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# SAIL

BACK TO SCHOOL SUMMER CONFERENCE

JULY

29 & 30

CHARLESTON COLISEUM  
AND CONVENTION CENTER



West Virginia DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION



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2025-2026**

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West Virginia Department of Education



**Matt**  
Eicheldinger

*Author, Speaker, and  
Former Educator*

## Day One Keynote Speaker

Matt Eicheldinger is a New York Times bestselling author, speaker, and former educator known for turning ordinary moments into unforgettable stories. With a background in teaching and a gift for storytelling, Matt connects deeply with audiences of all ages through humor, heart, and insight. In just two years, he will have published eleven books, making him one of the most prolific and fast-rising voices in contemporary children's and inspirational literature. His works—including *Sticky Notes*, *Matt Sprouts* and the *Curse of the Ten Broken Toes*, and the upcoming adventure trilogy *When The Rain Came*—have inspired readers to find meaning in everyday experiences and sparked imagination in classrooms across the country. Whether he's sharing lessons from the classroom or stories from his own childhood, Matt leaves audiences feeling seen, uplifted, and ready to write their own story—one small moment at a time.

### Keynote Address

Known as the “teacher who wrote it all down,” Matt Eicheldinger delivers a powerful keynote address that resonates deeply with educators. Drawing from 15 years of capturing poignant and often humorous classroom stories, he shares the profound life lessons his students have taught him along the way. With his signature blend of authenticity, humor, and heart, Matt inspires his audience to see the ripple effect of their actions, no matter how small. Attendees will leave not only with four actionable insights but also with a renewed sense of purpose and the emotional reminder that their work leaves a lasting impact far beyond what they can see.



**Joey  
Stepp**

*Motivational Speaker,  
Middle School  
Counselor, and  
Comedy Magician*

## Day Two Keynote Speaker

Joey Stepp is a middle school counselor and professional magician who shares a powerful, relatable message rooted in personal resilience. Once a struggling student, he went on to earn a football scholarship to Marshall University. Now a sought-after keynote speaker, Joey combines magic, humor, and heartfelt stories to inspire audiences. His presentations emphasize persistence, connection, and believing in what's possible. Offstage, he continues to support students daily, drawing from his own experiences to help them succeed.

### Keynote Address

**The Magic of Connection: Every Kid Has a Story** is a high-energy, motivational keynote blending comedy, magic, and real-life storytelling. Through interactive magic routines and personal experiences, Joey Stepp shares the powerful reminder that students often hide their struggles behind smiles and success. With a focus on simple, everyday ways to build rapport—like high-fives, positive comments, and being a consistent source of encouragement—Joey challenges educators to see beyond appearances.

Drawing from his own experiences of growing up in a unique situation during his teenage years, Joey's message is clear: every child has a story, and sometimes the ones who seem the strongest are carrying the heaviest loads.

Attendees will leave re-energized, entertained, and reminded of the real magic they bring to their schools every day—the magic of connection.

# SAIL DAY 1

July  
29



Time	Sessions	Room
7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Registration	
8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Welcome and Keynote <i>Michele L. Blatt, State Superintendent</i> <i>Keynote presented by Matt Eicheldinger</i>	Grand Ballroom

## Session 1 | 9:45 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
All Aboard: Navigating the Waters of Accessibility with AEM, AT, and ADA Title II	In this session, participants will dive into accessibility. We will discuss Accessible Educational Materials (AEM), Assistive Technology (AT) devices and services, and the new accessibility requirements under ADA Title II. We will also cover real-life scenarios and examples of accessibility.	Deborah Adams, Coordinator, WVDE and Heather Waselchalk, Coordinator, WVDE	204-205
Cooking Up Learning: Turning the Kitchen into a Classroom	Discover how hands-on cooking activities can enhance learning across subjects. This session will explore ways to integrate math, science, reading, and cultural studies into delicious, engaging lessons that make concepts stick - one recipe at a time. Spätzle with Roasted Red Pepper Coulis will be prepared during this session.	Chef Tommy Grant, Instructor, Carver Career Center	216
Overview of Credit Recovery Program	Join a WVDE representative to discuss registration, extensions, billing, and general information about the Credit Recovery program.	Deborah Justice, Program Specialist, WVDE	210

## Session 1 | 9:45 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Incorporating Test Authoring as Part of a Comprehensive Assessment System: A Panel Discussion	This session features a panel discussion on how Marshall County Schools implemented the West Virginia Department of Education's free assessment tool, Test Authoring. Middle school principals and the county test coordinator will share their experiences introducing the tool, how its use has evolved, and how they built teacher support. Teachers will explain how they apply this tool in the classroom to support instruction and student mastery. The session is geared toward educators and administrators aiming to enhance assessment practices and foster ongoing school improvement.	Joseph Mastracci, Ed.D., Coordinator, Office of Assessment; Panelists: Casey Storm, County Test Coordinator, Marshall County Schools; Ryan Finley, Principal, Moundsville Middle School; Rob Chavanak, Principal, Sherrard Middle School; Melissa Glasgow, Teacher, Moundsville Middle School; Kelly Hamrick, Teacher, Sherrard Middle School; Greg Oliver, Teacher, Sherrard Middle School	202-203
Introduction to Instructional Rounds: Building a Network for School Improvement <i>(Invitation Only)</i>	This session introduces instructional rounds as a structured method for continuous improvement, combining improvement strategies, classroom observations, and educator networks. Participants will learn how administrators and teachers collaborate to identify instructional patterns, develop theories of action, and track progress. The session is open to any district interested in joining a West Virginia network led by WVDE coordinators.	Leah Earnest, Lisa Hindman, Michelle Leftwich, and Kelly Massinople Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support	South Hall
Let's Go Exploring!	Empower middle school students to discover their passions and future possibilities through hands-on career exploration that builds problem-solving, teamwork, and critical thinking skills during this pivotal stage of development.	David Watson, Barboursville Middle School, Cabell County Schools	213

## Session 1 | 9:45 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Positive Structured Learning Environments	Learn how to create a positive, structured learning environment by setting clear expectations and implementing effective classroom management strategies that promote student responsibility and engagement.	Gwynne Flatley, George Washington High School, Kanawha County Schools	212
The Family Factor: Elevating Achievement Through Trust and Collaboration	This interactive session focuses on effective strategies for building authentic, collaborative partnerships between schools and families to boost student achievement and well-being. Participants will explore ways to build trust, improve communication, and create inclusive environments that empower all families. Using real-world examples and research-based practices, the session offers practical tools for educators and leaders to strengthen the home-school connection, whether starting new initiatives or enhancing current efforts.	Kassie Gunnoe, MSW, LGSW, Project AWARE Therapist, Oak Hill High School; Andrea Bailey, MA, Project AWARE LEA Coordinator, Wirt County; Amy Knicely, MA, Project AWARE SEA Coordinator, Marshall University Research Corporation, Center of Excellence for Recovery; Rhonda Chukya (Fayette County)	211
Read-Alouds	This session will highlight the importance of read-alouds, emphasizing how to foster oral language development, expand vocabulary, and lay the foundation for early literacy and academic success.	Brandon Riffle, Pre-K Teacher, George Ward Elementary School, Randolph County, and Kaylee Cross, Pre-K Teacher, Beverly Elementary, Randolph County	215
Mind Your Business: Early Entrepreneurship	Design thinking is a human-centered approach to problem-solving. It is widely used across Silicon Valley to come up with new ideas and innovations. Find out how we're bringing it to West Virginia's students.	Dancey Howes, Hacker Valley Elementary School; Karlee Edwards, Scott Teays Elementary School; Jennifer Tupa, New Creek Primary School; Lisa Sydnor, Culloden Elementary School, and Kim Cremeans, Village of Barboursville Elementary School	214

## Session 1 | 9:45 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
When the IEP Includes Transportation as a Related Service	As with all IEP services, all decisions need to be made with the IEP team and with the least restrictive options considered first, but also being mindful that safety comes first. The entire transportation experience must be considered to ensure proper support and needs. Come join us to learn what should be considered from the bus stop in the morning back to the bus stop in the afternoon.	Peggy Stone, Director of Transportation Lincoln County Schools; Jimmy Lacy, WVDE Director of Transportation	217
Your Role in School Safety	Creating a safe school environment requires everyone's daily attention and effort. Just as each person plays a role in making learning possible, each person plays a role in creating a safe learning environment. This session will highlight each person's role in safety and provide some best practices for making their school as safe as possible.	Brian Brown, Regional School Safety Officer Division of Protective Services Capitol Police School Safety Unit	North Hall

## Session 2 | 11:00 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Adult Education: More Than High School Equivalency	This session is designed to provide educators with valuable insights into the transformative impact of adult education. We will examine how adult education empowers learners by equipping them with essential skills necessary for post-secondary enrollment, vocational training, digital literacy, customer service, employability, and certifications in key software applications. Furthermore, we will explore effective strategies to support students in achieving their GED®.	Chanda Perry, Adult Education Regional Coordinator and Elizabeth Jarrett, Adult Education Professional Development Coordinator	217



## Session 2 | 11:00 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
All Kids Are Our Kids: Strengthening WVTSS	This session will revitalize our state's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (WVTSS) by exploring innovative strategies and practical tools designed to enhance interventions and support the success of all learners across the domains of academics, behavior, and attendance. Participants will leave equipped with actionable strategies to strengthen WVTSS implementation in their schools and districts. This session is appropriate for all professional staff.	Hannah Cooper, Coordinator, District and Leadership Support	202-203
Cracking the Code: Boosting Test Scores for Every Student	Uncover practical strategies and innovative approaches to help all students succeed on assessments. From data-driven techniques to engaging classroom activities, this session will equip you with tools to unlock student potential and improve test performance in meaningful ways.	Jared Ulrich, John Marshall High School	216
Developing Mock Casualty Exercises with Local First Responders	We will dive into best practices, the need for and importance of training, planning, and coordinated efforts to prepare your school district for school bus emergencies while involving all stakeholders.	Jimmy Lacy WVDE Director of Transportation; Peggy Stone, Director of Transportation Lincoln County Schools; Richard Cast, Director of Transportation, Jackson County Schools	North Hall
Effective Educator ECCAT Partnerships	This early childhood classroom assistant teacher (ECCAT) support session will provide strategies and resources to enhance classroom assistance for students in Grades K-3, focusing on effective support techniques and developmental learning needs.	Amber Myers, WVDE, and Whitney Stead, Cabell County Schools	212

## Session 2 | 11:00 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Formative Assessment	This session will explore the importance of formative assessment in pre-k, demonstrating how ongoing observation and feedback support individualized instruction, inform teaching practices, and enhance children's learning and development.	Pamela Williamson, Pre-K Teachers, Buffalo Elementary, Putnam County and Jennifer Reynolds, Pre-K Teacher, George Washington Elementary, Putnam County	211
Monitoring 101: An In- and Out-of-State Overview	This session provides a concise overview of special education monitoring, both within and beyond the state. It covers the key stages of the process, such as pre-visit preparation, onsite activities, and post-visit follow-up. It also illustrates how these components work together to ensure statewide compliance, drive improvement, and offer guidance rooted in support.	Ian Kennedy, Coordinator, WVDE	204-205
Promoting Positive Behaviors for Engaged Learners	Learn evidence-based strategies for behavior management, emotional regulation, and de-escalation as participants are guided through practical, ready-to-use techniques they can apply right away.	Molly Fisher, Behavior Support Specialist, West Virginia Behavioral Mental Health Technical Assistance Center	214
SAIL into Success: Steering Your Virtual Classroom to New Heights	This lively, engaging session is led by two experienced virtual school teachers who will share practical strategies for navigating the challenges of online education. This session is perfect for K-12 virtual school teachers, those new to digital classrooms, or anyone looking for creative, actionable strategies to enhance their online teaching practice.	Jennifer LaCasella, Spanish teacher, WVDE and Casie Fox, Spanish teacher, WVDE	210
Setting the Stage for Instructional Rounds in Your School (Invitation Only)	This session will provide a more in-depth look at the instructional rounds process and prepare school-based instructional rounds teams to engage in all aspects of the instructional rounds framework.	Leah Earnest, Lisa Hindman, Michelle Leftwich, and Kelly Massinople Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support	South Hall

**Session 2 | 11:00 a.m.**

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Sketchnoting	Discover how sketchnoting—a creative blend of visuals, keywords, and structure—can transform the way you capture and retain information. No artistic skills required.	Matt Eicheldinger, Keynote Speaker, Author	213
West Virginia PEC Speakers Bureau	The K-12 Speakers Bureau is a free platform connecting West Virginia teachers with professionals from various fields to inspire students through engaging presentations.	Donna Peduto, West Virginia Public Education Collaborative, and Lauren Smith, Counselor, Monongalia County Schools	215

**Lunch | 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Grand Ballroom**

## Session 3 | 1:00 p.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
A Panel Discussion with West Virginia School Counselors	Join us for an inspiring and insightful panel discussion featuring expert school counselors—leaders who are redefining what it means to support students in today's evolving educational landscape. These experienced counselors will share their journeys, innovative practices, and lessons learned from the front lines of student support and advocacy. Come ready to learn, reflect, and be inspired by the voices of excellence leading the way in school counseling.	Richard Tench, St. Albans, High School, Kanawha County Schools; Lauren Hensley, Buffalo Middle School, Wayne County; Jodi Williams, Opequon Elementary School, Berkeley County; Zoe Sampson, Kanawha County	210
Anchoring to Your School Community: Established Processes for Stakeholder Engagement	Did you know there are established processes in place to help schools navigate community engagement and complaints? Leave this session knowing how your school's Local School Improvement Council (LSIC) can maximize its impact on stakeholder engagement and how the school community can voice concerns about policy or code violations at the school, county, or state level.	Alex Criner, Dr. Stacey Murrell, Angela Urling, Tammy Varney, Office of Accountability	202-203
Bridging Connections: West Virginia Family Engagement in Action	Join the West Virginia Family Engagement Center for an interactive fireside chat featuring experienced family engagement leaders from across our state. Come prepared with questions and join the conversation as we explore successful strategies that strengthen family-school-community partnerships across our region.	Dr. Lydotta Taylor and The EdVenture Group	North Hall
Building Thinking Classrooms	Learn how to transform your classroom into a dynamic learning environment by implementing the research-based practices of the Building Thinking Classrooms framework, designed to promote deep student engagement and critical thinking across all subjects.	Sara Klesel, Math and Science Curriculum Coordinator, Wood County Schools	212

### Session 3 | 1:00 p.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Creative Connections: Arts Across the Curriculum	Discover how integrating the arts into elementary instruction can boost student engagement, deepen understanding, and foster creativity across all content areas through meaningful, hands-on learning experiences.	Holly Kincaid, Park Middle School, Raleigh County Schools	213
Field Trip to Capitol and West Virginia Culture Center	Participants will explore the West Virginia Capitol and the West Virginia Culture Center's State Museum.		
Fostering Number Sense	Number sense development in pre-k focuses on helping children understand basic numerical concepts like counting, recognizing numbers, and comparing quantities. Through hands-on activities and play, participants will develop foundational skills in estimating, subitizing, and understanding simple relationships between numbers.	Kaylee Cross, Pre-K Teacher, Beverly Elementary, Randolph County, and Brandon Riffle, Pre-K Teacher, George Ward Elementary School, Randolph County	215
Math Everywhere: Sneaking Numbers into Every Lesson	Discover creative and hands-on strategies to seamlessly embed math into any subject area. This interactive session will showcase dynamic, cross-curricular activities that promote problem-solving, collaboration, and real-world connections. Walk away with practical, ready-to-use resources that will inspire students and strengthen their mathematical thinking—no matter what grade or subject you teach.	Kyle Sandy, Instructor, Mid-Ohio Valley Technical Institute	216

### Session 3 | 1:00 p.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Option Pathway: Mission Possible	The Option Pathway program is an alternative graduation pathway for high school students who are at-risk of not being able to graduate through traditional means. Since the program was first piloted in 2010, hundreds of high school students, who were struggling to meet graduation requirements, have earned their high school diploma through this alternative pathway. In this presentation, you will learn more about this awesome program and hear success stories of students who would not have been able to graduate without this opportunity.	Laura Crouch, Option Pathway Instructor, Kanawha County Schools, Riverside High School	217
Road to Publishing	Join bestselling author Matt Eicheldinger as he shares his journey through both self-publishing and traditional publishing, offering practical tips, insights, and inspiration for aspiring authors exploring their own path to publication.	Matt Eicheldinger, Keynote Speaker, Author	214
Setting the Stage for Instructional Rounds in Your School <i>(Invitation Only)</i>	This session will provide a more in-depth look at the instructional rounds process and prepare school-based instructional rounds teams to engage in all aspects of the instructional rounds framework.	Leah Earnest, Lisa Hindman, Michelle Leftwich, and Kelly Massinople Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support	South Hall
Unlocking Student Success: A Function Based Approach to Student Behavior	In this session, we delve into function-based thinking when confronted with difficult behaviors. We explore how to identify behavior functions and effectively recognize patterns to understand the underlying reasons behind student behavior. By doing so, we equip ourselves with powerful strategies to enhance student success.	Jennifer Carpenter, Coordinator, Office of Special Education, WVDE	204-205

## Session 4 | 2:15 p.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
A Formula for Engagement	Learn how to transform your lesson planning and boost student engagement using the five-step ATLAS model—a storytelling-inspired framework that helps make learning more meaningful and memorable.	Kyle Berry, Barboursville Middle School, Cabell County	214
A Process for Examining Discipline Data	Discipline data can be a cumbersome set of figures to examine. This session provides a simple process for reviewing year-end school discipline data and targets the most frequent and most severe infractions. The analysis challenges school administrators to examine their consistency, the impact of their responses on repeat offenders and make necessary adjustments to their practices to minimize behaviors that negatively impact their school's learning environment.	Jeffrey Kelley, WVDE Assistant Superintendent	202-203
Creating Meaningful Learning Targets	Learn how to craft clear, student-friendly learning targets that drive instruction, guide assessment, and help students take ownership of their learning.	Kathryn Alam and Casey Whitlow, Regional Numeracy Specialists, Mountain State Educational Services Collaborative	212
Family Engagement	This session will explore the importance of family engagement in pre-k, highlighting how strong partnerships between families and educators support children's early learning, development, and school readiness.	Amanda Fragile Peyton, Assistant Superintendent, McDowell County Schools	215
Field Trip to Capitol and West Virginia Culture Center	Participants will explore the West Virginia Capitol and the West Virginia Culture Center's State Museum.		
Igniting Our Future: Exploring How Educators Can Fuel Students' Curiosity for Entrepreneurship in West Virginia	Discover strategies for implementing and expanding classroom initiatives that foster synergistic relationships between academia and the community.	Tara St. Clair, Program Director at Encova Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, WVU	North Hall

## Session 4 | 2:15 p.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Innovate, Create, Educate: Hands-On Making for the Modern Classroom	Step into the ultimate hands-on experience at our Maker Space, where creativity meets education. This interactive session is designed for teachers eager to explore the power of maker-centered learning and its impact on student engagement, problem-solving, and innovation. Participants will dive into a variety of hands-on activities, from 3D printing and coding to robotics, circuitry, and upcycled design challenges. Whether you're a seasoned maker or brand new to the movement, you'll discover accessible, budget-friendly ways to bring STEM, design thinking, and project-based learning into your classroom. Leave with ready-to-use lesson ideas, inspiration for cross-curricular connections, and the confidence to foster a culture of making in your school. Get ready to tinker, create, and spark a love for hands-on learning.	James Coble, Coordinator, WVDE and Tim Elliott, Coordinator, WVDE	206
Introducing the My Climb Guides	My Climb Guides provide West Virginia students and families with step-by-step support for planning, preparing, and paying for college—empowering them to take charge of their educational journey.	Heather McChesney, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission	211
Medicaid 101: Understanding Random Moment Time Study and Why Your Role and Participation Are Important to West Virginia Schools	This session provides an overview of the Random Moment Time Study (RMTS) and its significance in the Medicaid School-Based Health Services program. Participants will learn how RMTS works, its importance in documenting Medicaid-reimbursable activities, and the impact of their participation on funding and services for West Virginia schools.	Karen Finney, Coordinator, WVDE	204-205



## Session 4 | 2:15 p.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Set Sail for Student Programs	The Office of Student Enrichment supports multiple student programs throughout the year. Come and learn more about the Academic Showdown, West Virginia Virtual School, Arts Alive, and how you can get your students involved.	Student Enrichment Staff	210
Setting the Stage for Instructional Rounds in Your School (Invitation Only)	This session will provide a more in-depth look at the instructional rounds process and prepare school-based instructional rounds teams to engage in all aspects of the instructional rounds framework.	Leah Earnest, Lisa Hindman, Michelle Leftwich, and Kelly Massinople Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support	South Hall
Sparking Early Literacy	Discover how Sparking Early Literacy Growth projects are empowering young learners in West Virginia's most rural areas with foundational reading and writing skills to close early learning gaps by Grade 3.	Donna Peduto and Canyon Lohnas, West Virginia Public Education Collaborative	213
Up, Up and Away! Exploring Science with Weather Balloons	Take science learning to new heights - literally! This hands-on session will show you how to use weather balloons to teach key science concepts like atmospheric pressure, data collection, and climate patterns, making STEM exciting and tangible for students.	Larry Harshbarger, Instructor, Lincoln County High School	216

## Prize Drawing and Closing | 3:15 p.m.

Clinton Burch, Assistant Superintendent



# SAIL DAY 2

July  
**30** 

Time	Sessions	Room
7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Registration	
8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Welcome and Keynote <i>Dr. Sonya White, Deputy Superintendent</i> <i>Keynote presented by Joey Stepp</i>	Grand Ballroom

## Session 1 | 9:45 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Active Students Make Better Learners!	Explore the powerful role of physical activity in boosting academic performance. Learn how to integrate physical activity in standards based instruction. This is an active session be prepared to move, learn and have fun.	Brooke Bias, Kanawha County Schools	212
A Process for Examining Discipline Data	Discipline data can be a cumbersome set of figures to examine. This session provides a simple process for reviewing year end school discipline data and targets the most frequent and most severe infractions. The analysis challenges school administrators to examine their consistency, the impact of their responses on repeat offenders and make necessary adjustments to their practices to minimize behaviors that negatively impact their school's learning environment.	Jeffrey Kelley, WVDE Assistant Superintendent	202-203

## Session 1 | 9:45 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Building Stronger Tourism Programs: Partnering with Government Agencies for Curriculum and Workforce Development	This session explores how educators can collaborate with government agencies—such as tourism boards, economic development offices, and workforce commissions—to strengthen tourism curriculum and create career pathways for students. Attendees will learn about successful partnership models, integrating industry insights, and accessing funding and internships. Through case studies and interactive discussions, participants will gain actionable strategies to build impactful partnerships that benefit students, schools, and the tourism industry.	Tim Elliott, Coordinator, WVDE	North Hall
Engaged, Empowered, and Equipped: Bridge Between Home and School	This session will emphasize the crucial role of Parent and Family Engagement in boosting student academic success. We will delve into the ESEA requirements for Parent and Family Engagement. Activities will include distinguishing between involvement and engagement and exploring strategies to elevate current involvement activities into effective engagement.	Elizabeth Younis, Coordinator, Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support Mami Itamochi, Coordinator, Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support	216-217
From Farm to Classroom: Growing Knowledge with Agriculture	Discover the shift from foraging to farming in this interactive session exploring hunter-gatherer societies and the rise of early agriculture. Participants will take part in a hands-on foraging activity that highlights the challenges of limited resources and the benefits of agricultural development. After the activity, attendees will receive practical materials to support the transition into lessons on ancient civilizations and their agricultural innovations.	Kari Brown, Coordinator, WVDE	215

## Session 1 | 9:45 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Managing Challenging Behaviors in the Early Childhood Classroom Part 1	Discover ways to manage behaviors through a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) in your early childhood classroom. We will discuss prevention tactics and strategies as well as how to respond to challenging behavior when it occurs. This session continues in Session 6.	Dr. Amy Carlson, West Virginia ECPBIS Coordinator; Kate Morris, EC Behavior Specialist, and Jessica Hensley, EC Coaching Specialist, V Behavior/Mental Health TA Center at the West Virginia Autism Training Center at Marshall University	211
Not One More Thing	Presenting The Network: A model that partners new teachers with mentors in their buildings and district offices to support and retain teachers.	Laura Presley and Team, Mercer County Schools	213
Science of Reading	Have you been wondering what the Science of Reading is all about? This session walks participants through the ineffective practices that persist from previous reading movements and outlines what the research shows we should be doing instead to help all students become successful, college- and career-ready readers. As part of the state's Ready, Read, Write, West Virginia initiative, all participants will receive a copy of the WVDE's SOR Talking Points and Supporting Research document and access to an electronic folder with the presentation, notes, and accompanying resources.	Christy Schwartz, Coordinator, PK-12 Academic Support	Grand Ballroom
Setting the Stage for Instructional Rounds in Your School (Invitation Only)	This session will provide a more in-depth look at the instructional rounds process and prepare school-based instructional rounds teams to engage in all aspects of the instructional rounds framework.	Leah Earnest, Lisa Hindman, Michelle Leftwich, and Kelly Massinople Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support	South Hall

## Session 1 | 9:45 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Specially Designed Instruction	This session offers resources and information on specially designed instruction (SDI) for students receiving special education services.	Whitney White, Manager, WVDE and Mimi Browning, Coordinator, WVDE	204-205
Supporting Families with ParentGuidance.org	Discover how ParentGuidance.org, in partnership with WVDE, is providing families across West Virginia with free, 24/7 mental health resources, coaching, and expert-led parenting support to strengthen student well-being.	David Lee, The Cook Center	214

## Session 2 | 11:00 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Continued: Managing Challenging Behaviors in the Early Childhood Classroom Part 2	A continuation of session 1, this session explores practical strategies to prevent and address challenging behaviors in the early childhood classroom.	Dr. Amy Carlson, West Virginia ECPBIS Coordinator; Kate Morris, EC Behavior Specialist, and Jessica Hensley, EC Coaching Specialist, V Behavior/Mental Health TA Center at the West Virginia Autism Training Center at Marshall University	211
Creating Meaningful Learning Targets	Setting clear learning targets as the destination and success criteria as the map has a powerful impact on student learning.	Kevin Colistra, Monongalia County, Morgantown High School Instructional Support Leader	213
Demonstration Schools	This session will showcase continued work on mastery-based learning. Presenters will discuss school visits and tours for other educators that will be hosted during the 2025-2026 school year.	Meredith Dailer, Principal, Wheeling Park High School/ Shelby Glover, Rhonda Foreman, Mike Lopez, Martinsburg High School	210

## Session 2 | 11:00 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Engaging Families West Virginia	Engaging Families WV is a new initiative created by the West Virginia Department of Education, focusing on helping you connect with your little ones and boost their vocabulary, numeracy, and understanding through fun, easy conversations and simple activities.	Emily Pearson, Coordinator, Office of Career Technical Education; Amber Myers, Coordinator, Office of PK-12 Academic Support; Angel Kennedy, Coordinator, Office of Special Education	North Hall
Engaged, Empowered, and Equipped: Bridge Between Home and School	This session will emphasize the crucial role of Parent and Family Engagement in boosting student academic success. We will delve into the ESEA requirements for Parent and Family Engagement. Activities will include distinguishing between involvement and engagement and exploring strategies to elevate current involvement activities into effective engagement.	Elizabeth Younis, Coordinator, Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support Mami Itamochi, Coordinator, Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support	216-217
Ewww! Broccoli!	Did your parents ever try to sneak vegetables into your meals? Mine did—grated carrots in the spaghetti sauce, broccoli disguised as parsley in manicotti, and parsnips blended into the soup broth. The same idea can be applied to teaching: when done thoughtfully, core curriculum doesn't have to feel overwhelming. It can be seamlessly—and even enjoyably—woven into other subjects. In this conversational-style session, we'll explore practical ways to embed strong English instruction across all content areas.	Jennifer Reynolds, Instructor, Ben Franklin Career Center and Christina Holston, Instructor, Ben Franklin Career Center	215

## Session 2 | 11:00 a.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Incorporating Test Authoring as Part of a Comprehensive Assessment System: A Panel Discussion	This panel discussion focuses on how Marshall County Schools implemented the West Virginia Department of Education's free assessment tool, Test Authoring, as part of a comprehensive assessment system. Middle school principals and the county test coordinator will share their implementation journey, including early steps, usage evolution, and teacher engagement strategies. Teachers will also present classroom applications that support instruction and student mastery. The session is intended for educators and administrators aiming to improve assessment practices and foster continuous school improvement.	Joseph Mastracci, Ed.D., Coordinator, Office of Assessment; Panelists: Casey Storm, County Test Coordinator, Marshall County School; Ryan Finley, Principal, Moundsville Middle School; Rob Chavanak, Principal, Sherrard Middle School; Melissa Glasgow, Teacher, Moundsville Middle School; Kelly Hamrick, Teacher, Sherrard Middle School; Greg Oliver, Teacher, Sherrard Middle School	202-203
Innovate, Create, Educate: Hands-On Making for the Modern Classroom	This interactive Maker Space session offers educators a hands-on introduction to maker-centered learning, highlighting its benefits for student engagement, problem-solving, and creativity. Participants will explore activities like 3D printing, coding, robotics, circuitry, and upcycled design. Designed for all experience levels, the session provides budget-friendly ideas, cross-curricular connections, and ready-to-use lessons to inspire a culture of making in the classroom.	James Coble, Coordinator, WVDE and Tim Elliott, Coordinator, WVDE	206
Navigating Special Education Law	Understanding and navigating special education laws, policies, and procedures is essential for ensuring that students with disabilities receive the support and services they need to succeed. This session provides a comprehensive overview of the legal framework and best practices to help educators and administrators effectively support their students.	Sheila Paitzel, Director, WVDE Teresa Brown, Coordinator, WVDE and Whitney White, Manager, WVDE	204-205

**Session 2 | 11:00 a.m.**

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Setting the Stage for Instructional Rounds in Your School <i>(Invitation Only)</i>	This session will provide a more in-depth look at the instructional rounds process and prepare school-based instructional rounds teams to engage in all aspects of the instructional rounds framework.	Leah Earnest, Lisa Hindman, Michelle Leftwich, and Kelly Massinople Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support	South Hall
The Wolfpack Way! School Improvement Grounded in the Standards for Effective Schools	The Wolf Pack Way is a professional development session highlighting how distributive leadership has transformed our school culture and academic focus. Grounded in the West Virginia Standards of Effective Schools, our strategic plan, and key findings from the WVDE diagnostic report, this session showcases how empowering leadership at all levels has driven sustainable improvement and collective ownership of student success.	Candice Steele, Principal; Chris Shinn, Teacher Leader; David LaMaster, Curriculum Vice Principal; Kelly Haynes, Transformation Specialist, West Side Middle School Kanawha County	214
Wonderful West Virginia Phonics	This session will cover foundational reading skills through interactive lessons designed by the June Harless Center at Marshall University.	Samantha Sparks, Brittany Fike, and Elicia Barr, Literacy Specialists, June Harless Center for Rural Education Research and Development at Marshall University	212

**Lunch | 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Grand Ballroom**



## Session 3 | 1:00 p.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Anchoring to Your School Community: Established Processes for Stakeholder Engagement	Did you know there are established processes in place to help schools navigate community engagement and complaints? Leave this session knowing how your school's Local School Improvement Council (LSIC) can maximize its impact on stakeholder engagement and how the school community can voice concerns about policy or code violations at the school, county, or state level.	Alex Criner, Dr. Stacey Murrell, Angela Urling, Tammy Varney, Office of Accountability	202-203
Functional Behavior Assessment in Early Childhood	This session will explore the key components involved in planning Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) for early childhood to effectively identify and address challenging behaviors in early childhood classrooms.	Jennifer Carpenter, Coordinator, Office of Special Education, WVDE	211
Hands Up for Learning: Integrating ASL in Every Classroom	Looking for a fun, interactive way to boost student engagement? American Sign Language (ASL) is not just for communication. It's a powerful tool that makes learning more dynamic and memorable! In this hands-on session, you'll discover easy, practical ways to bring ASL into your classroom, no matter what subject or grade you teach. Get ready to move, sign, and laugh as you learn techniques that will keep your students engaged and excited to participate. No ASL experience? No problem! Just bring your enthusiasm and leave with skills you can use right away!	Misty Boone, Instructor, Greenbrier West High School	215
Serving Students with Dyslexia	This overview session will include the definition, key indicators, effective accommodations, and interventions to support students with dyslexia.	Brandi Keaton, Dyslexia Specialist, Mountain State Educational Services Collaborative	212

## Session 3 | 1:00 p.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Setting the Stage for Instructional Rounds in Your School <i>(Invitation Only)</i>	This session will provide a more in-depth look at the instructional rounds process and prepare school-based instructional rounds teams to engage in all aspects of the instructional rounds framework.	Leah Earnest, Lisa Hindman, Michelle Leftwich, and Kelly Massinople Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support	South Hall
Special Education Q & A	This session will allow participants to ask questions related to special education.	WVDE, Office of Special Education Team Members	204-205
Taming Tween Turbulence	Explore why strong transition programs are essential for middle school success, helping students build confidence, connections, and a sense of belonging during one of the most critical shifts in their educational journey.	Katy Turman, Milton Middle School, Cabell County Schools	213
Tracking Progress: Best Practices for Title I Schoolwide Monitoring	This session will provide a comprehensive walkthrough of the Title I schoolwide monitoring form, delving deeply into its indicators. Participants will see examples of the necessary documentation for the monitoring process and have the opportunity to ask questions about documentation retention. By the end of this session, participants should feel confident in their understanding of the documentation required for successful Title I schoolwide monitoring.	Carrie Reeves, Coordinator, Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support Elizabeth Younis, Coordinator, Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support	216-217
Wait, Was That the Bell?	Learn how to grow learner engagement in grades 9-12 through carefully scaffolded Cooperative Learning Structures (CLSs) and Visible Thinking Routines (VTRs). Participants will leave with hands-on experience and will glean several structures and routines for implementation during their own lessons.	Kristine Alvarez and Chase Leone, Morgantown High School, Monongalia County Schools	214

### Session 3 | 1:00 p.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
West Virginia Governor's Schools	The West Virginia Governor's Schools of West Virginia are free summer programs for 7-11 graders, including arts, humanities, math, science, technology, business, tourism/hospitality management and more.	Dustin Lambert, Coordinator, WVDE	210

### Session 4 | 2:15 p.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
All Kids Are Our Kids: Strengthening WVTSS	This session will revitalize our state's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (WVTSS) by exploring innovative strategies and practical tools designed to enhance interventions and support the success of all learners across the domains of academics, behavior, and attendance. Participants will leave equipped with actionable strategies to strengthen MTSS implementation in their schools and districts. This session is appropriate for all professional staff.	Hannah Cooper, Coordinator, District and Leadership Support	202-203
Best Practice for Behavior Intervention Planning in the Early Childhood Classroom	This session will cover essential components of behavior intervention planning for Pre-K and kindergarten classrooms, focusing on effective strategies for supporting young learners.	Jennifer Carpenter, WVDE, Office of Special Education Coordinator	211
Empowering Diverse Learners: Navigating Title III Support	In this session, we will explore facts and myths about the English learner (EL) population. We will also cover best practices for differentiated learning that benefit all students, not just ELs. Additionally, we will delve into Title III requirements and the responsibilities at both the school and LEA levels.	Mami Itamochi, Coordinator, Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support	216-217

## Session 4 | 2:15 p.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
Living Literature - How to Make Literature Engaging and Meaningful for Students	Explore strategies for applying the Science of Reading at the secondary level with a focus on engaging older students in meaningful, evidence-based literacy instruction across all content areas.	Brianne McKinney, Bluefield High School, Mercer County Schools	213
Navigating the CRA Pathway	Explore the Concrete–Representational– Abstract (CRA) model as a powerful instructional strategy to support deep understanding by moving learners from hands-on experiences to visual representations and abstract thinking.	Kyle Berry, Barboursville Middle School, Cabell County Schools	214
Next-Level Project Based Learning	If you're interested in taking your project-based learning units to the next level, this session is for you. Participants will learn about the four building blocks of killer PBL units as well as fresh, creative ideas on critiquing and grading group projects.	Alex Milanese, Instructor, Nicholas County Career and Technical Center	215
Section 504	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal law that ensures students with disabilities receive equal access to education and are not discriminated against in programs and activities that receive federal funding.	Terry Riley, Coordinator, WVDE	204-205
Setting the Stage for Instructional Rounds in Your School (Invitation Only)	This session will provide a more in-depth look at the instructional rounds process and prepare school-based instructional rounds teams to engage in all aspects of the instructional rounds framework.	Leah Earnest, Lisa Hindman, Michelle Leftwich, and Kelly Massinople Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support	South Hall

## Session 4 | 2:15 p.m.

Sessions	Session Overview	Presenter(s)	Room
The Great Eight	Explore a set of high-impact instructional practices that promote deep understanding, encourage productive struggle, and use student thinking to guide learning—applicable across content areas to support meaningful engagement and growth.	Keisha Thompson, WVDE, Office of PK-12 Academic Support	212
World Languages	Join us for an interactive session full of ideas and activities to incorporate more languages and culture into any educational level, including elementary classrooms.	Gustavo Barros, Office of Student Enrichment and Kennetha Parker- Howes, Principal. Hacker Valley Elementary School	210

## Prize Drawing and Closing | 3:15 p.m.

Clinton Burch, Assistant Superintendent

# VENDOR LIST AND INFORMATION TABLES

Advantage Technology	Pearson
AppleTree Institute	Personify Health
Behavior Mental Health Technical Assistance Center	Office of PK-12 Academic Support
Carnegie Learning	Prodigy Learning
Office of Certification and Educator Preparation	Read Aloud West Virginia
Davis Art Publications	Sadlier
Office of ESEA, Support, and Improvement	Segra
Gallopede International	Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia
Hatch Early Learning	The Art of Education
Imagine Learning	The Education Alliance
Innovamat	The EdVenture Group/West Virginia Family Engagement Center
Kami	W. W. Norton & Company
Lexia Learning	West Virginia Foreign Language Teachers' Association (WVFLTA)
McGraw Hill	West Virginia Public Broadcasting
National Geographic Learning/Cengage	West Virginia Association for Play Therapy
Neola	West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (CFWV)
Office of Adult Education	West Virginia Outreach Center for the Deaf and Blind at WVSDB
Office of Special Education	WVDE/WVU STEAM Technical Assistance Center
Office of Student Enrichment	
Office of the Inspector General	
Pathway2Careers	

# Notes





Michele L. Blatt  
West Virginia Superintendent of Schools

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