



CURRICULUM, RESEARCH, & INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS MEETING

*Leading with Purpose: Aligning
Vision, Systems, and Practice*



HYATT REGENCY ATLANTA
ATLANTA, GA

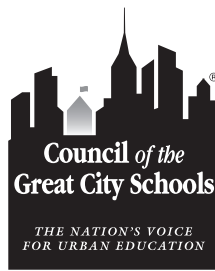


JULY 7-10, 2026



LEADING LEARNING.
TRANSFORMING FUTURES.

AGENDA BOOK



ABOUT THE COUNCIL

The Council of the Great City Schools is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Composed of 82 large city school districts, its mission is to promote the cause of urban schools and to advocate for inner-city students through legislation, research, technical assistance and media relations. The organization also provides a network for school districts sharing common problems to exchange information, and to collectively address new challenges as they emerge in order to deliver the best possible education for urban youth.

Chair of the Board:

Valerie Davis, Board Member
Fresno Unified School District

Chair-Elect:

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Denver Public Schools

Secretary-Treasurer:

Stacey Woolley, Board Member
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Immediate Past-Chair:

Marcia Andrews, Board Member
Palm Beach County School District

Executive Director:

Ray Hart
Council of the Great City Schools



FACT SHEET

Council of the Great City Schools
THE NATION'S VOICE FOR URBAN EDUCATION

1331 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 1100N, Washington, D.C. 20004
www.cgcs.org

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Total number of students served by Council member district schools: **7.1 million**

Student Enrollment Characteristics:

45% - Hispanic	1% - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
25% - African American	5% - Two or More Races
17% - White	17% - English Language Learners
7% - Asian/Pacific Islander	73% - Eligible for free/reduced price lunch
1% - Alaskan/Native American	17% - Students with Individualized Education Programs

Member Districts:

Albuquerque	Des Moines	Little Rock	Pittsburgh
Anchorage	Detroit	Long Beach	Portland
Arlington (Texas)	Durham	Los Angeles	Providence
Atlanta	Duval County	Madison (WI)	Puerto Rico
Aurora	(Jacksonville)	Memphis-Shelby County	Richmond
Austin	East Baton Rouge	Miami-Dade County	Rochester
Baltimore	El Paso	Milwaukee	Sacramento
Birmingham	Fayette County	Minneapolis	San Antonio
Boston	(Lexington)	Nashville	San Diego
Bridgeport	Fort Worth	New Orleans	San Francisco
Broward County	Fresno	New York City	Santa Ana
(Ft. Lauderdale)	Guilford County	Newark	Seattle
Buffalo	(Greensboro, N.C.)	Norfolk	St. Louis
Charleston	Hawaii	Oakland	St. Paul
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	Hillsborough County	Oklahoma City	Toledo
Chicago	(Tampa)	Omaha	Tulsa
Cincinnati	Houston	Orange County	Wake County
Clark County (Las Vegas)	Indianapolis	(Orlando)	Washington, D.C.
Cleveland	Jackson	Palm Beach County	Washoe County
Columbus	Jefferson County	Philadelphia	(Reno)
Dallas	(Louisville)	Phoenix Union High	Wichita
Dayton	Jersey City	School District	Winston-Salem/
Denver	Kansas City	Pinellas County	Forsyth County

School districts eligible for membership must be located in cities with populations of 250,000 or more and student enrollments of 25,000 or more. School districts located in the largest city of many states are also eligible for membership, regardless of size.

23rd Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference
“Leading with Purpose: Aligning Vision, Systems, and Practice”
July 7 – 10, 2026 Hyatt Regency Atlanta

Agenda-At-A-Glance

	Tuesday, July 7	Wednesday, July 8	Thursday, July 9	Friday, July 10
7:30 am	Registration (7:30 am – 4:00 pm)	Registration (7:30 am – 4:00 pm)	Registration (7:30 am – 1:00 pm)	
8:00 am	Breakfast (8:00 am – 8:40 am)	Breakfast (8:00 am – 8:45 am)	Breakfast (8:00 am – 8:45 am)	Breakfast (8:00 am – 9:00 am)
8:40 am	Transition to Keynote			
8:45 am	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Break: Transition to Keynote	Break: Transition to Sessions	
9:00 am				Legislative Updates & Debrief
9:15 am	Dr. Bryan Johnson	Keynote Speaker: Dr. William Jackson	Keynote Speaker: Dr. Julie Washington	
9:45 am				
10:00 am	Keynote Speaker: Dr. Juan D'Brot		Break: Transition to Sessions	Lessons from the Field: GenAI Adoption in US Schools
10:15 am		Joint Session: Elevating Youth Voice in District Decision-Making		
10:20 am	Break: Transition to Sessions		District-Led Presentations	
10:30 am				Closing Remarks
10:45 am		Break: Transition to Sessions		
11:00 am	Role-Alike Sessions			
11:15 am		Role-Alike Session		
11:30 am				
12:00 pm	Lunch (12:00 pm – 1:00 pm)	Lunch (12:15 pm – 1:15 pm)	Awards Luncheon (12:00 pm – 1:50 pm)	
12:15 am				
12:30 pm				
1:00 pm	Historic Anniversaries			
1:15 pm	Fireside Chat	Keynote Speaker: Dr. Nancy Guittierez		
2:00 pm	Break: Transition to Sessions		Joint Session: Special Education	End of Conference
2:15 pm		Break: Transition to Sessions		See you next year!
2:50 pm			Break: Transition to Sessions	
3:00 pm	Role-Alike Sessions	District-Led Presentations	Role-Alike Sessions	
3:15 pm				
5:00 pm				
Evening	On-site Reception (5:00 pm – 7:00 pm)	Off-site Reception: The Carter Center (6:00 pm – 8:00 pm) <i>Buses start leaving at 5:30 pm.</i>	On Your Own	

Registration/Break	Meals	Joint Session	Role-Alike Sessions	District-Led Presentations	Evening/Receptions
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Agenda Key for Role-Alike Sessions

Academic Leaders:

Deputy Superintendents, Chiefs of Schools, Chief Academic Officers, Chief Innovation Officers, Principal Supervisors, Leaders in Equity, Early Learning, Special Education, Social Emotional Learning, Mental Health, Restorative Practice Leaders, School Counseling, English Language Learners, Multi-Tiered System of Supports, and Content (ELA/Literacy, Math, Science, Social Science) Leaders

Research Leaders:

Research, Evaluation, Assessment, and Accountability Leaders

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Time	Tuesday, July 7 th
7:30 am – 4:00 pm	Conference Registration (Terrace Foyer)
8:00 am – 8:45 am	Breakfast (Regency VI)
8:45 am – 9:20 am	Welcome and Opening Remarks (Regency VII) Welcome and Introduction - Dr. Ray Hart, Executive Director, Council of the Great City Schools Welcome from Atlanta Public Schools’ Superintendent - Dr. Bryan Johnson, Superintendent, Atlanta Public Schools
9:20 am – 10:20 am	Keynote Speaker (Regency VII) Dr. Juan D’Brot, Associate Director, Center for Assessment
10:20 am – 10:30 am	Break: Transition to Sessions
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Role-Alike Sessions Academic Leaders (Regency VII) Welcome and Setting the Stage Educational leaders from across districts will convene to share ways that systems, structures, processes, and strategies impact teaching and learning. Leaders will begin a journey of learning, problem-solving, and action designed to expand opportunities and improve outcomes for all students. Research Leaders (Courtland) Connections & Dialogue: Research Director Networking Connect with fellow research directors in an engaging and interactive introductory session. Through facilitated conversations, participants will lay the foundation for deeper collaboration and learning throughout the week. - Akisha Osei Sarfo, Director of Research, Council of the Great City Schools - Brian Garcia, Research Manager, Council of the Great City Schools
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Academic Leaders (Regency VII) Strategic Support Team Reviews (SSTs) and What We’ve Learned – Bringing Coherence to the Work We Do SST reviews provide districts with a powerful opportunity to examine systems, identify strengths and gaps, and strengthen coherence across district priorities. This session will share key lessons learned across SST reviews for special populations, curriculum, and instruction. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of the patterns emerging across large urban districts, the value of peer-based strategic reviews, and practical considerations for using review findings to move from isolated initiatives to a more coherent and aligned system of support for schools, educators, and students. Council of the Great City Schools - Dr. Nicole Mancini, Chief of Academics - Dr. Robin Hall, Chief of Schools, - Denise Walston, Chief of Curriculum - Sue Gamm, Special Education Consultant The School District of Philadelphia - Dr. Nathalie Neree, Chief of Special Education and Diverse Populations - Dr. Nyshawana Francis-Thompson, Chief of Curriculum and Instruction

11:00 am – 12:00 pm, Continued on Next Page

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Time	Tuesday, July 7 th
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Research Leaders (Courtland) Building Coherence: Expanding Data Use Beyond the Research Office Explore how research leaders drive systemwide changes by strengthening the use of data to inform school improvement, MTSS, and differentiated supports across departments. During this interactive session, district leaders will hear practical strategies for moving beyond reporting to shaping decisions, aligning supports, and increasing the impact of research and data across the system. - Shanna Ricketts – Executive Director of Research, Evaluation, and Analytics, <i>Gwinnett Public Schools</i> - Monique O’Bryant Griffin – Assistant Superintendent of District and School Performance, <i>Henry County Schools (GA)</i> - Will Melton, Director – Data & Information Group, <i>Atlanta Public Schools</i>
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch (VI)
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Historic Anniversaries Fireside Chat (Regency VII) America’s 250th Anniversary/100th Anniversary of African American History Month/70th Anniversary of CGCS <i>Dr. Michael Casserly</i> , Strategic Advisor, Council of the Great City Schools <i>Dr. Brandi Waters</i> , Historian and Scholar, Specializing in the History of the African Diaspora in Latin America
2:00 pm – 2:15 pm	Break: Transition to Sessions
2:15 pm – 5:00 pm	Role-Alike Sessions Academic Leaders (Regency VII) Beyond the False Binary: Content-Rich Guided Play in Early Learning As states and districts invest record resources in expanding pre-K, a persistent false choice is shaping what fills children's days: play-based learning or academic content. But in early learning classrooms—where young children rightly spend time investigating, building, and pretending—play and content knowledge are not competing priorities. This session explores what it looks like when we build systems and use instructional materials that make content-rich guided play purposeful, joyful, and effective. Participants will examine the key ingredients of content-rich play and explore how leaders can create the conditions for content-rich play to take root. - Tori Filler, Student Achievement Partners, Director of Literacy - Carey Swanson, Student Achievement Partners, Chief Program Officer for Literacy Every Teacher is a Literacy Teacher: Supporting Secondary Literacy Across School Systems The science of reading has transformed literacy instruction, but its insights too often focus on ELA only. In secondary schools, where students spend most of their day with science, history, math, and elective teachers, literacy development is everyone's responsibility. This session explores what it looks like when leaders build systems that make literacy support sustainable, joyful, and effective across all content areas. - Carey Swanson, Student Achievement Partners, Chief Program Officer for Literacy - Tori Filler, Student Achievement Partners, Director of Literacy <i>2:15 pm – 5:00 pm, Continued on Next Page</i>

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2:15 pm – 5:00 pm	Academic Leaders (Regency VII) Fluency Forward: Accelerating Student Outcomes in Math and Literacy This session examines what it takes to build lasting fluency in both math and literacy — and why fluency matters as a foundation for deeper learning. Panelists will share district strategies for moving beyond basic skill acquisition to ensure students can apply knowledge with speed, accuracy, and confidence across grade levels. Discussion will address instructional design, assessment for fluency, and the conditions that allow schools to sustain gains at scale, including lessons learned from the largest districts in the country. • Hillary Rinaldi, VP, Whiteboard Advisors / Director of the National Math Improvement Project • Carolyne Quintana, Former Deputy Chancellor, NYCPS • Carey Swanson, Chief Program Officer for Literacy, Student Achievement Partners
2:15 pm – 5:00 pm	Research Leaders (Courtland) Making Every Dollar Count: ROI, Cost-Benefit Analysis, and Strategic Investments As districts face growing financial pressures, districts are being asked to make difficult decisions about which programs, tools, contracts, and partnerships are worth sustaining. This session will feature Tulsa Public Schools’ work to apply ROI analyses to technology and program reviews, followed by Jefferson County Public Schools’ efforts to strengthen contract review and improve the quality of district partnerships. Participants will hear practical examples of how districts are using evidence and structured decision-making to make more strategic investments. Tulsa Public Schools • Christine Trahms – Director of Data Strategy and Analytics • Neil Belford – Senior Data Strategist • Daniel Wallach – Data Strategist Jefferson County Public Schools (KY) • Thomas Reece – Specialist, Research and Evaluation • Danielle Doelling – Director of Research and Systems Improvement Beyond Budget Cuts: Using Research to Design Better Subtraction Districts often struggle not because they lack good ideas, but because they are trying to implement too many at once—yet they rarely apply the same rigor to deciding what should stop as they do to deciding what to start. In this interactive session, district research leaders will learn how to use subtractive design to identify opportunities to improve coherence, implementation, and outcomes by removing unnecessary practices—not by cutting budgets—and will design a "subtractive experiment" to evaluate one opportunity from their own district. Participants will leave with a practical framework for identifying promising candidates for subtraction and generating evidence to support more efficient improvement efforts. • Dave Hersh – Founder and CEO, <i>In Tandem</i> <i>Cross District Collaboration and Reflection Time</i>
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Onsite Reception (Regency V)

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7:30 am – 4:00 pm	Conference Registration (Terrace Foyer)
8:00 am – 8:45 am	Breakfast (Regency VI)
8:45 am – 9:00 am	Break: Transition to Sessions
9:00 am – 10:00 am	Keynote Speaker (Regency VII) <i>Dr. William Jackson, Founder, Village of Wisdom (VOW)</i>
10:00 am – 11:00 am	Joint Session (Regency VII) Academic & Research Leaders Centering Youth in District Planning and Continuous Improvement Processes Engage in a game that tests your knowledge of students and their experiences, then apply what you learn in a practical exercise where you will plan how to engage students directly to improve outcomes. Along the way, you'll gain simple strategies to better understand your students and develop more impactful plans and solutions. Dave Hersh – Founder and CEO, <i>In Tandem</i> Cross-District Reflection & Discussion
11:00 am – 11:15 am	Break: Transition to Sessions
11:15 am – 12:15 pm	Role-Alike Sessions Academic Leaders (Regency VII) Paying for What Works: Outcomes-Based Contracting in Large Districts Explore how OBC is reshaping district procurement, accountability, and the relationship between investment and impact. Panelists will discuss how implementing the OBC structure is tied directly to measurable student outcomes — including how districts define success metrics, establish shared risk, build data infrastructure to monitor progress, and create a true partnership grounded in mutual accountability rather than transactional vendor relationships. The conversation will surface the practical realities of moving from a traditional procurement model to one where providers earn payment based on student growth: what it takes to build internal alignment, how to engage legal and finance teams early, where trust is tested, and what districts should look for in providers willing to put their fees on the line. - LaToya Blackshear, Director of Planning and Evaluation, Jackson Public Schools - Jasmine Walker, Managing Director, The Center for Outcomes Based Contracting - Nakia Towns, President, Accelerate Research Leaders (Courtland) AI and the Next Analytics Frontier Th next analytic frontier is not just about building more tools, but creating systems that help leaders identify needs, monitor progress, and drive greater impact. In this session, Guilford County Schools' will share the development and implementation of its data hub, including how it was designed to strengthen access to actionable information. Albuquerque Public Schools will then share its analysis protocol, demonstrating how structured data review, dashboards, and emerging analytic tools can help districts move from information to insight to action to support of student performance. Albuquerque Public Schools - Aja Kleinert – Senior Director, Strategic Analysis & Program Research Guilford County Schools (NC) - Sonya Stephens – Chief of Staff - Kate Hill – Data Visualization Specialist

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12:15 pm – 1:15 pm	Lunch (Regency VI)	
1:15 pm – 2:15 pm	Keynote Speaker (Regency VII) <i>Dr. Nancy Gutiérrez, President and Chief Executive Officer, Leadership Academy</i> <i>“From Vision to Classroom: Leading Coherence That Sticks”</i>	
2:15 pm – 2:25 pm	Break: Transition to Sessions	
2:25 pm – 3:10 pm	District-Led Presentations: Wednesday, July 8th	
Room	Title and Description	Presenters and Districts
Edgewood	<i>Gatekeeper to Gateway: How Urban Districts Are Expanding Algebra I Access and Accelerating Math Pathways</i> Access to Algebra I is not just a scheduling question, it is an equity question. This session draws on the work of the National Math Improvement Project (NMIP), a community of practice spanning six large urban districts, to examine how districts are expanding access to algebra coursework, supporting students who have historically been tracked out of advanced pathways, and building the instructional infrastructure to make acceleration sustainable. District-specific strategies will be shared for shifting both mindset and practice at scale from course placement policies and scheduling decisions to the professional learning and coaching structures that support teachers through the transition.	• Dr. John Vladovic, Executive Director of Secondary Instruction, Los Angeles Unified School District • Dr. Nyshawana Francis-Thompson, Chief of Curriculum and Instruction, School District of Philadelphia
Fairlie	<i>An Octopus in the Schoolhouse: Moving from Industrial Models to Living Learning Systems</i> For decades, educational systems have operated like machines: linear, top-down, and predictable. In an era of complex problems and rapid technological shifts, this "Tin Man" model is failing students and exhausting educators. It is time for an evolution. Drawing on the work of Le-Brun and Werner in The Octopus Organization, this session explores a radical theoretical framework for K-12 systems. Participants will dive into the core tenets of the Octopus Organization—a model where intelligence is decentralized, and adaptation happens at the "edges." We will move beyond the traditional theory of "scaling" to identify the systemic antipatterns that stifle curiosity and add unnecessary bureaucracy. Whether you are a classroom teacher or a district leader, you will learn how to use this framework to disrupt rigid hierarchies and design school environments that are efficient, adaptive, and living learning organisms.	• Gina DiTullio, Ed.D., Principal, Austin Steward Elementary School #46 Rochester City School District

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Room	Title and Description	Presenters and Districts
Greenbriar (Research Panel 1)	<i>Building a District Culture of Research and Data Use to Drive Improvement in Philadelphia</i> In this session, we will review a new report and protocol developed to foster a shared understanding of school enrollments and their implications for budgeting and teacher allocations. In spring 2026, we began a new process where every school leader engaged with a school-specific “Enrollment Trends Planning Report.” This report includes five years of data (by grade), including: October 1 enrollment, May 31 enrollment, average daily attendance, and annual enrollment projections. Presenters will share the projection reports and describe the process used for school leaders to engage with the report and provide feedback about the projections. <i>ROI: Relationships, Ownership, and Insights</i> The ROI process in our district is focused on input, outputs, and outcomes. However, we found that relationships and social capital were just as important in the success of the process. While spreadsheets can capture the “what,” initiative owners provide the essential “how” and “why” that give data its meaning.	• Tonya Wolford, Ph.D., Chief, Evaluation, Research and Accountability • Joy Lesnick, Ph.D., Deputy Chief, Research, Evaluation, and Academic Partnerships <i>The School District of Philadelphia</i> • Jacob Cortez, M.Ed, Assistant Superintendent of Evaluation and Assessment • Anduamlak Meharie, Ph.D, Executive Director of Program Evaluation <i>Dallas Independent School District</i>
	<i>When Special Education Becomes Everyone’s Work: A Shift in Practice Within the School Community</i> As districts work to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, success depends on stronger alignment across general education, special education, and school leadership, with consistent, high-quality instruction at the center to make special education a shared responsibility. Panelists will share how this shift is taking shape. District leaders will speak to the challenges that prompted this work, the structures they are building to support shared ownership, and the strategies they are using to strengthen instruction and services. Participants will hear how districts are aligning systems, supporting educators, and improving access to grade-level content for students with disabilities and show how a more cohesive, district wide approach can drive meaningful change in teaching and learning.	• Shateena Love, Ph.D., Director, Exceptional Education, Atlanta Public Schools • Janet Armelin Harris, Ph.D., NCED, Executive Director of Exceptional Student Services, East Baton Rouge Parish School System • Pamela Wimbish, Ed.S., Director of Special Education, Birmingham City Schools • Paul Wilson, Senior Lead, Public Consulting Group • Elizabeth Chmielewski, Associate Manager, Public Consulting Group <i>Diamond Sponsor:</i> <i>Public Consulting Group</i>

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Room	Title and Description	Presenters and Districts
Kennesaw	<i>Math Belongs to Everyone: Building Family and Community Engagement in Math</i> Improving math outcomes in large urban districts requires more than classroom instruction — it requires families and communities to see themselves as partners in the work. This session explores how NMIP districts are developing strategies to engage parents, guardians, and community members in supporting student math learning at home and beyond. Panelists will share approaches to culturally responsive communication, family math nights, community partnerships, and the messaging frameworks that have shifted perception and participation. Attendees will leave with ideas applicable across diverse urban contexts that have also translated to math gains for students.	• Dr. Bren Elliott, Interim Deputy Superintendent, School District of Philadelphia • Dr. Sonya Stephens, Chief of Staff, Guilford County Schools • Dr. Carolyn Quintana, Former Deputy Chancellor, NYCPS • Hillary Rinaldi, Director, National Math Improvement Project
Lenox	<i>Beyond Instant Answers: Rethinking Math in the AI Era</i> As AI reshapes classrooms, urban district leaders face a defining question: how do we ensure new tools deepen instruction rather than dilute it? This session will explore how we shape the future of mathematics in the age of technology and the AI boom. Dr. Jason Aldridge, District Instructional Specialist and Mathematics Leader at Charleston County School District, joined by Magma Math, will share how to use technology to uphold student thinking and promote productive struggle and student discourse. Attendees will leave with a roadmap for how to integrate technology and AI to promote deep thinking, increase math results, and improve teacher and student confidence.	• Dr. Jason Aldridge, District Instructional Specialist and Mathematics Leader, Charleston County School District • Jordan Evans, SVP of Revenue, Magma Math <i>Diamond Sponsor:</i> <i>Magma Math</i>
3:10 pm – 3:20 pm	Break: Transition to Sessions	

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3:20 pm – 4:05 pm	District-Led Presentations: Wednesday, July 8 th	
Room	Title and Description	Presenters and Districts
Edgewood (Academics Panel 1)	<i>What Works Now: Redesigning Professional Learning in the Age of Choice, Voice, and AI</i> This session highlights how one of the nation’s largest school districts strategically redesigned its professional learning system to prioritize relevance, personalization, and scalability without increasing costs. Participants will explore how the district shifted from traditional, compliance driven models to a dynamic ecosystem grounded in educator choice, amplified voice, and the intentional integration of artificial intelligence (AI). By leveraging data informed decision making, flexible delivery models, and innovative partnerships, the district has increased engagement, strengthened instructional practice, and expanded access to high quality learning opportunities for all educators.	• Dr. Mrylaine Salter, Director, Professional Learning and Development • Kai Walker, Supervisor, Professional Learning and Development <i>Broward County Public Schools</i>
	<i>Math in Motion: Using Real-Time Data for Instant Classroom Impact</i> This session highlights a comprehensive professional learning model designed to build instructional leadership and strengthen elementary mathematics practices. Teachers had the opportunity to engage in targeted professional development and implementation focused on real-time monitoring of student performance. Ongoing learning focused on evidence-based math instruction and the use of formative assessments (short-cycle data) to provide immediate feedback and adjust daily practice. Supported by hands-on coaching and continuous professional development—including collaborative cadres, video labs, and side-by-side coaching—teachers strengthened their ability to deliver high-quality, responsive instruction that addresses student needs in real time. This approach promotes aligned instructional practices, enhances leadership coherence among schools, and ensures that data-driven, research-based math instruction is consistent in every classroom to improve student outcomes.	• Adrienne Howard, Director of Elementary Education • Ruth Brown, Math Manager K-5 <i>The School District of Palm Beach County</i>
	<i>Unlocking the City: Scaling Learning Voyages and Real-World Curriculum</i> In Dallas ISD, we are completely reimagining experiential learning by turning our vibrant city into an active, equitable extension of the classroom. Enter Student Learning Voyages—a groundbreaking pilot initiative that served over 48,000 students this year by replacing the traditional, disconnected "field trip" with deeply immersive, curriculum-driven adventures. By forging strategic partnerships with top-tier cultural and civic venues, we have created a seamless bridge between our High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) and real-world exploration. Bringing highly curated, interactive experiences directly to students in the heart of the city, every voyage is intentionally designed. Attendees will explore the architectural blueprint behind scaling these high-impact experiences.	• Aaron Daffern, Director of Mathematics <i>Dallas Independent School District</i>

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Fairlie	Scaling Success: From K-5 Math Academies to a K-8 Mathematics Teacher Collaborative Building on the success of the K-5 Math Academies launched in SY24-25, Dallas Independent School District has evolved its professional learning model into the Mathematics Teacher Collaborative (MTC). This session details how the district scaled a high-impact, experiential learning design to include middle school (grades 6-8) and Algebra 1, ensuring a seamless vertical progression of mathematical content and pedagogy district-wide. Participants will explore the MTC’s operational parameters, which include three days of intensive, hands-on training tailored to eight specific grade bands. The collaborative focuses on unpacking mathematical progressions—specifically number, operations, and algebraic reasoning—through the lens of the student experience. This session will explore impact and provide actionable insights into the logistics of implementing large-scale professional learning, managing regional engagement, and utilizing data to refine instructional vision across a major urban district.	Aaron Daffern, Director of Mathematics Dallas Independent School District
Greenbriar	The Impact of Safe Routes: Analyzing Attendance Benefits of Community Led Walking School Buses In response to post-Covid chronic absenteeism rates, the Tulsa community rallied around a uniquely structured "walking school bus" attendance intervention to bridge transportation and neighborhood safety gaps. This session will provide findings around the impact of the intervention for treated schools and students - as well as providing a model for cooperation between school districts and nonprofits to both develop and conduct analysis around a walking school bus or similar "safe routes" program.	Daniel Wallach, Data Strategist Tulsa Public Schools
Inman (SPED Track)	Every Student Counts: Inclusive Education for Our Most Vulnerable Learners Urban school districts are navigating a growing tension: the needs of students with disabilities are expanding while budget constraints and educator shortages are making it harder than ever to design truly inclusive classrooms. The gap between what students need and what systems can deliver is widening — and districts can no longer rely on traditional models to close it. This session explores how great city schools are expanding inclusive practices and improving outcomes for students with disabilities at scale. Hear how these districts are leading the way through dedicated special education infrastructure, efforts to build community around disability identity and belonging, and districtwide commitments to improving IEP delivery. Participants will leave with concrete strategies for strengthening inclusive learning environments and improving IEP implementation while also centering the voices of students with disabilities and their families in decision-making.	- Christina Foti, Deputy Chancellor, Division of Inclusive and Accessible Learning (DIAL), New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) - Nathalie Neree, Chief of Special Education and Diverse Learners, School District of Philadelphia - Glenna Wright Gallo, Former Assistant Secretary of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), US Education Department

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Room	Title and Description	Presenters and Districts
Kennesaw	<i>Future Graduation Success Starts with an Innovative Early Learning Design</i> Dallas ISD is launching innovative Early Learning initiatives to support access to school and support outcomes for our youngest learners. Universal PreK will open seats for all three and four-year-old students regardless of their parents' income level, creating access for more students. In addition, Pre-Primer is a bridge between kindergarten and first grade to build foundational skills. Each approach will reimagine the Early Learning space to propel learning toward improved outcomes.	Dr. Debbie Ramos, Assistant Superintendent of Early Learning and Centralized Enrollment <i>Dallas Independent School District</i>
Lenox	<i>What It Actually Takes: District Leaders on Moving AI from Commitment to Classroom</i> The pressure to "do something with AI" is real. So is the risk of doing it poorly. This session features curriculum and instructional technology leaders from three large urban districts who have moved beyond exploration and into execution — and are willing to talk honestly about what that requires. Panelists will address how they've built educator capacity, maintained curriculum fidelity, and made decisions about which tools belong in their classrooms and why. The session is designed for district leaders who are past the pilot stage and ready to think seriously about scale, sustainability, and student impact. Attendees will leave with concrete frameworks for building AI literacy across their systems, peer-tested guidance on evaluating tools against instructional goals, and a clearer picture of what responsible AI adoption looks like in practice.	- Gary Brady, Chief Academic Officer, Hillsborough County Public Schools (FL) - Natasha Rachell, Director of Instructional Technology, Atlanta Public Schools - Billy Sayers, Director of STEAM, Denver Public Schools <i>Diamond Sponsor:</i> <i>Magic School</i>
Regency VII	<i>Cross-Functional Collaboration & Shifting Mindsets: Systems Change When People Do</i> During this session, participants will learn more about how systems change, organizational development, and mindset shifts are integrated into the Baltimore City Public Schools Equity Specialists' work when they're working with school staff on School Equity Action Teams and partnering with other central office teams. To advance academic achievement, the Equity Specialists create professional learning spaces for adults to better serve the students they support through a shift in mindset and action. This session will create space for participants to consider how they can design and implement a similar structure to drive equitable academic initiatives across priority schools through intentional partnership, shifting leadership mindsets in and outside of the classroom, and supporting systemic initiatives.	- Dr. Cara D. Jeanne Educational Specialist II - Equity - Dr. Marie Parfait Educational Specialist II - Equity - Dr. Kayce A. Smith Educational Specialist II - Equity <i>Baltimore City Public Schools</i>
4:05 pm – 4:15 pm	Break: Transition to Sessions	

23rd Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference
“Leading with Purpose: Aligning Vision, Systems, and Practice”
July 7 – 10, 2026 Hyatt Regency Atlanta

Time	Wednesday, July 8 th	
4:15 pm – 5:00 pm	District-Led Presentations - Wednesday, July 8 th	
Room	Title and Description	Presenters and Districts
Edgewood	<i>Designing for Transfer, Not Attendance: 5 Principles That Change Practice</i> In this session, participants will explore the “primacy of practice”, ensuring educators spend more time doing the work than hearing about it. Through “less is best”, we focus on depth over overload—prioritizing what matters most for immediate application. With “use your tools”, learning is grounded in the actual curriculum, resources, and systems educators use daily, eliminating the gap between training and implementation. “Show your own” models’ vulnerability and clarity, as facilitators and leaders demonstrate the work in real time, making expectations visible and actionable. Finally, “begin with the end in mind” anchors every experience in clear outcomes tied directly to student impact. Walk away with a practical framework, concrete strategies, and a renewed lens for designing professional learning that doesn’t just fill seats—but changes practice and drives results for every student.	Dr. Kimberly Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Support <i>Jackson Public Schools</i>
Fairlie	<i>The Architecture of Automaticity: Establishing Fact Fluency as the Phonics of Mathematics</i> Just as phonics provides the essential foundation for literacy, fact automaticity serves as the critical “alphabet” of mathematical success. This session introduces Operation: Math Magic, a Dallas ISD initiative designed to bridge the fluency gap for students in grades 1–3 before they encounter the complex arithmetic of upper elementary school. Aligned with the Science of Learning and state mathematics academy frameworks, the program utilizes a scaffolded instructional strategy. We will detail the operational parameters of the rollout, which combines daily classroom drills, tangible incentives, and “folder game kits” for home extensions available in English and Spanish to ensure diverse learning styles are supported. Attendees will leave with a blueprint for implementing a district-wide fluency program, including a preview of the Campus Toolkit and visual tracking displays used to build a culture of mathematical mastery.	- Aaron Daffern, Director of Mathematics - Dr. Elena Hill, Deputy Chief Academic Officer <i>Dallas Independent School District</i>
Greenbriar	<i>Making Sense of School Enrollment Trends: Playing the Long Game instead of a Sprint to the Finish Line</i> In this session, we will review a new report and protocol developed to foster a shared understanding of school enrollments and their implications for budgeting and teacher allocations. In spring 2026, we began a new process where every school leader engaged with a school-specific “Enrollment Trends Planning Report.” This report includes five years of data (by grade). In this presentation, we will share the projection reports and describe the process we used for school leaders to engage with the report and provide feedback about the projections. We will also discuss the draft protocol we will be using to support school and district leaders in looking at enrollment trends reports alongside other school and district data including attendance, student well-being, student and teacher perceptions of belonging, and parent perceptions of school welcomeness.	- Tonya Wolford, Ph.D., Chief, Evaluation, Research and Accountability - Joy Lesnick, Ph.D., Deputy Chief, Research, Evaluation, and Academic Partnerships <i>The School District of Philadelphia</i>

23rd Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference
“Leading with Purpose: Aligning Vision, Systems, and Practice”
July 7 – 10, 2026 Hyatt Regency Atlanta

Time	Wednesday, July 8 th	
4:15 pm – 5:00 pm	District-Led Presentations: Wednesday, July 8 th ,	
Room	Title and Description	Presenters and Districts
Inman (SPED Track)	<i>Instructional Coaching at the Core: Driving Special Education Improvement in ATSI Schools</i> This session explores how Atlanta Public Schools developed a comprehensive professional learning model using instructional coaching to strengthen special education instruction and support improvement efforts in Atlanta Targeted Support and Improvement schools. The model strengthened alignment between general education and special education while connecting professional learning directly to classroom implementation. Participants will examine a multi-layered approach that includes onsite professional learning, targeted summer conference sessions, and sustained coaching aligned to Jim Knight’s Instructional Coaching Framework and high-leverage practices in special education.	- Shateena Love, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent - Rashida Askia Willies, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate Atlanta Public Schools
Kennesaw	<i>From Chaos to Coherence: A District’s Journey to Rebuild Special Education Systems for Results</i> What happens when a large urban district confronts the reality of its lowest possible special education determination, “Needs Substantial Intervention”? This session offers a candid, district-led case study from Tulsa Public Schools, grounded in transparency, urgency, and a commitment to better outcomes for students with disabilities. Participants will examine how Tulsa Public Schools used its District Data Profile to catalyze a system-wide redesign addressing gaps in compliance, achievement, and inclusion, including low proficiency rates, a 44.5% graduation rate for students with disabilities, and longstanding procedural breakdowns. The session centers Tulsa’s work to move from fragmented practices to a coherent, aligned system and highlights three high-leverage improvement strategies as a core instructional lever.	- Dr. Gena Koster, Assistant Superintendent of Special Populations, Tulsa Public Schools - Mr. Marty Chavez, Sr. Account Executive, TeachTown Diamond Sponsor: TeachTown
Lenox	<i>It’s About Time: Prioritizing Mathematics Content to Improve Student Outcomes</i> This session supports school leaders in understanding how to prioritize mathematics content to maximize instructional time and impact. Participants will explore how Depths of Learning (DoLLs) and coherence across grade levels can guide decisions about pacing, emphasis, and instructional focus.	- Cameron Hance, Senior Administrator, Secondary Mathematics - Lanee Wilcox, Senior Administrator, Elementary Mathematics Orange County (FL) Public Schools
Regency VII	<i>Which EdTech Tools Actually Help Students Learn?</i> Every leader in this room is accountable for student outcomes. You have evidence systems for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. For the digital tools students use every day, you have logins. Usage reports show who signed in. Assessment results show who grew. Nothing connects the two. So, one question goes unanswered: which tools are helping students learn, and which students are they helping? Screen time has become a board-level conversation. The harder question is not how many hours, but what those hours produce. This session puts both questions in one place. Assessment data, tool usage, demographics, and screen time come together so leaders can explore which tools are associated with learning gains, for which student groups, and at what usage levels.	- Sarah Mayberry, EdD, Director of Media Services, Bibb County School District, Macon, GA - Don Wolff, Director of Enterprise Sales, ClassLink - Barbara Nesbitt, VP of Product, ClassLink Diamond Sponsor: ClassLink
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Offsite Reception – The Carter Center <i>Buses start leaving at 5:30 pm.</i>	

23rd Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference
“Leading with Purpose: Aligning Vision, Systems, and Practice”
July 7 – 10, 2026 Hyatt Regency Atlanta

Thursday, July 9 th		
7:30 am – 1:00 pm	Conference Registration (Terrace Foyer)	
8:00 am – 8:45 am	Breakfast (Regency VI)	
8:45 am – 9:00 am	Break: Transition to Keynote	
9:00 am – 10:00 am	Keynote Speaker (Regency VII) <i>Dr. Julie Washington, Professor and Interim Dean, University of California Irvine, School of Education</i>	
10:00 am – 10:15 am	Break: Transition to Sessions	
10:15 am – 11:00 am	District-Led Presentations: Thursday, July 9 th	
Room	Title and Description	Presenters and Districts
Edgewood (Academics Panel 2)	<i>From Required to Remarkable: Turning Instructional Coaching into Sustainable Growth</i> As school systems navigate increasing demands with limited resources, instructional coaching must function as a strategic lever for improving educator practice and student achievement. Broward County Public Schools redesigned its instructional coaching model to transition from a compliance-driven structure to a cohesive, results-oriented system that builds educator capacity and supports continuous improvement. This session will highlight how the district transformed instructional coaching into a scalable model grounded in clear expectations, strategic alignment, and data-informed decision-making. By redefining the role of the coach, establishing consistent frameworks, and leveraging data to guide practice, the district has strengthened instructional quality while maximizing existing human capital to ensure improved outcomes across diverse school contexts.	• Dr. Myrlaine Salter, Director of Professional Learning and Development • Susan Burgess, Instructional Coach, Professional Learning and Development • Isabel Nodarse, Instructional Coach, Professional Learning and Development <i>Broward County Public Schools</i>
	<i>Academic Growth for Students with Diverse and Complex Needs</i> How do you drive rapid growth for students with diverse and complex needs? Join the School District of Philadelphia as we share our blueprint for success through high-quality instruction. Learn how we are achieving fast-growing improvements by seamlessly integrating progress monitoring with rigorous IEP goal alignment to ensure every learner thrives. Walk away with practical strategies to implement these seamless systems in your own district.	• Nathalie Neree, Ph.D., Chief of Special Education and Diverse Learners • Vanessa Burke, Coordinator for Multiple Disabilities <i>The School District of Philadelphia</i>
	<i>From Professional Learning to Daily Practice: Weekly Lesson Prep in Action</i> Many districts struggle to ensure professional learning translates into daily instruction. Dallas ISD addresses this challenge through Weekly Lesson Prep, a job-embedded approach that connects professional learning directly to the lessons that teachers deliver each week. Through short, focused videos and aligned resources, teachers engage with key concepts, instructional priorities, and common student misconceptions ahead of instruction. Embedded within weekly PLCs, Weekly Lesson Prep supports collaborative planning and real-time adjustments. This session highlights how Dallas ISD uses Weekly Lesson Prep to strengthen instructional coherence and bridge curriculum to classroom practice at scale.	• Dr. Charissa Govan, Dallas ISD Executive Director of Professional & Digital Learning • NaTonya Huff, Director of Professional & Digital Learning <i>Dallas Independent School District</i>

23rd Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference
“Leading with Purpose: Aligning Vision, Systems, and Practice”
July 7 – 10, 2026 Hyatt Regency Atlanta

Thursday, July 9 th		
10:15 am – 11:00 am	District-Led Presentations: Thursday, July 9 th	
Room	Title and Description	Presenters and Districts
Greenbriar	<i>Consolidating Buildings and Predicting Enrollment: Techniques, Strategies, and Lessons Learned</i> Declining public school enrollment nationwide has led to a wave of school closures and consolidations. These are difficult decisions that require a significant amount of planning to reduce the amount of uncertainty and disruption felt by students and staff. This session will share both the technical approach CMSD used to predict school/grade level and subgroup enrollment in a context of school consolidations (decision trees with gradient boosting), along with how this information was made usable for Finance, Talent, and Enrollment teams in their planning processes. Example code and visuals will be made available for districts interested in applying these approaches.	Nicholas D’Amico, Executive Director of Research, Evaluation, and Accountability <i>Cleveland Metropolitan School District</i>
Inman (SPED Track)	<i>Strengthening Special Education Practice: A Multi-Modal Approach to Professional Learning</i> This engaging, practice-focused breakout session equips special education teachers and instructional leaders with the knowledge, tools, and strategies needed to effectively support special education teachers across K–12 settings. Participants will explore a comprehensive, multi-modal professional learning system designed to strengthen instructional practice, improve compliance, and enhance outcomes for diverse learners. Grounded in real-world application, this session introduces a robust professional development approach that blends flexible and sustained learning opportunities. Attendees will learn how educators can deepen their expertise through self-paced online modules, onsite professional learning sessions, a community of practice, and a curated set of ten practical guidance documents aligned to special education policies and high-impact practices.	Pamela Wimbish, Ed.S., Director, Special Education <i>Birmingham City Schools</i>
Kennesaw	<i>Scaling Specialized PD: Logistical Frameworks for District-Wide Secondary Literacy Training</i> When data reveals that a significant percentage of middle school students lack foundational reading skills, urban districts face a complex challenge: how to translate the vision of reading proficiency into coherent systems and day-to-day instructional practices. This session shares how Dallas ISD addressed this challenge through the design and implementation of the Middle School Foundational Reading Support initiative—a high-intensity training for nearly 200 secondary teachers. This session pulls back the curtain on our district-wide planning process. We will share how we aligned our vision for literacy with operational systems to produce meaningful results for historically underserved students. Attendees will learn how we created meaningful content for participants that can lead to immediate adjustments in the Reading Language Arts classroom. We will detail our unique "Lab" PD structure, bridging the gap between Science of Reading theory and immediate, practical application in the middle school setting.	- Dr. Elena Hill, Deputy Chief of Academic Services - Dr. Deborah Ramos, Assistant Superintendent of Early Learning - Doug Frank, Director of Reading Language Arts <i>Dallas Independent School District</i>

23rd Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference
“Leading with Purpose: Aligning Vision, Systems, and Practice”
July 7 – 10, 2026 Hyatt Regency Atlanta

Thursday, July 9 th		
10:15 am – 11:00 am	District-Led Presentations: Thursday, July 9 th	
Room	Title and Description	Presenters and Districts
Lenox	<i>The Table We Build: Building Voice, Coherence, and Partnership Across Cultural and Historical Studies</i> This session explores a district-level approach to building coherence across cultural and historical studies initiatives, not just through alignment of standards and resources, but through intentional community building among the people doing the work. Drawing from leadership experience in the School District of Palm Beach County, this session examines what becomes possible when every program sees itself reflected in the others: African American studies that honors Afro-Latino identity, Jewish studies that connects to broader histories of resilience and persecution, Latino studies that engages the fullness of the African diaspora. When every team is at the table — heard, supported, and invested in each other’s success — the result is stronger professional learning, more culturally relevant instruction, and communities that can see themselves and each other in the curriculum.	Ethel Kennedy, Manager of African, African American, Latino, Holocaust, and Jewish Studies <i>The School District of Palm Beach County</i>
11:00 am – 11:10 am	Break: Transition to Sessions	
11:10 am – 11:55 am	District-Led Presentations: Thursday, July 9 th	
Edgewood	<i>Improving Instruction through Emerging Technology</i> Emerging technology is reshaping instruction and assessment in the largest districts — but adoption without strategy rarely moves the needle for students. This session brings together senior leaders from large urban districts to share how their they are integrating new tools across the full instructional cycle, including technology-enabled assessments, VR lessons for deeper learning, and teacher-facing tools to improve pedagogy. Presenters will address implementation challenges, equity considerations, and outcome data from each context. Attendees will leave an understanding for how to evaluate emerging technology and honest lessons from districts doing this work at scale.	- Dr. Fabian Cone, Chief of Academics, Broward County Schools - Dr. Nyshawana Francis-Thompson, Chief of Curriculum and Instruction, School District of Philadelphia - Dr. Shateena Love, Assistant Superintendent, Atlanta Public Schools - Hillary Rinaldi, Vice President, Whiteboard Advisors
Fairlie	<i>The 9th Grade Inflection Point: What It Takes to Put Every Student on a Path to High School Success</i> Ninth grade is one of the strongest predictors of high school graduation—a moment when student trajectories diverge and stakes for intervention are highest. This panel makes the case for treating 9th grade as a systemwide priority and shares what it actually takes to effectively support this transition. Panelists will draw on work across two district contexts to show how deliberate structural design—including advisory structures and tracking key indicators—produces measurable results in keeping ninth graders on track to graduation. Districts will share how scaling a 9th Grade Success approach across all district high schools, building on gains achieved in other districts and supported by the Center for High School Success. Attendees will leave with concrete, replicable strategies for reducing opportunity gaps, improving on-track rates, and building the conditions every 9th grader needs to graduate on time.	- Jen Troy, Chief Academic Officer, Aurora Public Schools - Kaaren Andrews, Executive Director, Center for High School Success - John Vladovic, Executive Director of Secondary Instruction, LAUSD

23rd Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference
“Leading with Purpose: Aligning Vision, Systems, and Practice”
July 7 – 10, 2026 Hyatt Regency Atlanta

Thursday, July 9 th		
11:10 am - 11:55 am	District-Led Presentations: Thursday, July 9 th	
Room	Title and Description	Presenters and Districts
Greenbriar (Research Panel 2)	<i>Implementation of Dashboards to Support Transportation Operations</i> Safe and reliable school bus transportation is a key part of the school day for many students and constitutes a sizable expense in the budgets of many districts, not least in Columbus, OH, where 37,000 students, most of whom do not attend their home school by address, are routed to 228 schools on 494 buses across 137 square miles every school day. State budget cuts have prompted a decrease in the transportation budget of more than 10% between school year 25-26 and 26-27 to minimize the potential impact of reduced state funding on classroom instruction. Columbus City Schools has undertaken a data-based strategy to improve both service and efficiency of our school bus transportation. A series of dashboards were developed to support day-to-day operations and larger-scale strategic decisions. This session will cover how we have used dashboards and data analysis to support service improvements and pilot initiatives in transportation.	Devyn Shafer, Manager, Analytics & Data Management <i>Columbus City Schools</i>
	<i>Back to the Basics, Forward with Data: Key Performance Indicators & Strategic Planning</i> Atlanta Public Schools launched its 2025-2030 strategic plan, placing renewed emphasis on student outcomes, transparency, and data-oriented action. To implement the plan, data aligned with the strategic plan was needed for progress monitoring and goal setting. If everything is important, nothing is important, so we developed a series of KPIs and 2030 goals aligned with the six focus areas of our strategic plan: Our Strength is Our Team, Our Responsibility is Shared, Our System is Efficient and Effective, We are Strengthening Our Instructional Core, We Are Caring for Every Child, and We Are Sparking Student Curiosity. To provide transparency, KPIs and 2030 goals are viewable by the public at district and school levels on our strategic plan website. We also developed a process for updating department strategies and action plans in alignment with our strategic focus areas and KPIs, better connecting the work to outcomes our district has prioritized and enabling us to follow the data and make changes as needed.	- Erin Kruger, Senior Research Associate - Sheletha Champion, Program Director of Strategy Management <i>Atlanta Public Schools</i>
Inman (SPED Track)	<i>Mapping the Journey: From Paper to Proof in Special Education Systems</i> East Baton Rouge Parish School System is redefining special education as a coherent, accountable, and student-centered system. Grounded in a systemwide logic model, the district’s Mapping the Journey framework organizes special education as a connected continuum from evaluation and eligibility through instruction, behavioral supports, and postsecondary transition. This session will highlight how EBR is operationalizing the framework through system design, clear ownership, job-embedded professional learning, data transparency, and continuous improvement. Presenters will share how an integrated compliance dashboard is increasing visibility into dispute patterns and helping the district identify earlier, more strategic opportunities for communication, clarity, and proactive support.	- Janet Armelin Harris, Ph.D., NCED, Executive Director - Dwana Webb, Ed.S., Supervisor, Pupil Appraisal, Parent Liaisons & Child Find Coordinators - Bridget A. Rey, Ph.D., Program Facilitator-Compliance - Robert S. Garcia, Ph.D., Supervisor of Special Education Programs <i>East Baton Rouge Parish Public Schools</i>

23rd Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference
“Leading with Purpose: Aligning Vision, Systems, and Practice”
July 7 – 10, 2026 Hyatt Regency Atlanta

Thursday, July 9th		
11:10 am - 11:55 am	District-Led Presentations: Thursday, July 9th	
Room	Title and Description	Presenters and Districts
Kennesaw	<i>From Sentences to Systems: A K-12 Framework for Evidence-Based Writing Scaffolds</i> Urban districts often struggle with inconsistent writing performance due to fragmented instructional approaches across grade bands. Dallas ISD addressed this by engineering a systematic K-12 writing framework that bridges foundational gaps and prepares students for college-level rigor. This session deconstructs the "Dallas ISD Writing Roadmap," a vertically aligned strategy that integrates the sentence-level mechanics of The Writing Revolution 2.0 with the inquiry-based "Invitations to Notice" from Jeff Anderson's Patterns of Power and Patterns of Analysis. We will share the logistical "how" of scaling this across 200+ campuses, focusing on the creation of "Clarity Documents" that translate complex rubrics into actionable classroom scaffolds. Attendees will leave with a blueprint for unifying writing instruction and ensuring every student, from K-12th grade, has the linguistic tools to express complex thought.	• Angie Gaylord, Chief Academic Officer • Elena Hill, Deputy Chief of Academic Services • Doug Frank, Director of Reading Language Arts <i>Dallas Independent School District</i>
11:55 am – 12:00 pm	Break: Transition to Lunch	
12:00 pm – 1:50 pm	Awards Luncheon (Regency VI) Special Presentation of Awards: Informing Progress in Urban Education – Research Team Award <i>Sponsored by NWEA</i> Advancing Excellence Award <i>Sponsored by Curriculum Associates</i> Opportunity and Access Award <i>Sponsored by Amplify</i>	
1:50 pm – 2:50 pm	Joint Session: Special Education Academic & Research Leaders Educational Redlining in Special Education: Establishing New Civil Rights Protections for Students of Color With/out Disabilities. To protect the civil rights of Students of Color in special education, we must challenge the ways special education that continues to uphold forms of structural racism and ableism. We not only aim to examine, interrogate, and challenge educational redlining in special education, including zones of resegregation, but also examine potential anti-racist practices that support transformative change. • Nicholas Bell – Assistant Professor of Special Education, <i>University of Connecticut, Neag School of Education</i> • Zachary Collier – Associate Professor of Research Methods, Measurement, and Evaluation, <i>University of Connecticut</i> Cross-District Reflection & Discussion	
2:50 pm – 3:00 pm	Break: Transition to Sessions	

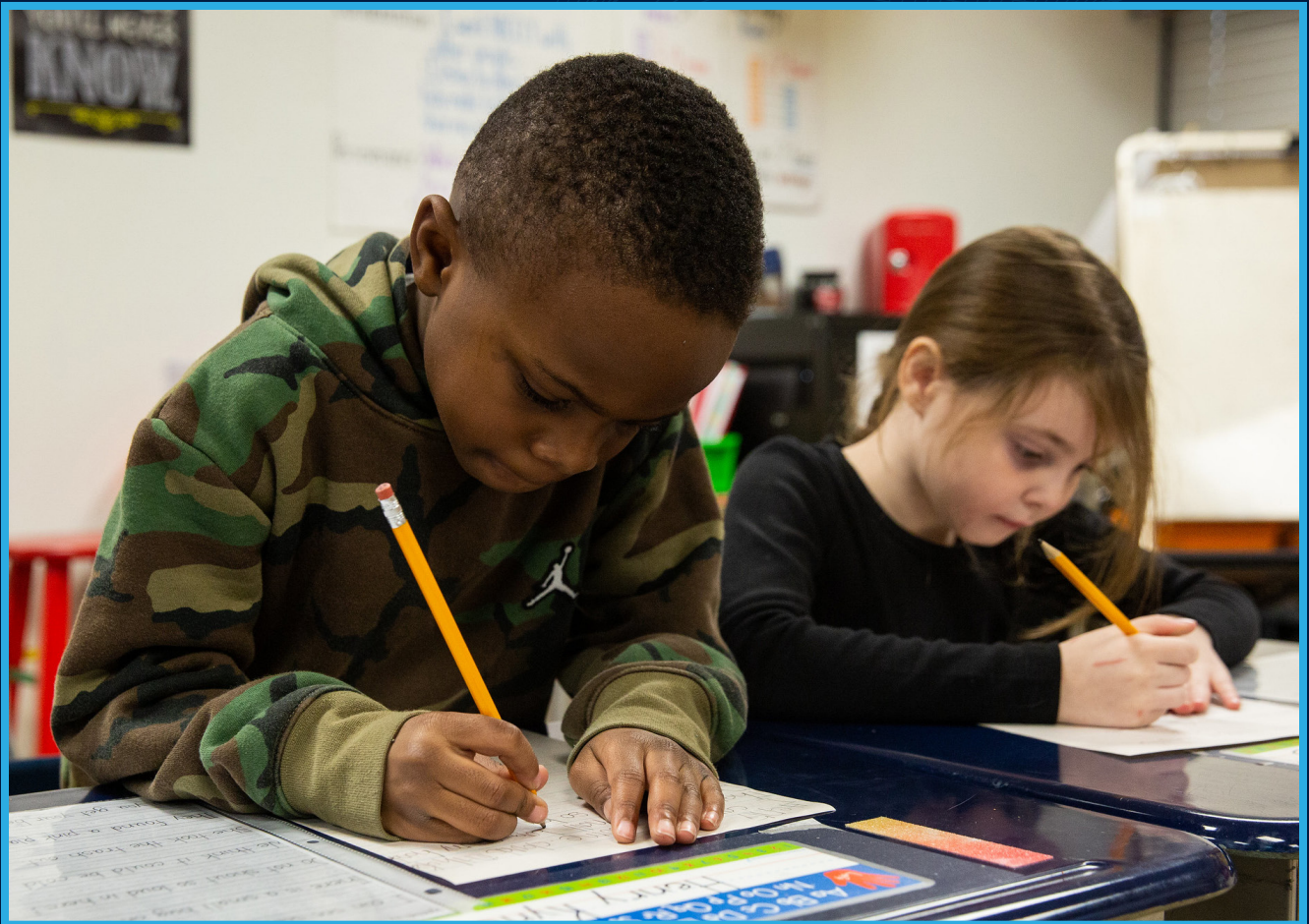
23rd Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference
“Leading with Purpose: Aligning Vision, Systems, and Practice”
July 7 – 10, 2026 Hyatt Regency Atlanta

Thursday, July 9 th	
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Role-Alike Sessions
3:00 pm – 3:45 pm	Academic Leaders (Regency VII) Harnessing Technology in Urban Education: Transforming Student Writing and Teacher Coaching "AI will not replace humans, but those who use AI will replace those who don't". Dallas ISD is scaling AI tools to address the unique challenges of secondary schools. We will explore how the district leverages Academic AI to transform the student writing process and teacher professional growth. This session features our AI Writing Grader, which provides students with immediate scores, actionable rationales, and the opportunity for iterative revision—moving writing from a static assignment to a dynamic learning cycle. We will detail our High School AI Curricular Integration, showcasing specific lessons in Algebra I and English III that teach students to use AI ethically and effectively. We will demonstrate how we use AI to elevate teacher feedback through data-informed coaching. By capturing classroom evidence such as "teacher talk vs. student talk" and question types, we empower educators with personalized, timely insights that increase student engagement and academic discourse. Dallas Independent School District • Aaron Daffern, Director of Mathematics • Doug Frank, Director of Reading Language Arts
3:45 pm – 5:00 pm	Academic Leaders (Regency VII) Connecting Learning to the Supporting Excellence Framework and Accompanying Rubric Participants will examine the <i>Supporting Excellence Framework</i> and its newly released accompanying rubric as tools to align instructional vision, curriculum guidance, and high-quality instructional materials. to ensure high-quality instruction. Reflecting on successful district initiatives and strategies for continuous improvement shared throughout the convening, leaders will explore how these resources can support continuous improvement and advance excellence and opportunity, improving outcomes for all students.
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Research Leaders (Courtland) Measuring Impact: Advanced Methods for Evaluating Student Interventions Drawing on a districtwide study, this session will examine how single-case design metrics, progress-monitoring data, and automated decision tools can help leaders determine whether interventions are producing meaningful growth. Participants will learn how real-time indicators, such as rate of improvement, can support more timely decisions about intervention quality, intensity, and student progress toward goals. Madison Metropolitan School District • Caroline Racine Gilles – Executive Director, Research Assessment and Improvement • Deonte Iverson – District Data Literacy Coordinator Research Leaders (Courtland) Navigating External Research Partnerships in a New Funding Reality As school districts continue to face financial challenges, so are the universities and research firms that typically collaborate with districts to provide research and evaluation support. This session will address the ever-shifting funding landscape and provide space to consider how it may impact research partnership dynamics, as well as strategies for effective collaboration with external researchers. We will discuss benefits, challenges, and implications for pursuing various funding from philanthropic, governmental, and corporate sources. • Matt Linick – Senior Fellow in Education and Child Development, <i>NORC at the University of Chicago</i>
5:00 pm	Night on Your Own

23rd Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference
“Leading with Purpose: Aligning Vision, Systems, and Practice”
July 7 – 10, 2026 Hyatt Regency Atlanta

Time	Friday, July 10 th
8:00 am – 9:00 am	Breakfast (Regency VI)
9:00 am – 9:45 am	Legislative Updates (Regency VII) This session will provide an update on legislation and legal cases impacting urban public education (to date). • <i>Manish Naik</i>, Director of Legislative Services, Council of the Great City Schools • <i>Mary Lawson</i>, General Counsel, Council of the Great City Schools
9:45 am – 10:45 am	Lessons from the Field: GenAI Adoption in US Schools (Regency VII) What does effective GenAI adoption really look like in US schools and universities today? In this session, education leaders will hear lessons learned from real-world partnerships with educational organizations and current academic research. Participants will explore proven strategies for developing organization-wide GenAI guidelines, building staff capacity, and leading change with clarity and confidence. Participants will also learn about the rapid evolution of this technology and the implications for educational institutions. This session highlights what works (and what to avoid) when creating a culture of responsible, mission-aligned AI adoption that supports teachers, safeguards students, and accelerates learning innovation. Walk away equipped with field-tested resources and actionable strategies to lead your community toward meaningful and responsible AI adoption. • <i>Amanda Bickerstaff</i>, Co-Founder & CEO, AI for Education
10:45 am – 11:00 am	Closing Remarks

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HMH is an adaptive learning company that helps educators create growth for every student. Our integrated curriculum, assessment and professional learning solutions use data to paint a full picture of every learner and recommend how to best support their needs. By partnering with educators, we create lasting momentum so that all students can reach their full potential. HMH serves more than 50 million students and 4 million educators in 150 countries.

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Amplify.

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Prisms was founded by Anurupa Ganguly, an MIT-trained engineer turned educator. After over a decade of teaching, leading curriculum and instruction for some of the largest districts in the US -- Anurupa became convinced that we must re-imagine how our children are educated for schools to deliver their promise to families: of developing passionate, curious, empathetic and resilient thinkers and leaders who will take on the problems of today with gusto, passion and success.



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Riverside Insights is a leading educational assessment company that provides research-based tools to help educators measure student learning, monitor progress, and support academic success. Its assessments and data solutions empower schools and districts to make informed instructional decisions that improve student outcomes.



At Savvas, we believe learning should inspire. Our next-generation K-12 learning solutions, developed by leading authors and educators, span every grade level and discipline, from evidence-based, standards-aligned core curricula and supplemental and intervention programs to state-of-the art assessment tools and the industry's most innovative portfolio of college and career readiness solutions — all designed to meet the needs of every learner. Visit Savvas.com for more information.



We're transforming education through innovative technology, connecting students to their ultimate goals and fostering a future where passion and purpose align.



Wayground (formerly Quizizz) is an AI-powered learning platform that helps educators create interactive lessons, quizzes, and assessments. It provides engaging, standards-aligned resources and personalized learning tools to support teaching and improve student outcomes.



The teacher-student relationship is the single most influential factor that increases student achievement and teacher retention. Argossey is a platform (PD + Support Tool) that focuses teachers on believing in their students, so that students believe in themselves.



Cengage School delivers high-quality instructional materials and innovative digital resources for K–12 educators and librarians, helping them engage learners and support academic success.



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Paloma boosts PreK-2 reading outcomes by equipping families to build the habit of tutoring their kids for 15 minutes a day.



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