth advocacy, promote cultural representation, refine nature connections, and support emerging leaders within your own communities.

Scarborough 2

**Ethical Considerations for Behavioral Support: Least Intrusive Planning**

*Todd Stephens, Ph.D., Professor, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, Eau Claire, WI; Angela Dalhoe, Ph.D., Professor, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, Eau Claire, WI; and Tom J. Clees, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Georgia, Athens, GA*

This session will identify levels of intervention to support the needs of learners. Multiple real-life examples will be presented to describe levels of intrusiveness and how practitioners might use these interventions to assure ethical and effective programming in schools, in community-based programs, and clinical settings.

Scarborough 3

**Describing the Parent University Journey to the World**

*Featured Speaker: Michael O'Neal, Organization Founder and Executive Director, Parent University, Savannah, GA*

This presentation will highlight the evolution of the Parent University, which has positively influenced the Savannah community for over 19 years. The presenter will describe the process from planning and development to the maintenance of a parent-centered program.

Scarborough 4

**Engaging Data-Based Problem-Solving to Address Chronic Absenteeism Among PreK-12 Students**

*Amber Humm Brundage, Ph.D., Coordinator for Research and Evaluation, Florida Problem-Solving and Response to Intervention Project at University of South Florida, Tampa, FL*

The focus of this presentation is to increase participant knowledge and skill in data-based problem-solving of chronic absenteeism among PreK-12 students. The session will start with a brief overview of the literature related to the contributors, implications, and interventions for chronic absenteeism and a description of tools to measure the reasons for chronic absenteeism from multiple informants. The tools to be covered in the presentation are the Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism (RCA) and the Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism-Parent (RCA-P).

Scarborough 5

**Grief and At-Risk Behaviors: Through the Eyes of a Teen**

*Kiana Battle, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Social Work, Middle Georgia State University, Griffin, GA*

This presentation will explore the effects that grief has on adolescents, including at-risk behaviors, identity confusion, issues of self-worth, and many more. The presentation will illustrate the positive impact that grief-counseling groups have among adolescents (with a special focus in the public school environment). Barriers that hinder the effective delivery of group counseling within the public school arena will also be addressed (such barriers are amount of time in the school day, student caseload, and administrative support). This presentation will also address the critical role that school social workers play in effectively providing group-counseling interventions to adolescents who are affected by grief and loss.

Percival

**Cultivating a Culture of Creativity, One Spam Carving at a Time!**

*Kasey Bozeman, MS, County Extension Agent, University of Georgia, Liberty County Extension, Hinesville, GA*

Educational researchers find that creativity and imagination are essential for learning, especially for difficult to reach students. How can you have a creativity-building activity that also develops critical social, emotional, and life skills for youth-at-risk populations? Educators from all areas can learn how to implement a series of creative challenges, such as mind puzzles, mystery games, and even Spam—yes, the canned meat—carving!

- Vernon **The Poverty Simulation: Increasing Teacher Sensitivity for Students Living in Poverty**  
*Aviva Goelman Rice, Ed.D., Coordinator of Professional Learning, Bryan County Schools, Black Creek, GA; Linda Ann McCall, Ed.D., Associate Professor, Georgia Southern University, Armstrong Campus, Savannah, GA; and Jacquelyn E. Ogden, MED, Faculty Member and County Agent, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension, Savannah, GA*  
 This presentation describes the Poverty Simulation in southeast Georgia and its history. Survey data reveals increased teacher empathy toward students and their families who live in poverty. Strategies for improving the academic achievement and socio-emotional skills of children living in poverty are offered. Target audiences include educators and instructional designers. Handouts will be given and participants are encouraged to enter dialogue with the presenters.
- Verelst **Keeping Everyone Safe in a Violent Situation!**  
*Matt Eldridge, Ed.S., Master Trainer and CEO, Certified Restraint Training, LLC, Livingston, TN*  
 This session will introduce specific restraint methods to use in a violent situation happening in a public or private school setting. The following topics will be discussed: types and causes of stress in the classroom; de-escalation techniques, both verbal and non-verbal; safety rules; when and how to administer various restraint techniques; and federal laws regarding restraint and isolation.
- Sloane **Dismantling the School to Prison Pipeline: Meeting the Needs of Students of Color Placed At Risk**  
*Karla Sapp, Ed.D., Licensed Professional Counselor, U Matter Consulting and Counseling, Midway, GA*  
 School mental health initiatives tend to seek to address the gap between students of color placed at risk who need them and those who receive mental health services and/or interventions that do not lead to exclusionary discipline. This presentation focuses on identifying interventions that incorporate both positive behavioral intervention and supports with mental health, which would reduce the school to prison pipeline and promote healthy development among students of color placed at risk.
- Plimsoll **Building Family Engagement Through Fathers, and Father-Figures, of Your Students Volunteering a Full School Day**  
*Keith Schumacher, Associate of Applied Science, National Coordinator, WATCH D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students), Springdale, AR*  
 WATCH D.O.G.S.® is a family engagement educational initiative that utilizes the influence of fathers and father figures to provide active, positive, adult male role models for the students. Come learn how to successfully launch the WATCH D.O.G.S. program in your school(s) to support education and safety and increase family engagement.
- Westbrook **Enhancing Well-Being While Boosting Self-Esteem and Closing the Achievement Gap**  
*Marcia Wade, Master's Degree, Teacher, PE Academic Coach, and Consultant, Math and Movement, Oak Ridge, TN*  
 You can have increased well-being (physical, mental, and emotional) and increased test scores in just 15 minutes per day. In this session, understand how movement affects learning and well-being, review the data on a program that ramps up key skills and understand how easy it is to help your students succeed!

**4:00 - 5:30 p.m.**  
Harborside Center  
East

### **Poster Presentations**

Join us in Harborside Center East for posters along with light refreshments. Over 30 posters provide an opportunity for networking and one-on-one discussion with knowledgeable experts in a wide variety of areas. Posters feature visual aids and handouts.

#### **Cancer Happens: Impacting Teens for Life**

*Jana Mastrogiovanni, LPC, Program Manager, Cancer Pathways, Charleston, SC*

Cancer Happens is a FREE e-learning program that provides cancer prevention and health promotion strategies for middle and high school students. The course provides a basic understanding of cancer, risk factors (including tobacco use, nutrition and exercise, sun safety, and HPV), and coping skills. Participants will learn how to use curricula materials and web-resources, as well as implement the program effectively in their classroom and/or community.

#### **Reducing Recidivism in 'At-Risk' Urban Youth Through Lyrical Expression Therapy: A Qualitative Program Evaluation**

*Margaret Goldman, Senior Majoring in Psychology and Minor in Human Social Development, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL*

This presentation examines hip-hop-based lyrical expression therapy as a mechanism of recidivism reduction, particularly for youth offenders of color. Using a recently conducted program evaluation, the presenter discusses how one lyrical expression program empowers minority youth at risk to make positive life changes while using the familiarity of hip-hop subculture to establish a comfortable learning environment. Attendees interested in juvenile justice—particularly in racial/ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system—will benefit from this presentation.

#### **What's Love Got to Do With It? Everything.**

*Sarah Jones, Doctoral Candidate, University of Georgia, Athens, GA*

This presentation, for school administrators, counselors, and teachers, emphasizes the ways practice can be supported by an ethic of care and love. Pulling from educational and feminist theorist, this presentation will consider the unique needs of youth at risk of attrition and the way love changes everything.

#### **Project LION: Learning in Our Neighborhood, a Community Partnership**

*Gerlinde Beckers, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA*

Project LION: (Learning in Your Own Neighborhood) is a community partnership working with high-need, low-income middle school students within their neighborhoods to improve academic outcomes by providing programming that focuses on school engagement, academic performance, enrichment, and personal and social skills while enhancing opportunities for teacher candidates to work with diverse populations of students.

#### **The Effects of Non-Nutritive Sweeteners on the Health of Youth in United States**

*Ashley Passantino, Biology Pre-Vet Major, Michael Hinson, Exercise Science Major, and Padmini Shankar, Ph.D., Professor of Nutrition and Food Science, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

Obesity results from a multitude of problems related to depression, an imbalance of hormones, genetics, and environmental factors. Obesity can also result from a poor diet, which is the focus of this study. A strong correlation can be found between low income and obesity in children. In 2014, 14.5% of patients ages 2-4 were considered obese. From 2011 to 2014, 17% of adolescents experienced obesity—around 12.7 million people. Statistics have shown that as age increases in adolescents, so does the prevalence of obesity.

**Effects of Excessive Sugar Consumption in Adolescents**

*Ashley Passantino, Biology Pre-Vet Major, Michael Hinson, Exercise Science Major, and Padmini Shankar, Ph.D., Professor of Nutrition and Food Science, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

With sugar consumption in the youth on the rise, many people have turned their heads towards this epidemic in response to the many side effects associated with excess sugar in the diet. Roughly, 75% of all foods and beverages have some form of added sugar. It is difficult to find a safe product for your child to eat without running into something like high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). Sugar-sweetened beverage intake has increased nearly 500% since 1950. This excessive sugar intake is very taxing on the body and may lead to long-term impairments if not properly regulated. A study documented that drinking two 16-oz sugar-sweetened beverages every day over a time span of 6 months induced features of metabolic syndrome and fatty liver. Chronic conditions such as diabetes and CVD (cardiovascular disease) may occur if the consumption of sugar remains too high.

**Bullies, Tattletales, and Good Citizens: Helping Students Define, Identify, and Report Authentic Bullying Behavior**

*Robert “Colby” Jones, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Kylie Reynolds, Senior, Majoring in Early Childhood Education, Marilaura Farr, Junior Majoring in Early Childhood Education, Julie Ramirez, Junior Majoring in Early Childhood Education, and Lauren Sanders, Junior Majoring in Early Childhood Education, LaGrange College, LaGrange, GA*

In-service teachers must be active participants in traditional, academic discussions on bullying. In our study, we sought to add local teachers’ voices to ongoing discussions of the definition of “bullying” before developing resources to help new teachers and students identify and report such behaviors. We believe anyone who works with K-12 students can benefit from our discussion of developing a practical approach to identifying and reporting bullying behaviors.

**Sparkling Eco-Awareness Through Global Environmental Literacy with Urban Elementary Students**

*Dr. Kimberly Mack, Ed.D., Principal, Cathleen Farrell, Teacher, Milbeth Hinton-Allen, MA, Intervention Specialist K-12, and Susan Arbogast, M.Ed., First Grade Teacher; John P. Parker School, Cincinnati, OH*

Presenters share with school-based practitioners the process for implementing a Global Environmental Literacy program in a Midwest urban elementary school. The presentation includes definitions of terms (global environmental literacy, community learning center, and project-based learning), program components (global citizenship, environmental literacy, health and wellness, digital literacy, and service learning), and practical strategies for implementation in a high-need, high-poverty urban school.

**Rural School Counselors’ Perceptions of Children and Adolescents Living in Poverty**

*Christi S. Jones, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL; and Bethany Lanier, Ph.D., NCC, Assistant Professor, University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA*

This session reports qualitative research findings related to perceptions of rural school counselors toward students living in poverty. Research presents emergent themes related to perceptions, practices, and recommendations of school counselors. Session objectives focus on discussing research findings and providing recommendations for counselors and educators related to student support systems and parental and community engagement in student success.

**Effective Counseling Techniques for Working with ‘At Risk’ Youth in Residential Settings**

*Marisa Finlayson, Graduate Student, David Scott, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Heather Mack, Ed.S in Progress, Graduate Student, Charlotte Lazarus, Graduate Student, and Hannah Wegley, Graduate Student, Clemson University, Clemson, SC*

It has been questioned whether therapeutic group homes are an effective form of treatment for youth at risk. This presentation will examine the recidivism rates of “at-risk” youth who participated in an established residential group home program and report what worked in this treatment modality.

**Literacy-Based Action Research: Strategies for Improving Student Achievement**

*Anne Katz, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Reading, Deborah Jaudon, Masters, Educator, Danielle M. Russell, M.Ed. in Reading, Reading Specialist and Mathematics Teache, and Jennifer Formby, M.Ed., Teacherr; Georgia Southern University, Armstrong Campus, Savannah, GA*

The presentation will highlight literacy-based action research projects by three Reading Specialist M.Ed. graduate students. The topics outlined include enhancing struggling readers' vocabulary development using technology, the effects of technology during summer school on student promotion, and the infusion of dialogue and metacognitive strategies to promote self-efficacy and early reading success. Tools for attendees to implement the process of action research in their own classroom will be outlined.

**Counseling and Educational Strategies to Promote Student Success for Students Living in Poverty**

*Brandee Appling, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Jamie Carney, Ph.D., Department Head and Distinguished Professor, and Malti Tuttle, Ph.D., Auburn University, Auburn, AL*

This session will provide school counselors and teachers with educational and counseling strategies for working with students living in poverty. The strategies provided will be specific to each school level (elementary, middle, and high) as well as to the areas of educational support, advocacy, and engagement.

**Steering 'At-Risk' Students in the Right Direction on Life's Highway**

*Sheila Coats, BS, Retired Elementary School Teacher, and Cheryl Flowers, Retired Elementary School Teacher, The W.O.R.K.S. Inc., Douglasville, GA*

The commitment of the W.O.R.K.S. Program is to educate our students for life, so they can maximize their potential and the totality of their lives: academically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically.

**Reaching Diverse Learners in Elementary Science with Instructional Technology**

*Stephanie Hendrith, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, Murray State University, Murray, KY*

This poster presentation concentrates on blending instructional technology to help teach diverse learners. The focus will be on apps, computer programs, and centers, as well as how to structure inquiry activities. Topics include ideas for visual learners, kinesthetic learners, struggling readers, differentiation, and how technology can be used to assist in reaching everyone.

**The EXCEL Mindset: If I Excel and You Excel, Then We Excel Together**

*Jake Golden, IV, Ed.D., Educator, Muscogee County School District, Columbus, GA*

Making the decision to change is the first step towards that change. Once a leader wholeheartedly decides that change is warranted and puts actions towards implementing that change, the universe will align with the decision. The Five EXCEL principles, if implemented consistently, will drastically change the lives of your students and add vitality to your school's climate and community. This program is specifically designed for any leader who wants to excel in their lives professionally and personally.

**Reinforcement Interventions for Title I Schools: Realistic Practices for Classroom Behavior and Academic Achievement**

*Kelly C. Dreger, Ed.D., Curriculum and Instruction, Math and Language Arts, and Bill Truby, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA*

The presentation will examine relevant research about reinforcement for youth at risk, particularly those who attend Title I middle schools. It will offer suggestions for educators based on past literature and current practices. This presentation includes an explanation of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies that address how this intervention strategy may benefit students personally and professionally.



**Life-Long Literacy**

*Paulette P. Harris, Ed.D., Cree-Walker Endowed Chair, Augusta University, Augusta, GA*

Literacy building continues throughout the lifespan. The presenter will explore examples of literacy building for children, adolescents, and adults.

**A Review of Survey Data Collected on the Use of Applied Behavior Analytic (ABA)-Based Instructional Strategies by Educators in Pennsylvania Schools**

*Eric Bieniek, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Mike Monfore, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Matthew Erickson, Ashlea Hershey-Rineer, and Richael Barger-Anderson, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, Slippery Rock, PA*

This poster presentation examines the state of current practices and opinions of professionals recognized as Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and Teachers of Students having exceptionalities working specifically in school-based settings. Responses were collected from a regional sample of professionals recognized as BCBAs and fellow educators working in schools using Applied Behavior Analytic (ABA) Practices. This survey collected data on the state of ABA service delivery in these settings. Respondents were further queried on the specific types of interventions most frequently used in their professional experiences and where ABA practices are most commonly used. Other questions included the following: What areas of intervention did professionals receive most or least formal training? What was the amount of formal training they experienced and what types of training platforms used for instructional delivery?

**A Moral Imperative for Ensuring the Academic Success of Diverse Student Populations**

*Roben Taylor, Ed.D., Professor, School of Education, Dalton State College, Dalton, GA*

Accepting moral and ethical needs for improvement, Teacher Education Programs (TEP) must answer how they should address demands stemming from changing demographics, changing professional rules and identities, and an increase in poor student outcomes. This presentation opens the door of multicultural thinking and considers new roles for teachers in the classroom.

**Franklin Covey Leader in Me Program: The Impact on Title I Students—A Positive Social Climate for all Children and Youth**

*Ronny Green, Ph.D., Professor, Paula Tench, ABD, Senior Lecturer ELE/SPED Project, Lantry Brockmeier, Bill Truby, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Rudo Tsemunhu, Ph.D., Associate Professor, and Kathy Nobles, Ed.D., Bureau Chief, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA*

What was the impact on Title I students when the Franklin Covey Leader in Me Program was implemented to foster a positive social climate for all children and youth in a North Georgia school? The presenters discuss these findings and their implications for improving the education of Title I students.

**Choices and Consequences: A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste**

*Ian Elmore-Moore, Fulton County Gang Coordinator, Noble Truth Project, Atlanta, GA*

This presentation highlights the functionalities of the human brain. Through our presentation, attendees will be able to identify the four main components of the human brain that control our emotions and behaviors. We will provide evaluation-based techniques to strengthen self-awareness. It is our goal that attendees will grasp scientific information of the human brain as well as learn a new skill set to improve social emotional learning and restorative practices to de-escalate conflicts.

**The Effect of Economic Level on Students' Goal Setting**

*Mary Ann Hollingsworth, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of West Alabama, Livingston, AL; and Hasna Abu Khalid, Doctoral Candidate in Education Leadership, Seattle University, Seattle, WA*

The purpose of this study was to discover various challenges that low-socioeconomic students face with investigation of some variables that impact student goal setting, such as satisfaction of basic needs and source of motivation for goal accomplishment. Some of our participants came from a poor background, which may impact their established goals. The Needs (Food) aspect scored well because a considerable number of participants were offered free food in their respective schools or at reduced rates. Parents and friends were found to be key sources of the participants' motivation to set and accomplish various goals.

**Closing Achievement Gaps and Improving Students' Attitudes Towards School Through Cross-Curriculum Integration and Project-Based Learning**

*Zakiyyah Stroman, M.Ed., Teacher, Darlington High School, Society Hill, SC*

This presentation describes our DREAM Team/Team 20 initiative: a project that allowed four teachers (Algebra I, English, Physical Science, and World Geography) to create project-centered cross-disciplinary lessons, which actively engaged ninth graders identified as low-achieving or probable dropouts. Other goals included improving students' attitudes towards school, self-esteem awareness, student motivation, and goal setting. The success of this program resulted in the creation of the Innovative Academy to implement "Project Based Learning" and "Cross-Curriculum Instruction" at other grade levels.

**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth: Health Disparities and Protective Factors**

*Jeremy Shain, Ed.S., Counselor, Carroll County Schools, Carrollton, GA*

This session examines health disparities affecting LGBTQ+ students and protective factors to safeguard them against the health disparities.

**Developing Identity and Third Culture Kids**

*Amy Rustine, Undergraduate Student, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

The main issues discussed within the research on Third Culture Kids (TCKs), kids raised in a culture other than their parents, reveals influential social factors such as identity and transition. The current literature emphasizes the critical nature of the transition period for TCKs. It also reveals the struggle that identity formation can pose for TCKs. This presentation will discuss the identity development of TCKs who are currently college-aged, and who navigated through schools as a TCK.

**Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and Special Education**

*Megan Fromme, Undergraduate Student, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

The purpose of this study is to highlight how Common Core has influenced special education teachers' efforts to meet the needs of their students, and the teachers' perceptions of the Common Core standards.

**Supporting Teachers of ELL Students**

*Abigail Slattery, Undergraduate Student, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

This presentation outlines a study conducted by the presenter. It is designed to investigate the support being provided to English Language Learners (ELL) in one rural, southeastern Georgia elementary school. This research will take place through a case study in which the presenter will interview various individuals who are involved in the education of ELL students, as well as shadow several students. In this presentation, the presenter will be providing viewers with an overview of this information by stating the purpose of the research, the methodology, the expected outcomes, and any results that have been found by the time of the presentation.

**Developmental Justice**

*Darleen Claire Wodzinski, Ph.D. Candidate, Director of Program Development, Orchard Human Services, Inc., Douglasville, GA*

Developmentally oriented factors are implicated in the pathways that lead to juvenile justice contact. A trauma-informed and developmentally responsive approach to youth engagement can divert youth who have early contact with the juvenile justice system, support the reentry of youth who were placed in a facility, and ease the burden of DMC (Disproportionate Minority Contact). Trauma-informed, mental health supportive, and developmentally appropriate strategies are discussed as solutions for the future. Included is an introduction to community impact on youth challenges as well as strategies for promoting better youth outcomes through community outreach.

**Students Advocating for Youth**

*Robin McWilliams, MS, Director, Students Advocating for Youth, North Carolina State University at Raleigh, Raleigh, NC*

Students at NC State University who participate in the “Students Advocating for Youth” Village on campus gain course credit for serving as individual youth advocates and mentors to local 4th and 5th students at risk and attend partner school sites once a week. This poster presentation will focus on ways that these college-age mentors assist their younger “mentees” to learn valuable life development skills.

**Facilitating Children’s Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in After-School Settings**

*Keonya Booker, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC*

As educators, we must establish a safe space for children to develop positive social skills. A warm, yet firm, environment will increase feelings of belongingness, positive behavior, and academic performance. For after-school staff, bridging the gap between the classroom and home environment is a critical component of their charge. In this poster session, I will discuss sociocultural variables and specific models for increasing students’ social and emotional learning in extended day settings.

**The “Monster” in the Classroom**

*Alfreda Love, Ph.D., Consultant, AlfredaLoveShow.com, Waco, TX*

Classroom discipline and increasing instructional time has been the desire of educators and administrators. Daily, some educators solely focus on the structure of the classroom and forget to focus on their students’ well-being. A key to classroom discipline is creating a stress free environment for all.

**Literacy for Life: Daily Reading Effectively Promotes Success (REPS)**

*Karen Washington, Ed.S., High School Teacher, and Terecia Gill, Ed.S., Principal, John J. Wright Educational and Cultural Center Alternative Education Program, Spotsylvania, VA*

Literacy is at the heart of basic education and essential for eradicating poverty, achieving equality, and ensuring that all students have the opportunity for lifelong success. Administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers will be fascinated by the simple, but effective strategy for improving the literacy skills of students at risk through authentic, highly engaging daily “REPS” activities in every class.

**Adolescent Emotional Wellness from a Multicultural Lens**

*Whitney Robertson, MA, Clinical Supervisor, North Carolina State University Raleigh, NC*

This presentation will inform the audience about the nuances of the intersectionality of race and mental health and deliver strategies to promote adolescent emotional wellness in the midst of the current social climate.

**RAMbassadorS: Making Student Leadership the Cornerstone of PBIS**

*Megan Chaffin, Ed.S., Teacher and PBIS Team Leader, Virginia Waters, BS, M.A.T., Ed.S., Teacher and RAMbassadorS Sponsor, and Carla Hull, Ed.S., Assistant Principal and PBIS School Administrator, Newton High School, Covington, GA, Patrice Tealer, Ed.S., Third Grade ELA Content Leader and Teacher*

RAMbassadorS are students from various academic and behavior backgrounds who are given a leadership opportunity to extend model behavior into all aspects of student life including school, home, and community. The goal of this presentation is to share the impact of a successful Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) student advisory organization. The RAMbassadorS are trained to serve the school and welcome the community with pride and excellence. Presenters will provide an in-depth explanation of the development of the program.

**Children of Substance Abusing Parents**

*Nicole Dale, MSW, CPS, LADC, Student Assistance Program, Rochester School District, Rochester, NH*

Target population surrounds anyone working with children who may have family or loved ones abusing substances. Addiction is a family disease and not only is the person suffering from addiction impacted but others in their life as well such as a child. According to SAMHSA, "Based on data from the combined 2009 to 2014 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health, about 1 in 8 children (8.7 million) aged 17 or younger lived in households with at least one parent who had a past year substance use disorder." These children face different stressors than those who are in homes where there is not substance use. Throughout working with this population in our community we have found that these children often have poor school attendance, inadequate food sources, increased anxiety and other barriers that prevent them from thriving within a school environment.

**Improving Health Outcomes for Vulnerable Populations through Innovative Partnerships with a Focus on Social Determinants of Health**

*Gregory J. Rosso, Community Advocate, WellCare of Georgia, Inc., Savannah, GA*

The HealthConnections model demonstrates the impact of bringing together community stakeholders including care management organizations, community and faith based programs, non-profits, and educational institutions in creative ways to affect positive health outcomes for populations living in poverty, seniors and people with disabilities. Using a model that combines research and mobilizing strategies, participants will learn how to utilize and maximize the social service resources in their communities.

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## Wednesday, March 7

**7:00 – 8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast**

**7:30 a.m. Check-In (Lobby) | On-Site Registration (Second Floor)**

**7:45 – 8:00 a.m. Therapeutic Drum Call**  
 Ballroom A-B  
*Tom Harris, Tatiana Rolles, Danny Daniels, Jill Sandiford, and Phillip Block, Therapeutic Drumming Instructors, Youth Villages® at Inner Harbour, Douglasville, GA*

**8:00 – 9:15 a.m. Keynote Presentation and Announcement of Prize Winners**  
 Ballroom A-B

**Mistress of Ceremonies**  
*Alisa Leckie, Ph.D., Conference Co-Chair and Assistant Professor, College of Education Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

**Introduction of Keynote Speaker**  
*Randy Shearouse, Ph.D., Superintendent, Effingham County Schools, Effingham, GA*



**Ensuring Every Student Succeeds with a Supportive School Climate**  
 Keynote: *Dr. Jane Bluestein, Ph.D., Educational Consultant, Author, and Head of Instructional Support Services, Inc., Albuquerque, NM*

It's tough to learn in an environment that doesn't feel safe and supportive—not just physically safe, but also academically, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally safe! Let's look at school climate through each of these lenses and see how we can make our learning environments engaging and inviting, even for defeated, defiant, and discouraged kids, including those who may have had negative, contentious, and failure-oriented experiences in the past. For all grade levels and subject areas.

**Announcement of Prize Winners**

**9:15 – 9:45 a.m. Break | Visit Exhibitors**

**9:45 – 11:00 a.m. Session 8 | Wednesday Concurrent Sessions**

Ballroom A



**Positive School Climate** (repeats at 11:15 – 12:30 p.m.)  
 Featured Speaker: *Steven Edwards, Ph.D., President and CEO, Edwards Educational Services, Alexandria, VA*

With the constant pressure of high-stakes testing and high-achievement standards, the climate of a school can be compromised. This session will focus on specific strategies and techniques that can be implemented to create a positive school climate while at the same time enhancing student academic achievement. Participants will walk away with ideas that they can immediately implement in their schools.

Ballroom D

**Lost and Found in Transition: How Alumni of Foster Care Experience Transition in Higher Education**  
*Sarah Jones, Doctoral Candidate, University of Georgia, Athens, GA*

School counselors, social workers, and school administrators (P-16) can benefit from this presentation, which emphasizes results from a phenomenological inquiry into the educational experiences of alumni of foster care. This presentation will emphasize the first-person accounts of college students who were also in foster care. Their voice offers insight into the ways we can shape our practice to best meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable students.

Ballroom E

**Table of a Second Chance**

*Jean P. Belizaire, Licensed and Ordained Clergy, Former Spiritual Consultant, Brockton High Point Drug Treatment Center, Bridgewater, MA*

This presentation will help to empower those who work with those who suffer from a drug addiction to identify, increase, and incorporate better means of services. The topics included are mental health, public safety, drug treatment, recovery, trauma and counseling, and mentorship.

Ballroom F

**Got Groups? Redefining Small Groups Through Tiered Intervention Systems**

*Victoria Lockhart, Ed.D., Guidance Counselor, Newton County Schools, Convington, GA*

Given the many tasks placed on educators and administrators, how do we create and provide optimum support for our students? In an elementary school, it is imperative to address students' academic and social needs head on and provide optimum support. This interactive presentation will provide attendees with a different perspective on how to use "tiered intervention systems."

Scarborough 1

**Question-and-Answer Session with Keynote Speaker Jane Bluestein**

*Jane Bluestein, Ph.D., Educational Consultant, Author, and Head of Instructional Support Services, Inc., Albuquerque, NM*

Scarborough 2

**Count Yourself In: A Village Approach to Combating Truancy**

*Featured Speakers: Curlandra Lightfoot-Smith, Ed.S., Positive Behavior Interventions and Support District Coordinator, and Takeysha Lewis, Ed.S., District School Social Worker, Bibb County School District, Macon, GA*



Participants will focus on the importance of a holistic approach addressing chronic absenteeism through education, motivation, communication, and collaboration. Participants are provided with low-cost/no-cost strategies to bring awareness to regular, punctual school attendance. Knowledge/strategies will be provided to identify and address students with school absenteeism trends and how to communicate with teachers, parents, students, and the "new age" family unit. We will provide exciting, interactive experiences on initiatives and creative strategies as attendees leave with take-home practices to implement directly in the learning environment and in their community.

Scarborough 3

**An Integrated Approach to Transforming School Culture and Climate**

*Kathleen Bevins, MA, District Culture and Climate Transformation Facilitator, Justin Blietz, Masters in Educational Leadership, Associate Principal, and Carlos Grant, Ed.D., Executive Director of Middle Level Education, Cedar Rapids Community School District, Cedar Rapids, IA*

In the age of buzzwords and phrases encompassing school culture and climate, how do we practically embed these pieces into a cohesive, equitable approach to teaching and learning? This session will focus specifically on integrating restorative practices, trauma-informed care, mindfulness, and intercultural development within the middle school setting.

Scarborough 4

**Alternative to Expulsion Programs**

*Shauna Bock, MA, Assistant Principal, and Daniel R. Wolff, MA, Principal, Saint Paul Public Schools, St. Paul, MN*

This presentation will explore a program that provides an alternative to expulsion, including the pros, the cons, and how to incorporate this program in your school district.

Scarborough 5



**Working with ‘At-Risk’ Students: Self Check** (repeats at 11:15 – 12:30 p.m.)

*Featured Speaker: Dr. Joe Johnson, Ph.D., National Speaker and Trainer, Joe Johnson Group LLC, Gainesville FL*

This session is designed to illuminate the pitfalls of recognizing and maximizing one’s potential. We will address issues and current trends within the “at-risk” community. Further, this session will provide participants with practical strategies to help develop self-awareness, understand identity and purpose, re-evaluate the meaning of “versatility,” and also provide strategies to work more effectively with “at-risk” youth.

Harborside Center West



**Experience and Enjoy Therapeutic West African Drumming**

*Featured Speakers: Tom Harris, MS, Founder of Therapeutic Drumming Instructor Program, Tatiana Rolles, Lead Therapeutic Drumming Instructor, Danny Daniels, M.Ed., Teacher and Certified Therapeutic Drumming Instructor, Jill Sandiford, M.Ed., Teacher and Certified Therapeutic Drumming Instructor, and Phillip Block, M.Ed., Teacher and Certified Therapeutic Drumming Instructor, Youth Villages® at Inner Harbour, Douglasville, GA*

This presentation is designed to introduce the benefits of a therapeutic West African drumming program to educators and mental health professionals. Participants will engage in a basic drumming class where they will experience the academic and socio-emotional benefits of drumming while practicing an African rhythm. Presenters will also demonstrate how to relate American School Counselor Association (ASCA) standards as well as Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) and Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS).



Harborside Center East



**Standing in the Gap: A relevant Blueprint for Closing the Ambition and Achievement Gaps Between ‘At-Risk’ and ‘Not At-Risk’ Youth** (repeats at 11:15 – 12:30 p.m.)

*Featured Speaker: Keith L. Brown, Lead Consultant/Chief Messenger, 2020 Enterprises LLC, Fayetteville, GA*

Closing the Achievement Gap is the rallying cry in America today. However, a key tenet in doing so is to close the Ambition Gap, for if youth lack ambition then they are less likely to achieve—especially when burdened with a plethora of societal and educational forms of inequity. In this highly engaging session, Keith will show youth advocates how their outlook and innovative output will directly influence the outcome of the youth they serve. In addition, he will provide tangible tools and strategies that will awaken youth to desire not only to excel, but also to transform that desire into positive results.

Percival

**A, B, C, D, Schwa: Improving Literacy Instruction for Struggling Readers**

*Anita Sanders, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, Paula King, Teacher, and Ann Pickard, High School History Teacher, Gardner-Webb University, Gastonia, NC*

A, B, C, D, Schwa is a fast paced, research-based, hands-on literacy experience. This presentation will allow teachers to reinforce strong instructional literacy practices with proven effectiveness. The activities support increasing academic achievement, student engagement, student generalization, and provide research-based reading for struggling readers.

Vernon

**Interconnectedness: Create a Culturally Aware School Environment / Cultural Awareness = Building Relationships?**

*Lakeysha Hallmon, Ed.D., Education Research and Evaluation Specialist, and Cindy Turner, M.Ed., Education Research and Evaluation Specialist, and Simone Danielson, M.Ed.; Georgia Department of Education, Atlanta, GA*

What happens when you are a teacher with a class of students whose cultural backgrounds are far different than your own? What happens when there is civil unrest in the community, in the world, and now your classroom is divided? How do you relate, establish trust, and create a safe space that encourages social, emotional, and academic growth for all students? In this workshop, through engaging conversation and interactive collaboration, we will provide essential tools to empower teachers to create a culturally conscious and aware after-school program that nurtures relationships among students, teachers, and the community.

- Verelst **Creating Structured Environments: Teaching the Relationship Between Behavioral Choices and Outcomes**  
*Whitney Meade, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL*  
 Creating a structured environment where students are empowered to grow while also providing the needed structure to teach the relationship between behavioral choices and outcomes can mean the difference between long-term success and incarceration. This presentation addresses behavioral strategies that can be implemented in both educational and residential settings.
- Sloane **Bridging the Gap: Understanding Student Perspectives of Mentally Healthy School Spaces in Alternative School Settings**  
*Adam W. Jordan, Ph.D., Associate Professor, and Desmond Vaird, University of North Georgia, Dahlonega, GA*  
 This presentation offers the results of a qualitative study that utilized focus group research with alternative high school students to better understand their various perspectives of the components of a mentally healthy school space. Eight alternative high school students participated in the in-depth focus group. The results of the focus group were transcribed, coded using methods common to Grounded Theory research, and themes were developed. In this presentation, we will explore three themes and conclude by offering suggestions for classroom teachers and school administrators in regards to producing more mentally healthy and inclusive school spaces for students at risk. In addition, this study was made possible through a deliberate school/university partnership. Tips for developing school/university partnerships to support youth at risk will also be explored.
- Plimsoll **Phoenix Rising from the Ashes: A Last-Chance Approach to Turnaround School Culture**  
*Janet Morris, M.Ed., Principal, North Nicholas High School, Cape Coral, FL*  
 Is poor student behavior and focus directing the daily sails in your school? Learn how to use student empowerment and student advocacy for smooth sailing. Young adults may arrive at our doorstep with nearly 20 years of at-risk factors on their shoulders, but simple steps can be taken to watch a phoenix emerge from the ashes of low performance and distrust.

11:00 - 11:15 a.m.

**Visit Exhibitors**

11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

**Session 9 | Wednesday Concurrent Sessions**

Ballroom A

**Positive School Climate**

*Featured Speaker: Steven Edwards, Ph.D., President and CEO, Edwards Educational Services, Alexandria, VA*

With the constant pressure of high-stakes testing and high-achievement standards, the climate of a school can be compromised. This session will focus on specific strategies and techniques that can be implemented to create a positive school climate while at the same time enhancing student academic achievement. Participants will walk away with ideas that they can immediately implement in their schools.

Ballroom D

**Black Girls' Magic: Understanding our Misunderstood Black Girls Through Therapeutic Relationship Building**

*Phylicia Anderson, MSW, District Behavior Interventionist, Savannah Chatham County Public School System, Savannah, GA*

Black Girl Magic is a popular phrase that celebrates the beauty, power, and resilience of black womanhood. Just like "magic," our black girls are often misunderstood and feared. Through implicit biases, stereotypes, and discrimination, many black girls are unable to tap into their full potential. As change agents, it's our responsibility to break barriers and build therapeutic relationships to tap into Black Girl Magic!



Ballroom E

**Narratives of Resilience**

*Donald Redmond, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Counseling, Mercer University - Atlanta, Founding Director, Center for the Study of Narrative, Atlanta, GA*

The program combines aspects of narrative therapy and digital technology to increase self-esteem and confidence of adolescents and young adults. Techniques described promote verbal and artistic expression as a way to focus self-concept on successes and accomplishments instead of self-defeating inner dialogues.

Scarborough 1

**Using Restorative Practices to Create a District that Cares**

*Louis L. Fletcher, Ph.D., Director of Culture and Services, and Kim Boyd, PsyD, Director of Community Care, School District 49, Colorado Springs, CO*

The presenters go beyond their narrative about the fundamentals of restorative practice (RP) to engage the participants in a dialogue on strategies for implementing restorative practices at the school district level. Many school leaders successfully implement restorative practices at the building level only to face resistance at the district level. The key to RP sustainability is institutionalizing fair process through revising district policies, engaging with the school board, and energizing the community. There is also a discussion on strategies for addressing resistance from teachers and other building administrators. The session demonstrates a leadership driven model empowered by grass roots advocacy.

Scarborough 2

**Social Media, Online Cruelty, and Cyberbullying: Update on the Youth Perspective**

*Patti Agatston, Ph.D., Licensed Professional Counselor/Consultant, Prevention/Intervention Center, Powder Springs, GA*

This presentation shares findings from focus group interviews with youth on the topic of social media and cyberbullying. Highlights include youth perceptions of an increasingly blurred line between bullying and cyberbullying as well as some surprising views on helpful versus unhelpful responses to cyberbullying and online cruelty. Also highlighted are the need for prevention and response strategies that emphasize social and emotional literacy including a restorative practices framework.

Scarborough 3

**Implementation of a Specific Schema Theory Strategy to Facilitate Reading Comprehension for 'At-Risk' Readers**

*David Little, Ed.D., Director of Elementary Education, Samford University, Birmingham, AL*

This presentation employs the use of brain theory and semantic mapping activities to assist struggling readers with comprehension and vocabulary development.

Scarborough 4

**Be a Friend First**

*Cassandra Campbell, BS, Program Manager, Direct Delivery Bullying Prevention for Girl Scouts, Girls Scouts of Historic Georgia, Savannah, GA*

B.F.F. stands for "Be a Friend First," a title selected by girls. BFF was created for middle school girls to help them develop healthy relationship skills. Girls in this program begin to learn and understand relational aggression and the damage it can cause leaving scars in a relationship. They also learn about conflict resolution and bullying prevention strategies. The presentation is for anyone who works with middle school girls in school, after-school programs, church, local housing authority, and other government-funded organizations.

Scarborough 5

**Working with 'At-Risk' Students: Self Check**

*Featured Speaker: Dr. Joe Johnson, Ph.D., National Speaker and Trainer, Joe Johnson Group LLC, Gainesville FL*

This session is designed to illuminate the pitfalls of recognizing and maximizing one's potential. We will address issues and current trends within the "at-risk" community. Further, this session will provide participants with practical strategies to help develop self-awareness, understand identity and purpose, re-evaluate the meaning of "versatility," and provide strategies to work more effectively with "at-risk" youth.



Harborside Center  
East



**Standing in the Gap: A Relevant Blueprint for Closing the Ambition and Achievement Gaps Between 'At-Risk' and 'Not At-Risk' Youth**

*Featured Speaker: Keith L. Brown, Lead Consultant/Chief Messenger, 2020 Enterprises LLC, Fayetteville, GA*

Closing the Achievement Gap is the rallying cry in America today. However, a key tenet in doing so is to close the Ambition Gap, for if youth lack ambition then they are less likely to achieve—especially when burdened with a plethora of societal and educational forms of inequity. In this highly engaging session, Keith will show youth advocates how their outlook and innovative output will directly influence the outcome of the youth they serve. In addition, he will provide tangible tools and strategies that will awaken youth to desire not only to excel, but also to transform that desire into positive results.

Vernon

**Being an Advocate for the Effective Integration and Education of Refugee Children**

*Kate E. Crockett, M.Ed. Candidate, and Daniel T. Jeng, M.Ed. Candidate, Augusta University, Augusta, GA*

Georgia and the United States have a growing refugee community. Successful refugee resettlement and K-12 education is dependent on school personnel understanding the emotional wellness and challenges of this population. Advocating on behalf of this population, this presentation will address the state of refugees in the United States and Georgia and their unique experiences adjusting to a new community and society. Information and discussion will address the various emotional roadblocks to refugees that can be an impediment to successful integration in K-12 schools. Presenters will also provide participants with available resources to address these challenges and seek further education.

Verelst

**Deter Juvenile Delinquency Utilizing Interscholastic Sports**

*Drew Zwald, Ph.D., Professor; Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

The relationship between interscholastic sport and juvenile delinquency has been a topic of discussion for many years. One reason cited by educators, sociologists, and parents for including sports programs in educational and community settings is their potential for diminishing delinquency. However, several sociologists have presented an alternative view. For example, Tappan has stated that sport is no deterrent to delinquency, providing evidence that if a child is prone to law violations, it will probably take more than sport to stop the pattern of law violations effectively. The purpose of this presentation is to examine both the positive and negative effects of interscholastic sport on juvenile delinquency, with the notion of further discussion for new ideas and mindsets.

Sloane

**First Offenders Drug Diversion: An Alternative to Zero Tolerance**

*Stephanie A. Davis, BSW, Drug Education Coordinator, Metro Nashville Public Schools, Nashville, TN*

A district modified drug intervention service for students receiving their first zero-tolerance drug offense. This initiative is in its seventh year and aims to decrease the risks associated with drug use and increase parental influence and involvement to decrease use.

Plimsoll

**Take the Limits Off!**

*Dr. Angela S. Coaxum-Young, Ed.D., Chief Executive Officer, Favor Academy of Excellence, Inc., Douglasville, GA*

Education and access—let's talk about it! This session will outline methods, programs, and ideas to help mitigate some of the disparities that exist in underprivileged communities due to lack of exposure to opportunities or inadequate fiscal resources. We will also examine the concept of "school dependent" youth and some of the circumstances that may render them at risk. Finally, the presentation will review some of the best practices of Favor Academy of Excellence (Our Programs and Success Rates) that have served to positively impact youth at risk.

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## Pre-Conference Speakers

**Hotep**

*Educational Success Strategist, Make A Way Program, Hustle University, Atlanta, GA*

Known as an Education Success Strategist and Congressional award-winning author, Hotep has made his mark with his proactive, “tough love” approach to education. He is a 15-year master teacher that has developed a reputation for requesting the most troubled students and transforming them into willing participants in their own education. Hotep is the founder of Hustle University and creator of the MAKE A WAY program, a series of high-relevance curricula, which are used in over 1000 schools throughout the U.S. His profound work has earned him nominations for the Presidential Citizen’s Award and as a CNN Hero. Hotep is also creator of the revolutionary Outcome Progression Model, which he uses to transform the climate and culture of poverty, excuse making, and helplessness into one of empowerment, resiliency, and success!

**Steve Parese**

*Ed.D., International Speaker, Author, Wilderness Counselor and Special Educator, SBP Consulting, Danbury, NC*

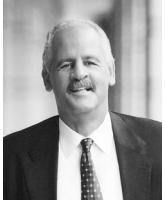
Dr. Parese began his career as a wilderness counselor and special educator, working with youth with special needs in a variety of settings in North Carolina, Florida, and Maryland. Since leaving his teaching position at George Washington University in DC, he has become a notable speaker at the international level and has authored more than a dozen curricula. He specializes in cognitive behavioral and crisis intervention for youth, as well as workforce development for challenging adults. Dr. Parese lives in rural North Carolina, where he is active in his community and church, and spends his free time renovating his 110-year old home.



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## Keynote Speakers



### **Stedman Graham**

*Honorary Doctorate, Humanities, Master's, Education, Best Selling Author, Educator, Entrepreneur, S. Graham & Associates, Chicago, IL*

Dr. Stedman is Chairman and CEO of S. Graham & Associates, a Chicago-based management and marketing consulting firm that specializes in corporate and educational markets. Graham delivers his identity message throughout the country and globally to corporations, professional associations, government and civic organizations, colleges and universities, and community groups. Stedman Graham has authored 11 books, including two New York Times Best Sellers, *You Can Make It Happen: A Nine-Step Plan for Success* and *Teens Can Make It Happen: Nine Steps to Success*. His latest release, *Identity: Your Passport to Success*, was on the Wall Street Journal Best Seller list. He is currently working on his latest book, *Identity: Passport to Freedom*. He served in the U.S. Army and played basketball professionally in the European League. Graham holds a bachelor's degree in social work from Hardin-Simmons University, a master's degree in education from Ball State University, and an honorary doctorate in humanities from Coker College.



### **Principal Baruti Kafele**

*MA, Educational Administration, Education Speaker, Consultant, Author Principal Kafele Consulting, LLC, Jersey City, NJ*

Principal Kafele is the leading authority for providing effective classroom and school leadership strategies toward closing what he coined, the "attitude gap,"—defined as, "the gap between those students who have the "will" to achieve excellence and those who do not"—and is known as an expert in the area of "attitude transformation." As a middle and high school principal, he led the transformation of four different New Jersey urban schools, including "The Mighty" Newark Tech, which went from a low-performing school in need of improvement to national acclaim, which included U.S. News and World Report Magazine recognizing it three times as one of America's best high schools. He has authored eight books, including national best-sellers, *Closing the Attitude Gap*, *Motivating Black Males to Achieve in School and in Life*, and *The Principal 50*. He is married to his wife Kimberley and is the father of their three children. He earned his B.S. degree in Management Science/Marketing from Kean University and his M.A. degree in Educational Administration from New Jersey City University. He is the recipient of over one hundred fifty educational, professional, and community awards, which include the prestigious Milken National Educator Award, the National Alliance of Black School Educators Hall of Fame Award and the City of Dickinson, Texas proclaiming February 8, 1998 as Baruti Kafele Day.



### **Jane Bluestein**

*Ph.D., School Consultant, Author, Head of Instructional Support Services, Inc., Albuquerque, NM*

Dr. Bluestein specializes in programs and resources geared to provide practical and meaningful information, training, and hope in areas related to relationship building, effective instruction and guidance, and personal growth and development. Much of her work focuses on interactions between adults and children, especially children at risk. Her down-to-earth speaking style, practicality, sense of humor, and numerous stories and examples make her ideas clear and accessible to her audiences. Jane is an award-winning author of several books, including: *The Win-Win Classroom*, *Managing 21st Century Classrooms*, *Creating Emotionally Safe Schools*, *Mentors, Masters, and Mrs. McGregor: Stories of Teachers Making a Difference*, and *Magic, Miracles & Synchronicity : A Journal of Gratitude and Awareness*. Dr. Bluestein's latest book is *The Perfection Deception: Why Trying to Be Perfect is Sabotaging Your Relationships, Making You Sick, and Holding Your Happiness Hostage*. Formerly, Dr. Bluestein was a classroom teacher (in inner-city Pittsburgh, PA), crisis-intervention counselor, teacher training program coordinator, and volunteer with high-risk teens at a local Day Treatment Program. Currently, she heads Instructional Support Services, Inc., a consulting and resource firm in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

## Featured Speakers

**Abbigail Armstrong**

*Ed.D., Program Director of Middle Level Education Program, Winthrop University, Gastonia, NC*

Dr. Armstrong has been an educator for 22 years, 10 of which she spent teaching young adolescents from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. She has been at Winthrop University for 11 years where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in various education departments, and she supervises and trains teacher education candidates. She has consulted in several school systems across the United States in which she has shared her expertise on fostering motivation and challenging students in at-risk populations. Dr. Armstrong is known for her interactive, hands-on, practical presentations.

**Alisa Leckie**

*Ph.D., Conference Co-Chair and Assistant Professor, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

Dr. Leckie is an Assistant Professor at Georgia Southern University. Her work focuses on the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students and adolescent literacy. Currently she is studying meaningful discipline-specific academic language development and the impact of earning ESOL endorsements on the professional practice of K-12 teachers. She is also working with local school districts to help them address the growing numbers of English learners in their classrooms through collaborative coaching and the modification of materials and assessments for emergent English learners. Prior to moving to Georgia, Alisa taught Language Arts, Spanish Language Arts, and ESL for 18 years at a middle school in southern Arizona.

**Anthony Outler**

*Ph.D., Chief Operations Officer, Epic Empowerment Enterprises, Lilburn, GA*

Dr. Outler is a change agent and social justice educator who devotes himself to the education, inspiration, and empowerment of youth, as well as those who serve them. He has been afforded a wealth of knowledge and experience from his formal education, as well as his 16+ years of professional work in education, curriculum design, and professional development. Dr. Outler has a BS in Middle Childhood Education, an MSE in Urban Teacher Leadership, and a Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies from Georgia State University. As the Chief Executive Officer of Epic Empowerment Enterprises, he has travelled across the country teaching educators how to become more effective change agents in the lives of the youth they serve. He is also the co-founder of B.E.S.T Men, Inc., which is a rites of passage organization that seeks to develop leadership, character, and critical awareness in young men.

**Aviva Goelman Rice**

*Ed.D., Coordinator of Professional Learning, Bryan County Schools, Black Creek, GA*

Dr. Goelman Rice is the Coordinator of Professional Learning in Bryan County, GA. She taught in Title I schools for 17 years and provided site-based and district-level Professional Learning services for 13 years. She has developed multiple courses on the topic of Classroom Management for in-service educators, including face-to-face, blended, and online courses and has been a guest lecturer at Armstrong State University in Classroom Management courses for pre-service educators. Her research interests include teacher empowerment, instructional coaching, and the use of poverty simulations to support teacher development of empathy for working with students at risk of school failure due to poverty.

**Carmen Long**

*M.Ed., Lead High School Math Teacher, Georgia Connections Academy, Duluth, GA*

Carmen Long has been an educator since 1994 and has taught in traditional school, online school, university model school, home schooled her own children, and taught math courses for homeschooled students. In 2004, she started teaching as an adjunct teacher for Georgia Virtual School. She has taught for Georgia Cyber Academy for two years and is teaching at Georgia Connections Academy for the sixth year. She graduated from Georgia State University with a Bachelor of Science in Math and Computer Science and from Kennesaw State University with a M.Ed. in instructional technology.

# SPEAKER BIOS



## **Chang'aa Mweti**

*Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Minnesota, Duluth, MN*

Known for his dynamic and humorous presentations, Kenyan native Chang'aa Mweti has a B.S. in English and drama and M.S. in the teaching of English in Secondary Schools, all from the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. His area of concentration was "The Power of Narratives in Education." He taught elementary schools in Kenya for over 13 years. He is currently an Associate Professor and Director of the African and African American Studies Program at the University of Minnesota, Duluth Campus.



## **Cordelia Zinskie**

*Ph.D., Professor, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

Dr. Zinskie serves as a Professor of Educational Research at Georgia Southern University. She served as chair of the Department of Curriculum, Foundations, and Reading from 2006 until 2013. She teaches graduate courses in research methods (quantitative and qualitative), statistics, and proposal writing, and her most recent research efforts have focused on online teaching and learning (e-learning). She has significant experience with mentoring graduate student research at the Ed.S. and Ed.D. levels and has served as an evaluator on a number of funded grants. She has served as the editor of the National Youth-At-Risk Journal since 2014.



## **Curlandra Lightfoot-Smith**

*Ed.S., Positive Behavior Interventions and Support District Coordinator, Bibb County School District, Macon, GA*

Curlandra is currently the PBIS Coordinator in Bibb County School District. She was previously a School Social Worker for the District and an Educational Therapist/Special Education Teacher at a Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) Program in Bibb County. She has taught students with an array of disabilities from the Autistic spectrum to SEBD. She graduated from Fort Valley State University with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and a Master's Degree in Social Work from Valdosta State University. She also holds an Educational Specialist degree in Teacher Leadership from Valdosta State University. She has an array of experience from working in public education and in the field, to working directly with families and children within the foster care system in Georgia. She has also worked as a Hospice Social Worker and a Social Worker for the Department of Juvenile Justice. Mrs. Lightfoot-Smith's passion is to empower students, families, and community to come together to create a positive climate, not only in our schools, but also at home and in our community.



## **Dan Rea**

*Ed.D., Conference Co-Chair, Professor, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

Dr. Rea earned his M.A.T. in teaching secondary mathematics from Howard University and an Ed.D. in educational psychology from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He has worked as a secondary mathematics teacher in public and alternative schools and as a professor of educational psychology at Doane College, University of Wisconsin at Whitewater, and Georgia Southern University. He has served as a co-chair of the National Youth-At-Risk Conference since 1994 and has published numerous articles and edited books on fostering the well-being of youth placed at risk, motivating student underachievers, and building learning communities in schools. Presently, he is a Professor of Educational Psychology in the College of Education at Georgia Southern University.



## **Danny Daniels**

*M.Ed., Teacher and Certified Therapeutic Drumming Instructor, Youth Villages® at Inner Harbour, Douglasville, GA*

Danny has been teaching in this challenging environment for over 22 years at Paulding RYDC and Youth Villages Inner at Harbour Campus. He has played drums in local bands for over 50 years. When he interviewed with Youth Villages, immediately he was very impressed with the therapeutic drumming program. As soon as he was hired, he immediately purchased his personal djembe. Sixteen years later, he still realizes the value and purpose of the Therapeutic West African Drumming Program. To enhance his abilities and technique, he enrolled in and graduated from the Therapeutic Drumming Instructor Training (TDIT), course offered by Tom Harris at the Youth Villages Inner Harbour Campus. Danny participates in drumming classes to continue his development and fine-tune his drumming technique.



**Daryl Macaluso**

*BS, Sergeant, Durham Police Department, Durham, NC*

Sgt. Macaluso is a native of Baychester Housing Projects in the Bronx. A 19-year veteran of Durham Police Department, he currently is a Police Academy Instructor and Uniformed Patrol Supervisor. He has served as a School Resource Officer, supervised the Violent Incident Response Team, Street Crimes Unit, and the Gang Resistance Education and Training Unit. He was an instructor for the North Carolina Military Academy. He is certified as a “Gang Identification Specialist” with the National Gang Crime Research Center and presents gang awareness and intervention training sessions for law enforcement agencies, school districts, and youth groups nationwide.



**Dawn White**

*Ed.D., Instructional Designer, Gwinnett County Public Schools, Duluth, GA*

For 30 years, Dr. White has taught elementary, middle, and college students specializing in developing learner-centered classroom using differentiated instructional strategies to meet individual academic needs. Due to her innovative integration of technology during instruction, she became a STEM and Technology Coach with Gwinnett County Public Schools in Lawrenceville, GA. She has written curriculum using project-based inquiry learning following the 7Es Model: Elicit, Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate, and Extend. She has been awarded grants to fund special projects that enhance the learning experiences of students and has presented at national and state conferences.



**Eliza Hirst**

*Esq., CWLS, Deputy Child Advocate, Office of the Child Advocate, Wilmington, DE*

Eliza Hirst is a Deputy Child Advocate with Delaware’s Office of the Child Advocate where she represents children in dependency and neglect proceedings. Eliza is also currently collaborating with Casey Family Programs and local school districts to increase education supports and opportunities for youth in foster care. Eliza earned her J.D. from the University of Texas Law School, and is a member of the Delaware, New York, and Pennsylvania Bars, and the U.S. District Court for the District of Delaware. In 2012, the National Association of Counsel certified Eliza for Children as a Child Welfare Law Specialist.



**Eric Landers**

*Ph.D., Associate Professor, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

Dr. Landers earned his Ph.D. from the University of Florida, with an emphasis on children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD). He has worked as a classroom teacher for students with EBD, a professor at West Virginia University and Georgia Southern University, and as an independent consultant for supporting school-wide behavioral systems. Dr. Landers has given hundreds of presentations and authored more than a dozen publications regarding bullying, responding to challenging behaviors, teacher job satisfaction, and school-wide PBIS. He is the director of the National Youth-At-Risk Conference West and the founder/director of the Southeast Conference on Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports. Dr. Landers is also the creator of My-Behavior-Resource.com, a free online behavior resource for schools and MyBaseSystem.com, a comprehensive RtI data management system.



**Eric Rowles**

*MS Ed, CEO/President, Leading to Change, Huntersville, NC*

Eric is a nationally recognized trainer and speaker who has worked with over 160,000 youth, adults, administrators, volunteers, and policy makers within the past 15 years. Eric’s previous experience includes his work as Senior Director of Training with the Youth Leadership Institute (CA), Director of Leadership Development at Rutgers University (NJ), Director of International Youth Summer Abroad (CA), Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator with Riverside County Friday Night Live (CA), was a professional DJ, and ran a traveling theater company that toured California over 10 years.



## SPEAKER BIOS



### **Frank Kros**

*MSW, JD, President, Transformation Education Institute; CEO and EVP, The Children's Guild; Director, NAREN-TranZed, Transformation Education Institute, Baltimore, MD*

Frank is a career child advocate, who has served as a childcare worker, child abuse investigator, children's home administrator, consultant, college professor, attorney, writer, and speaker. Frank currently serves as president of the Transformation Education Institute, director of the National At-Risk Education Network (NAREN,) and EVP and COO of The Children's Guild, a multi-service children's organization headquartered in Maryland. Frank is a worldwide speaker and presents seminars to parents, educators, child-serving professionals, and their leaders on various topics including brain-based learning, neuroscience of the teenage brain and brain-compatible organizational leadership. He also speaks on the effects of stress, child abuse, and poverty in relation to brain function and development. In addition to lecturing nationwide, he has co-authored two books: *Creating the Upside Down Organization: Transforming Staff to Save Troubled Children* and *The Upside Down Organization: Reinventing Group Care*.



### **Jacqueline Smart**

*Ed.D., Teacher, Savannah Chatham County School System, Savannah, GA*

Dr. Smart is a middle school teacher with the Savannah Chatham County Public School System. She is a graduate of California State University and earned her Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership from Cambridge College School of Education. Dr. Smart has taught at the elementary, middle, high school, and adult levels in inner city as well as suburban schools. She is the "2017 Teacher of the Year" for her school site. She is passionate about the issue of bullying behavior and is a firm believer that prevention of bullying is the responsibility of every human being.



### **Jà Hon Vance**

*Ed.S., Executive Vice President, JV Educational Consultants, Owings Mill, MD*

Professor Vance is highly praised and respected for his savvy work with academic testing, teacher education training programs, recruitment, educating, and graduating African American male students in higher education, retention, as well as redesigning developmental educational writing programs using the Vance-Brooks Writing Model. His innovative writing concepts have provided successful outcomes in assisting students with gaining the needed skills to advance in higher education. Recently, Professor Vance used a zero-budget to fully operate a structural learning community called QUEST—which he designed specifically for African American males to earn an Associate's of Arts Degree in one year— while producing more than 2.5 million dollars in FTEs at Baltimore City Community College. He also used his one-year degree model concept, The QUEST, to aid in assisting nine consecutive classes of graduates from 2009–2017 at Baltimore City Community College. Professor Vance's philosophy for education is simple: "All persons are capable of learning, but the educator must be creative and skilled to reach, to teach, and to meet the various academic needs, but most importantly, the educator must act as the change agent that constantly works to foster continual awareness in every soul."



### **Jeremiah Hopes**

*LPC, CAADC, MS, Licensed Professional Counselor, The Center of Hopes™, Warner Robins, GA*

Jeremiah Hopes is a solution-focused thinker, professional counselor, speaker, and author. In 2005, he founded, The Center of Hopes™, a counseling, speaking, and training organization, and in 2015, he co-authored *Facing Our Future: Building Strong Black Men in the 21st Century*. Jeremiah is a powerful speaker and an engaging storyteller and his trainings are both interactive and informative. He has consulted with the award-winning GAP program and has provided services to a variety of groups and organizations including the School Nurse Association of North Carolina, the Virginia Department of Alcohol and Beverage Control Board, and the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission.


**Jessica Begley**

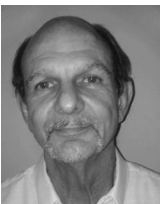
*M.Ed., Training Coordinator, Office of the Child Advocate, Middletown, DE*

Jessica Begley is the Training Coordinator for the Office of the Child Advocate. She facilitates the statewide Mandatory Reporting training in child abuse and neglect and serves as an Education Consultant for the Compassionate Schools Initiative where she trains others at the local and national level on trauma, resilience, and self-care strategies. Jessica started her career in education as a teacher in the Philadelphia School District. After six years in the classroom, Jessica moved into a new position as Program Coordinator for a non-profit organization, where she provided training and consultation in bullying prevention and intervention for area schools and youth-serving organizations.


**Jill Sandiford**

*M. Ed., Teacher and Certified Therapeutic Drumming Instructor, Youth Villages® at Inner Harbour, Douglasville, GA*

Jill has been teaching at Youth Villages Inner Harbour School for two and a half years. Before that she taught in a dual-language elementary school, and she was an AmeriCorps member at YVIH School. While an AmeriCorps, Jill went through the Therapeutic Drumming Instructor Training in 2011-2012. Since that time, she has continued to support the drumming program. She loves drumming and seeing the joy it brings into her life and others. She takes every opportunity to drum with anyone she can in Douglasville, Atlanta, Athens, Asheville, and even Lebanon.


**Jim Taylor**

*M.Ed., BCBA, Behavioral Analyst, Advanced Behavioral Counselors, Statesboro, GA*

Jim is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. He has worked in school systems from Barbados to Michigan. He has over 20 years of experience working with troubled youth in classroom settings; conducted over 150 workshops and presentations on children, mental health, and Behavior Analysis; spent 15 years working in the streets with behaviorally challenged students; and has worked with organizations such as the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, NAMI, Georgia Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, SAMHSA, CAFÉ/ Florida Institute for Families, and CARD.


**Joanne Billingsley**

*M.Ed., President, Billingsley Education, San Antonio, TX*

Joanne Billingsley is a national presenter, author, consultant, and award-winning teacher. She inspires and motivates educators to explore new techniques and strategies for reaching and teaching all students, particularly ELLs, special populations and those that struggle to succeed in school. Joanne's work combines current neuroscience research with best practices in teaching. She is passionate about supporting educators and sharing creative strategies for building brain-friendly, language-rich, interactive classrooms.

Joanne is the President/Founder of Billingsley Education and the creator of Vocabulary Magic, a research based 6-step process for accelerating the acquisition of academic language.


**Joe Hendershott**

*Ed.D., President, Hope 4 The Wounded, Inc., Kissimmee, FL*

Dr. Hendershott is a sought after speaker about the effects of trauma on learning and behaviors and working with wounded students™. As president of Hope 4 The Wounded, Inc. ([www.hope4thewounded.org](http://www.hope4thewounded.org)), he also provides consulting, staff training, an online course, and has authored *Reaching The Wounded Student* and *7 Ways to Transform the Lives of Wounded Students*. Joe has over thirty years in education and is the recipient of the 2015 National Crystal Star Award for Dropout Prevention and the 2016 Bixler Award, which recognizes excellence in education. His ongoing research along with his practical experiences as both a teacher and administrator and his personal experiences as an adoptive father give him a unique perspective that is engaging, thought provoking, and inspiring.

## SPEAKER BIOS



### **Joe Johnson**

*Ph.D., Licensed School Counselor, Owner, Joe Johnson Group, Bloomfield Hills, MI*

Dr. Johnson is a former standout college athlete who understands the importance of education and developing individuals and organizations in as many ways as possible. As a Licensed School Counselor, he has worked in a variety of K-12 school settings but has also done extensive work with undergraduate and graduate populations, corporate organizations, and with many entrepreneurs. Serving as an educator, mentor, trainer, peak performance coach, and entrepreneur leader across the country, Dr. Johnson continues to transform the lives of individuals and organizations by shifting mindsets, which translates into purposeful thinking, acting, and living. He is the author of the books: *Pursue Your Purpose Not Your Dreams* and *The College Kids*. Dr. Johnson is excited to spread his message of versatility, purpose, and self-esteem to the world. His personal story is captivating and his charming ability to engage his audience with humor and authenticity is one of a kind. These opportunities give Johnson the platform to consistently serve and add value to the world.



### **John Vandenburg**

*MA Ed., Executive Officer, Vanden Corporation, Protect Connect Educate Solutions, Murrieta, CA*

John Vandenburg began his career as a High School Teacher in Southern California, where in 2002 he was honored as one of the California League of High Schools Educators of the Year. His career transitioned into a focus on Violence Prevention in schools when he became a Safe Schools administrator for Murrieta Valley USD, in Murrieta, California. He has served on the California Department of Education's Gang Task Force where he helped develop the Getting Results Update on Gang Violence for schools in the state of California. In 2007, he received the Ananda Guruge Lifetime Commitment Award for Violence Prevention, presented by Stop the Violence, Increase the Peace Foundation in Los Angeles, CA. He is currently the Vice President of the California School Resource Officers Association and an active member of the Southern California Regional Violence Prevention Coalition. John is a nationally recognized speaker, program developer and trainer on violence prevention and youth development approaches in education. He is the author of the PLUS Program (Peer Leaders Uniting Students) and the creator of a software based application called CyberBully Alert. His latest work, has gathered international attention as an innovative strategy for addressing online safety and cyberbullying.



### **Keith L. Brown**

*BA, Graduate Studies in English, Certification in Secondary Education, Lead Consultant/Chief Messenger, 2020 Enterprises, Fayetteville, GA*

Keith L. Brown has been a featured conference speaker and educational consultant for over 15 years and Chief Messenger of 2020 Enterprises for well over a decade. In addition, he has presented in hundreds of school districts and for family advocacy agencies and government agencies nationally and internationally since 2000. He has authored and co-authored books nationally and internationally recognized, the latest being a curriculum, presently being used in school districts around the world: *Not Impossible-I'M POSSIBLE: A Relevant Guide on Leadership and Life Skills for Students and Families*, containing a book, student portfolio, and facilitator's guide. He has been a featured guest on I-Heart Radio, Sirius XM, and other Radio and Television programs as an expert on Topics, Issues, and Solutions in Education and Youth and Family Advocacy and has served as a Client Referral Consultant for the hit television series, "Beyond Scared Straight," on A&E. As a former educator in a rural school district in Georgia and adjunct instructor at a Technical College, this former Teacher of the Year, continues to be a staunch advocate for youth at risk, their families, and the change agents who empower them. More information can be found via [www.keithlbrown.com](http://www.keithlbrown.com)



**LaMarr Darnell Shields**

*Ph.D., Senior Change Agent, The Cambio Group and Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD*

Dr. Shields is a social entrepreneur, inspirational speaker, and educator who loves to create and build with purpose. As the Co-Founder and Senior Director of Education and Innovation at the Cambio Group, and former professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Education, Dr. Shields has dedicated his life to inspiring adults and youth alike to pursue a higher purpose, achieve sustainable value for long-term success, and cope with adversity in order to create opportunities in their personal, professional, and spiritual lives. As the Special Advisor to the Blue Ribbon Commission on Educational Equity and a recipient of the 2015 Social Innovator Award, Dr. Shields has been studying, writing about, and implementing change in schools and non-profit organizations for years. This bilingual author, master teacher, public speaker, social entrepreneur, and thought leader is a dynamic presence who has appeared on NPR, ABC, NBC, CNN, and BET. Dr. Shields has decades of experience providing workshops, presentations, assessment, training-of trainers, and other forms of consulting and staff development for P-12 schools, colleges and universities, community organizations, and government organizations.



**Lenny B. Gunther**

*Captain, Savannah Police Department, Savannah, GA*

Captain Lenny B. Gunther is the Commander of the Special Investigations Section with the Savannah Police Department. He commands the Savannah Area Regional Intelligence Center (SARIC), the Group/Gang Unit, the Strategic Investigations Unit (SIU) and the Firearms Unit. He joined SCMPD in January 2001 and serves on several boards and committees which tie law enforcement to the community. Captain Gunther is the Law Enforcement Coordinator for the City of Savannah group violence intervention strategy, formerly known as the End Gun Violence - Step Forward Initiative. He is also a graduate of the prestigious FBI National Academy, session 269. Captain Gunther served with the United States Army Reserve from 1996 until he was honorably discharged in 2004. He also earned a Master of Arts Degree in Business and Organizational Security Management from Webster University and is an adjunct professor at Georgia Southern University, Armstrong Campus. In his spare time, Captain Gunther enjoys spending time with his family and community.



**Mark Revenew**

*BS, MPA, Interim Chief of Police, Savannah Police Department, Savannah, GA*

Mark Revenew joined the Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department on January 18, 2018 and was sworn in as the Interim Chief of Police on January 25, 2018. Chief Revenew now leads the newly formed Savannah Police Department following the demerger of Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department. He has been in law enforcement for over 35 years. He began his law enforcement career as a military policeman serving his entire enlistment at Hunter Army Airfield. After being honorably discharged, like so many he fell in love with the Savannah area and made this his home. He has served on the Pooler Police Department since 1984. During his tenure, he also served on a FBI Safe Child Task Force, protecting children in the region from online predators. Since becoming Chief of the Pooler Police Department in 2010, Pooler was repeatedly named one of the 25 safest cities in Georgia and one of the Best Places to Live in Georgia. Their community oriented style policing and mission of treating everyone fairly and respectfully has earned them a strong alliance with the business and residential community. He serves on several professional and civic boards in the community.

## SPEAKER BIOS



### **Mary Felton**

*Ed.D., Assistant Principal, Evans County Schools, Claxton Elementary, Claxton, GA*

Dr. Felton is currently serving as Assistant Principal for third, fourth, and fifth grades. She is responsible for developing and managing the After-School Care Program for Claxton Elementary. She has spent over 25 years in education in Georgia and in Miami-Dade County, Florida. She worked as an Adjunct Professor at Barry University in Miami Shores, FL, instructing students earning their Bachelor's or Master's degree in education and also served as the Vice President for the National Board Certified Teachers of Miami-Dade. She moved to Statesboro, Georgia in 2014 after accepting the position of Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for Bulloch County Public Schools. Dr. Felton's academic degrees include: earning a MBA from Strayer University in Washington, DC, a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, a Specialist degree in Reading K-12 and a Master's degree in Elementary Education from Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida, and a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from SC State University in Orangeburg, SC. She has been National Board Certified in the area of Early Childhood since 2001.



### **Michael O'Neal**

*Organization Founder and Executive Director, Parent University, Savannah, GA*

Michael is a founder of Parent University and now serves as the Executive Director of Community United Services Inc., which is the entity that manages the Parent University program. O'Neal has been the chief steward of this grassroots community based program since its inception here in Savannah in 1999. O'Neal has given talks about Parent University and community building many places in the United States and several countries. Currently Michael is facilitating Parent University and its new component "Early Learning College" program for the parents of children birth to five years old.



### **Patrick Phillips**

*MSW, CEO, Atlanta Metropolitan State College, Atlanta, GA*

Patrick, "The Change Agent," is a doctoral student, college instructor, urban education specialist, award-winning speaker and author, certified educator, and school social worker. He is a recipient of the President of the United States Volunteer Service Award, Grassroots Leadership "Legacy Award," and the author of *The Intentional Student: 17 Strategies To Survive & Thrive In College From Day 1*, *Decisions: A Young Man's Guide to Avoiding the Traps*, *Change 101: Average Is Crowded*, and the *Decisions: Success Is Optional* curriculum. Mr. Phillips is a graduate of Georgia State University (GSU). He holds Master's and Bachelor's degrees in social work.



### **Phillip Block**

*M. Ed., Teacher and Certified Therapeutic Drumming Instructor, Youth Villages® at Inner Harbour, Douglasville, GA*

Phillip began his teaching career as a paraprofessional in a special education classroom, and then proceeded to earn certification needed to become a lead teacher in both special needs and gifted classrooms. Throughout the past 20 years of his career, Phillip taught in both public and private academies. He primarily enjoys the high school setting, both academically and developmentally. He loves the process of opening up and enriching the "formal thinking" capabilities of adolescents at risk. Phillip embarked on his inclusion of West African Drumming into his classroom processes back in 2007. He found the experience to be highly rewarding, enriching, and a great deal of fun.



### **Rajni Shankar-Brown**

*Ph.D., Associate Professor and Jessie Ball Chair of Social Justice, Stetson University, DeLand, FL*

Dr. Shankar-Brown is an Associate Professor of Education, Director of Education Graduate Programs, and Jessie Ball DuPont Endowed Chair of Social Justice Education at Stetson University. She is the Founder and Director of the Poverty and Homelessness Conference and serves on the Board of Directors for the National Coalition for the Homeless. She is an internationally recognized scholar in the areas of poverty and homelessness, diversity and inclusion, and social justice education. She is widely published and has presented around the globe. In addition to being a committed teacher-scholar, she is a passionate mother, multimedia artist, and social activist.



### **Robert Lake**

*Ed.D., Associate Professor, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA*

Dr. Lake is an Associate Professor of Social Foundations of Education at Georgia Southern University. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in diversity and multicultural education from both a local and global perspective. Robert is the author of *Vygotsky on Education* and *A Curriculum of Imagination in an Era of Standardization: An Imaginative Dialogue* with Maxine Greene and Paulo Freire.



### **Steven Edwards**

*Ph.D., President and CEO, Edwards Educational Services, Alexandria, VA*

A leader nationally recognized by USA Today for his innovative approach to education, Dr. Edwards successfully implemented numerous groundbreaking programs to improve student performance during his 16-year tenure as a school administrator. As President and CEO of Edwards Educational Services, Inc., he has been instrumental in helping countless organizations tailor similar programs with positive, far-reaching results. He is also CEO of and expert contributor to The National Principals Academy, an organization dedicated to helping educational leaders improve their professional practice. In addition, Dr. Edwards is an internationally recognized keynote speaker, facilitator, and trainer regularly featured as a content expert on television and radio with appearances on CNN.



### **Takeysha Lewis**

*Ed.S., District School Social Worker, Bibb County School District, Macon, GA*

Takeysha is a School Social Worker with the Bibb County Public School District of which she is a proud product! She graduated from Fort Valley State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and from Valdosta State University with a Master's Degree in Social Work and an Educational Leadership Specialist Degree. She has an array of experience that spans from working with students and families in public education, working directly with families within the Child Protective Services system in Georgia, and in the community sector for local non-profit organizations. It is her passion to engage and inspire every child on the importance of obtaining an education, and this passion drives the work that she performs on a daily basis.



### **Tatiana Rolles**

*Certified: Therapeutic Drumming Instructor, Youth Villages® at Inner Harbour, Douglasville, GA*

Tatiana is currently the Lead Therapeutic West African Drumming Instructor at Youth Villages, a residential treatment facility in Douglasville, GA. Tatiana studied early child development at Maria College in Albany, New York in 2001. She started in the field of helping youth at risk in 2002 at St. Anne's Institute in Albany, NY. Throughout the 10 years of her career at St. Anne's as recreation and life skills coordinator, she mentored and taught African Dance with the Student Theatre Outreach Program (S.T.O.P) for the Albany NAACP branch for youth in the community. Two years ago, she took interest in learning the Djembe to expand her West African knowledge. She is now dedicated in using art-integrated therapy to help youth find their voices through therapeutic drumming and dance on a daily basis.



### **Teri Lawler**

*MA, Doctoral Candidate, School Psychologist, Red Clay Consolidated School District and CPAC Educational Consultant, New Castle, DE*

Teri is a results-driven educator serving the students and families of Delaware for the last 28 years. She works collaboratively with education partners and community stakeholders to develop trauma-informed systems of care for schools and youth serving organizations. Teri is committed to moving systems from trauma-sensitivity to trauma-responsiveness. She loves training and serves on Delaware's Compassionate Schools Learning Collaborative, the City of Wilmington (DE) Community Advisory Council, and Delaware's MTSS Advisory Council. A native Virginian, Teri is a graduate of Hampton University and the University of Delaware. She is in the final stages of doctoral candidacy at Wilmington University.

## SPEAKER BIOS



### **Rev. Timothy Allen**

*BS, Chief Executive Officer, Gilead Group, Dorchester, MA*

Timothy is a nationally recognized lecturer on urban issues. Born and raised in the city of Boston, he began his career in the corporate world, experiencing success in engineering, sales, and executive recruiting. His heart for the plight of troubled youth drove him to begin working directly with this population as his vocation. For more than 20 years, he has worked with high-risk youth and their families. He has pioneered strategies to assist youth in re-integrating into their home communities and has designed and delivered trainings for families to help them support their children. His innovations have caught the attention of law enforcement agencies, schools, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations, for which he is a regular speaker, trainer, and consultant. Rev. Allen is also the senior pastor of the Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, an urban ministry that focuses on restoring broken families.



### **Tom Peterson**

*Ed.D., Professor of Critical Theory and Philosophy of Education, The University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA*

Dr. Peterson has served for 26 years as a professor of Critical Theory and Philosophy of Education at the University of West Georgia. He teaches courses including philosophy, critical theory, and history. His research interests include teachers' inner-life, teacher burnout, and renewal, growing a spiritual classroom, and igniting a SPARK in challenging youth. The son of a preacher, Tom lived his formative years in South East Asia. Prior to his appointment at UWG, he was an elementary/middle school principal in NC, art teacher in California and Maryland, World Masters gold medal winner in badminton, flight instructor, and pilot missionary to Africa.



### **Tom Harris**

*MS, Founder of Therapeutic Drumming Instructor Program, Youth Villages® at Inner Harbour, Douglasville, GA*

Tom has been working with adolescents and families in distress since 1978. Beginning in 1996, he developed a Therapeutic Drumming program based on traditional West African drumming for use at a residential treatment center with children and youth with significant mental health and behavioral challenges. Groups from his program have performed at Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, and for Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter at the Carter Center. He has developed a 12-month certification training for Therapeutic Drumming, which he offers at the Joseph M. Brown Therapeutic Drumming Center in Douglasville, Georgia.



### **Victor Woods**

*National Speaker and Published Author, Success International Incorporated, Bloomingdale, IL*

Victor is a national speaker, CNN contributor, and author of *A Breed Apart*, an autobiography published by Simon & Schuster. His book is currently being developed into a major motion picture and national TV series. His life story is said to be mesmerizing and his style of speaking, spellbinding. His life challenges and current success compel readers to look in the mirror and realize that if Victor Woods could achieve his vision through sheer will, sacrifice, and determination that life holds no excuse for failure—the universe opens up for a man or woman who knows where they're going. Simply put, that is why Victor has been speaking nonstop for two decades, inspiring all that hear him to never give up. His journey from prison to the biggest publishing company in the world is incredible. Having beaten the odds against him, his story's message is simple: Anyone who aspires to greatness in their life, no matter what their circumstances, you can make it.



### **Wesley Montoya**

*Ph.D., Principal, Gilliam School, Denver Public Schools, Denver, CO*

Dr. Montoya is a principal at Denver Public Schools in Colorado. He has worked with youth at risk—primarily Latino students—for more than 26 years and has taught math, science, and social studies. He works in a youth detention center that serves nearly 800 students each year, of which 80% are students of color. He has been a Dean of Students, Assistant Principal, and has worked at the Colorado Department of Education as a Title I Senior Consultant. He has a BA from Adams State College, MA from the University of Colorado, and a Ph.D. from the University of Denver.

## In Memory of Ron Alt



Ron Alt passed away, surrounded by family, on October 20, 2017. He was a wonderful husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, coach and friend.

Ron never met a stranger. He was fiercely tough, hilarious and selfless. All who knew him became better people because Ron was a part of their lives.

He helped countless youth through his many years of serving the community. Ron was a tireless and fearless advocate for youth and the underserved. As a Master Addiction Counselor and state-certified Clinical Evaluator, Ron helped youth who struggled with drugs and alcohol with one-on-one support and tough love. He changed thousands of lives with his intellect, humor, love, and persistence.

An Armstrong State University alumnus (AS '78, BA '78, MHS '90), he will best be remembered for his lifelong service. Ron served on the boards of directors of the Savannah Coalition for the Homeless, Chatham County Council on Alcohol & Drugs, Workforce Investment Board, the Youth Futures Authority, At-Risk Youth Council, the Frank Callen Boys and Girls Club, among many organizations. He was a long-time member of the Planning Council for the National Youth-at-Risk Conference, helping build the Conference into the premier event it is today.

Ron's proudest moments were reconnecting with youth, often hearing someone say "Hey, Mr. Ron" or "Coach Ron" as they stopped him to share how he had impacted their lives. Seeing people succeed and hearing of their accomplishments made him so happy.

The Ron Alt Service Award will honor his spirit of selfless service. Ron's work is legendary, and this award commemorates Ron's great desire to serve and help foster the well-being of children and youth everywhere.







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