



## Sectional Guide

### Sectional A: Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup> 1:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.

	Title	Facilitator (EC – Early Childhood, ES – Elementary School, MS – Middle School, HS – High School, AD – Administrators)
A-01	<a href="#">Create, Play, Learn, and Grow</a>	Katie Beegle and Laura Watson (EC/ES)
A-02	<a href="#">Reading an IEP and ISP: What Does this Mean?</a>	Dr. Dawn Callahan Dennis (All)
A-03	<a href="#">Support for the Challenging Child</a>	BJ Wiemer (EC)
A-04	<a href="#">The Tech Challenge+ What You Can Do About It</a>	Brock Murphy and Joshua Adams (All)
A-05	<a href="#">Approaching Difficult Conversations with Courage</a>	Angela Shirley (All)
A-06	<a href="#"># TheSaxonyWay - Establishing a School Culture</a>	Missy Adams and Mark Ruark (MS,HS,AD )
A-07	<a href="#">Parents as Partners -God's Design for Friendship</a>	Megan Majchrowicz and Julie Emory-Johnson (EC,ES,MS)
A-08	<a href="#">Building the Bridge</a>	Ron James CHOICES (All)
A-09	<a href="#">Using Data and NWEA-MAP</a>	Diana Meers and Scott Huster (ES,MS,AD)

### Sectional B: Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup> 2:40–3:40 p.m.

	Title	Facilitator (EC – Early Childhood, ES – Elementary School, MS – Middle School, HS – High School, AD – Administrators)
B-01	<a href="#">Support for the Challenging Child</a>	BJ Wiemer (EC)
B-02	<a href="#">Professional Development Resources for Independent Learning</a>	Janelle Hendricks and Elissa Beaver (EC)
B-03	<a href="#">Let's Celebrate Pi Day! Engaging Pi Day Activities for Teachers</a>	Aaron Hallien (MS,HS)
B-04	<a href="#">Approaching Difficult Conversations with Courage</a>	Angela Shirley (All)
B-05	<a href="#">The Tech Challenge+ What You Can Do About It</a>	Brock Murphy and Joshua Adams (All)
B-06	<a href="#">Multiplying Mission with Microschools</a>	Rev. Matt Hoehner (All)
B-07	<a href="#">Instituting a Faith Based Summer Program</a>	Jennifer Jankowski (EC,ES,MS)
B-08	<a href="#">Building the Bridge</a>	Ron James CHOICES (All)
B-09	<a href="#">Building and Keeping a Healthy Donor Base</a>	Leah Sieveking (AD)

**Sectional C: Tuesday, November 26<sup>th</sup> 10:00–11:00 a.m.**

	Title	Facilitator (EC – Early Childhood, ES – Elementary School, MS – Middle School, HS – High School, AD – Administrators)
C-01	<a href="#">A School's Journey to Being a Missouri State School of Character</a>	Brandi Hallemeier (All)
C-02	<a href="#">A Guide to Receiving Special Education Services</a>	Teresa Wapelhorst (All)
C-03	<a href="#">Teaching in a Multi-Grade Classroom</a>	Beth Haubein (ES)
C-04	<a href="#">Navigating the Two-Year-Old World</a>	Janelle Hendricks (EC)
C-05	<a href="#">Breaking Out of the Ordinary: Using Breakout Boxes in the Middle School Classroom</a>	Lyla Glaskey (All)
C-06	<a href="#">Getting Ready for NLSA Protocol G</a>	Dr. Melissa Sandfort (AD)
C-07	<a href="#">Advantage-Concordia Retirement Plan! Why the CRP Pension is Strong, Stable and Good for LCMS Ministry Workers</a>	Brian Page (All)
C-08	<a href="#">Restorative Practices</a>	Ron James CHOICES (All)
C-09	<a href="#">Financial Wellness for All Ages</a>	Laura Scheer (All)

**Sectional D: Tuesday, November 26<sup>th</sup> 12:00–1:00 p.m.**

	Title	Facilitator (EC – Early Childhood, ES – Elementary School, MS – Middle School, HS – High School, AD – Administrators)
D-01	<a href="#">Restorative Practices</a>	Ron James CHOICES (All)
D-02	<a href="#">Five Steps to Being Well</a>	Steve Gruenwald (All)
D-03	<a href="#">High Performance Instructional Leadership</a>	Dr. Jon Bernhardt (AD)
D-04	<a href="#">Planning for Retirement with Concordia Plans</a>	Laura Scheer (All)
D-05	<a href="#">EdCamp (Round Table Discussions)</a>	HS
D-06	<a href="#">EdCamp (Round Table Discussions)</a>	6-8
D-07	<a href="#">EdCamp (Round Table Discussions)</a>	3-5
D-08	<a href="#">EdCamp (Round Table Discussions)</a>	K-2
D-09	<a href="#">EdCamp (Round Table Discussions)</a>	EC

**Keynote I & 2: Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup> 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m. & 3:50–5:20 p.m.**



**Tim Clue, The Unlikely Teacher.**

Before Tim was an educator, speaker, comic, playwright, and father, he was an undiagnosed, hyperactive, dyslexic rug rat, raised in a small rural town outside of Chicago. Teachers stand and applaud Tim's unique ability to remind them of their own core strengths as mentors, artists, and teachers of curiosity. He showcases how a challenged learner can lead equally challenged educators on a journey to connect and build a mindset of lifelong engagement. His keynote celebrates, motivates, and 'LOL' empowers our nation's most undervalued assets—teachers! Tim travels across our country, mentoring, motivating, and modeling better ways to create lifelong, curious learners who are more capable of lighting the path to their own journeys. "When minds of all kinds find places to fit and not quit, we all succeed!" - Tim Clue

## Presentation best fit:

(EC – Early Childhood, ES – Elementary School, MS – Middle School, HS – High School, AD – Administrators)

---

### **A-01: Create, Play, Learn, and Grow**

**Kaite Beegle and Laura Watson**

(EC, ES)

Our presentation is everything you wanted to know about Project Based Learning Preschool through Elementary School! Project based learning is for everyone that is curious and full of wonder. We have heard of the term "Thinking outside of the Box". However, the presentation will talk about how to destroy that box and look at things in a new and creative way. Project Based is about creating, wondering, playing, Imagining, being inquisitive, and learning. Part of project based learning is being able to learn leadership skills and how to be motivated intrinsically, even when we do not want to do something! Come hear strategies that you can use in your classroom!

**Katie Beegle** is an elementary educator who specializes in project-based learning, differentiation, and language development. She has 27 years of teaching experience, including 20 years in Deaf Education, and 6 years in Lutheran Schools. Katie completed her bachelor's degree at Fontbonne University, Her Masters at Lindenwood. Katie Currently teachers a 3rd and 4th grade Inspire Class at Immanuel Lutheran St. Charles. The class is a project based, differentiated classroom where students learn to be self-directed, independent thinkers, problem solvers, and lead by example.

**Laura Watson** is an early childhood educator who specializes in integrating STEM across the Curriculum. She has 20 years teaching experience, including 16 years in Lutheran Schools.

Laura currently teaches Pre- K at Messiah Lutheran School and advises the third and fourth grade STEAM club. Laura completed her bachelors at University of Missouri- St. Louis and did masters level studies at Concordia University Nebraska! Laura is also trained in Project Construct!

[Return to Sectional A](#)

---

### **A-02: Reading an IEP and ISP: What Does this Mean?**

**Dr. Dawn Callahan Dennis**

(ALL)

Lutheran schools are experiencing an increase in students seeking enrollment who require special education services, accommodations and modifications. This course will provide the learner with an understanding of the difference between an IEP and ISP, how to interpret important information on an IEP/ISP which can inform enrollment decisions, and how to apply that information to create a successful learning environment for that student. Case examples will be reviewed.

**Dr. Dawn Callahan Dennis** has had a 33-year career as a speech language pathologist and educator, working in multiple states and settings. Her passion is empowering others, which she fulfills through providing mentorship, guidance and collaboration with students, staff, families, and school administration. She is sought out nationally by school districts for consultation and professional development. She works closely with Lutheran Schools in the Kansas City area, providing professional development and consultation for the topics of special education, learning styles and evidence-based practices in education.

[Return to Sectional A](#)

---

### **A-03: Support for the Challenging Child**

**BJ Wiemer**

(EC)

This engaging, hands-on session will provide a collection of evidence-based resources and strategies for EC educators and staff dealing with increasing trends in young children with socio-emotional concerns, challenging behaviors, and early learning deficits.

**BJ Wiemer** has served in special education for 48 years as a classroom educator, administrator, university instructor, and national teacher trainer. Her passions include early childhood, students with reading and other specific learning disabilities, the twice-exceptional learner, and social-emotional-behavioral needs. Her doctoral work branched out into another of her passions--missionary kids (MKs).

[Return to Sectional A](#)

---

#### **A-04: The Tech Challenge + What You Can Do About It**

**Brock Murphy and Joshua Adams**

*(ALL)*

In this conversation, we'll explore the hidden agenda and backstory of today's tech giants, looking at the good, the bad, and the ugly of the top platforms while also highlighting practical tips to keep our schools, churches, communities safe.

**Brock Murphy** is a graduate of St. Paul Lutheran School, Saxony Lutheran High School, Texas A&M University with time spent in the agriculture industry, at the White House, and at SpaceX. After being approached by parents and teachers to solve various problems about new technology and applications, he co-founded Parent ProTech to help empower parents and educators with the tools and knowledge needed to safely navigate technology.

**Joshua Adams** is the creative director at Parent ProTech, a company dedicated to equipping the next generation to safely navigate technology. He oversees all content and curriculum used in 200+ communities across 12 states.

As a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Wofford College, Joshua's professional pursuits have included work at the White House, South Carolina Governor's Office, and South Carolina House of Representatives. Most recently, he managed YouTube channels with over five million subscribers in four languages as a YouTube strategist at Elevation Church.

[Return to Sectional A](#)

---

#### **A-05: Approaching Difficult Conversations with Courage**

**Angela Shirley**

*(ALL)*

"How can we better prepare ourselves to communicate difficult information and share hard truths with our parents, colleagues, and leaders? The courage to have a hard conversation comes through intentional communication and conscious preparation.

Powerful communication is an art that fosters understanding, strengthens relationships, improves teamwork, and builds trust. We will begin our session looking at the intricacies of communication and its various forms, and most importantly, we will learn how to grow and strengthen our ministries through effective, assertive communication. We will then explore a practical, step-by-step process that will reduce anxiety and fear, preparing you to have that difficult conversation."

**Angela Shirley** has served in Lutheran school ministry for 28 years. She received both her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and Master's degree in Administration from Concordia University Chicago. She taught at the early childhood, elementary, and middle school levels until, in 2013, she accepted the Call to serve as the Director of Early Childhood Education at Christ Community Lutheran School in St. Louis. She oversees the multi-site program that serves 300 students, infants through pre-kindergarten, across four campuses. She has been a presenter and keynote speaker at multiple conferences including the National LEA Convocation, the National LEA Administrators conference, BPM Conference, and several LCMS District Education Conferences. She also enjoys consulting with schools and ministries throughout the country.

[Return to Sectional A](#)

---

#### **A-06: #TheSaxonyWay – Establishing a School Culture**

**Missy Adams and Mark Ruark**

*(MS, HS, AD)*

Learn how Saxony Lutheran High School created a purposeful powerful practice with #TheSaxonyWay with their Crusader students and beyond. Hear the story of how something simple became a part of Saxony culture.

**Missy Adams** is a K-12 educator and administrator for the past 23 years in both the public and Lutheran systems. Currently serves as the assistant principal at Saxony Lutheran High School in Jackson, Missouri.

**Mark Ruark** is a 40+ year secondary educator and administrator in both the public and Lutheran systems. Currently completed his 11th year of serving as principal at Saxony Lutheran High School.

[Return to Sectional A](#)

---

#### **A-07: Parents as Partners: God's Design for Friendship**

**Megan Majchrowicz and Julie Emory-Johnson**

*(EC, EL, MS)*

God hardwired us for connection, and He gives us the gift of friendship! Friendships provide fun, joy, laughter, and community! That said, relationships can be messy and hard at times. Seeing your children struggle to navigate their friendships can be challenging as parents. These experiences can cause tension and can challenge the parent-teacher relationship. Ultimately, parents and educators strive towards a common goal—to see their students flourish and live out God's call to love Him and their neighbors as themselves.

How can parents and teachers work together to help students navigate friendships through the lens of their faith? Together, we will acknowledge best practices to build a positive partnership between parents and teachers that relies

on open, honest, consistent and asset-based communication. Attendees will also receive scripturally based tools to use with their students to foster positive peer-to-peer relationships. Together, we can teach God's design for friendship and beautifully support our students.

Participants will learn how parents and educators can better strive towards a common goal—to see their students flourish and live out God's call to love Him and their neighbors as themselves.

**Megan Majchrowicz** is a Lead Partnership Specialist, hands-on momma, and mental health advocate. She is an active community member and volunteer who believes that if a child is supported socially and emotionally, it can increase their engagement and motivation to learn. Megan is committed to empowering our youth to understand their emotions, manage stress, and be mindful of the world around them. Megan also loves spending time with her husband, Mike, and their two children.

**Julie Emory-Johnson** currently serves as a National Partnership Director at Friendly. As the child of educators and raised in a family of lifelong learners, she knew from an early age that she was destined for a career in education. As a National Partnership Director for Friendly, Julie is focused on growing business and developing partnerships in schools across the country.

Julie has been an educator in both the public and private school settings for well over twenty years. She has been a teacher, interventionist, instructional coach, curriculum and staff development director, Catholic school superintendent, and consultant. In addition, she has been a strong advocate for education access. She believes all children deserve well-prepared and joy-filled teachers who will invest in finding every student's gifts and talents. The ethics of care and the study of belonging are both current research interests. Julie lives in Birmingham, AL, with her husband, two sons, and their beloved pets. They love to travel."

[Return to Sectional A](#)

---

## **A-08: Building the Bridge**

**Ron L. James CHOICES**

(ALL)

Parent Engagement Night is an opportunity for educators to highlight the invaluable skills parents/guardians can acquire. These sessions not only empower parents to foster their child's character development and academic success but also equip them with tools for year-round collaboration with teachers and staff. By creating a cohesive support system, parents can emerge as leaders in schools and communities, actively contributing to a strengthened parent-school-community network. The sessions, aptly titled "Building the Bridge," embody the essence of bridging the gap between the community and administrators. This collaborative effort, akin to co-parenting, serves the common goal of benefiting students in their exploration of diverse career options. Making way for students to tap into their own gifted abilities and become the best visions of themselves.

### **Presented by the Ron L James CHOICES team**

**Ron James** is an inspirational speaker, storyteller, professional development trainer, entrepreneur, life coach, and author of the book CHOICES

For 25+ years of his life, Ron L James was in and out of prison because of choices. While in prison, he was encouraged to write his life story. As he wrote, he realized that he did not like the man he had become. It was then that he began intentionally making different choices. Ten years ago, Ron was released from prison and has been a productive member of society ever since. He has been drug and alcohol free for over sixteen years. He is passionate about helping others understand that they can avoid making the mistakes he made. As a result of this passion, he now shares his message across the country as a Keynote speaker for businesses, schools, and organizations. His message on CHOICES continues to influence and inspire people to help "Make their next choice their best choice."

**Tamika Thomas** is a highly experienced life coach, author, and mentor who has dedicated over a decade of her life to teaching kids how to manage their emotions through social emotional learning. Throughout her life Tamika has faced numerous challenges but has never given up on her mission to empower children with the tools they need to succeed. Tamika's passion for teaching social emotional learning was born out of her own struggles and challenges. She knows firsthand what it's like to face adversity and overcome obstacles, and she is passionate about sharing her experiences with others. Tamika believes that every challenge we face in life can be turned into a treasure, and she works tirelessly to teach others how to do the same.

**Jeo Ramos** is a life-speaker, rhyme-sayer, bridge-builder. "I'm passionate about the stories of all people; how they became who they are today and what unique role they play in the world. I'm here to encourage & empower them to discover their dopeness and gifts. Whether it's through rapping, speaking, photos/graphic design or Restorative Practices, my aim is to highlight the *truth*, *beauty*, and *goodness* in all of us and how we're all here to make the world better."



**Stephanie Gutierrez-Vega** is originally from Puerto Rico and moved to Lancaster, PA in January of 2014. She has been in the field of restorative practices since 2017. For four years, she worked in a charter school as a restorative practices coordinator. With the support of the school principal, she was able to create a plan to improve behaviors, reduce suspensions, and build stronger relationships between staff and students. By working with low-income inner-city students, she was able to identify the gaps of the educational system.

Her implementation of restorative practices led her to discover that even the students classified as “problematic” could become great leaders. She gave the students the space to cope with negative behaviors and taught them how to better communicate, which yielded noticeable shifts in their conduct. Her relationship with students builds on her desire to be a youth mentor as she advocates for what they need to positively redirect them.

As a Latina, that also was raised in the projects, she understands the importance of trust and opportunities. She believes that students will only give you the best version of themselves when they completely trust you. She believes that: “When students trust you, you will have the opportunity to build relationships, truly know the students and have experiences that you never imagined you could have with them”.

Steph’s Vision is created with the mission to serve our communities by developing strong relationships within school, organizations, and workplaces. Her vision is to use individual values, emotion coping tools and restorative knowledge to create safe and healthy environments.

[Return to Sectional A](#)

---

**A-09: Using Data and NWEA-MAP**  
(EL, MS, AD)

**Diana Meers and Scott Huster**

In today’s educational environment, achievement testing is often seen as a vital tool for assessing student progress and guiding instruction. However, the wealth of information surrounding these tests can often feel overwhelming. In this session, we will explore NWEA MAP testing and discuss ways to interpret and use data to make informed decisions that support student learning and enhance instructional strategies.

**Diana Meers** is currently semi-retired with over 31 years of experience in teaching and administration in LCMS schools. She continues to work with NLSA and served as an interim principal. Her education includes an undergraduate degree in Child & Family Development, certification for K-8, and a Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership. Diana is married to her husband Mark. They have two sons who are married, and are now blessed with five grandchildren.

**Scott Huster** has over 20 years of teaching and administration experience in the LCMS. He currently serves as principal at Immanuel Lutheran School in St. Charles MO. He holds an undergraduate degree in Secondary Education / Broadfield Social Studies and a Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership. Scott is married to his wife, Kathryn. and has three children.

[Return to Sectional A](#)

---

**B-01: Support for the Challenging Child**  
(EC)

**BJ Wiemer**

This engaging, hands-on session will provide a collection of evidence-based resources and strategies for EC educators and staff dealing with increasing trends in young children with socio-emotional concerns, challenging behaviors, and early learning deficits.

**BJ Wiemer** has served in special education for 48 years as a classroom educator, administrator, university instructor, and national teacher trainer. Her passions include early childhood, students with reading and other specific learning disabilities, the twice-exceptional learner, and social-emotional-behavioral needs. Her doctoral work branched out into another of her passions--missionary kids (MKs).

[Return to Sectional B](#)

---

**B-02: Professional Development Resources for Independent Learning**  
(EC)

**Janelle Hendricks and Elissa Beaver**

Attendees will be exposed to various options for continued independent learning to support their vocation as early childhood educators. The presentation will share websites, podcasts, and books that are used by teachers. We will share how these resources are used to support an understanding of child development and how to serve children. Presenters will share how these resources have influenced and supported the early childhood program at Immanuel.

**Janelle Hendricks:** This is the fifteenth-year teaching two-year-olds at Immanuel for Janelle Hendricks. She has a degree in elementary education and a Master's in Early Childhood, both from Concordia Nebraska. Her passion is to nurture an environment where young children can grow in all areas of their development with the loving support of the adults in their life. Understanding young children and their needs is integral to this goal.

**Elissa Beaver** is in her 25th year of teaching Early Childhood and 5th year as director of Early Childhood. She has a degree in early childhood education from Concordia Mequon, Wisconsin and a certification in Project Construct. Her passion as director is building relationships with parents and the little blessings in Immanuel's early childhood program. Giving teachers the freedom to stay true to what is developmentally appropriate in their classrooms as they plan, providing a child centered environment is imperative to early childhood education.

[Return to Sectional B](#)

---

### **B-03: Let's Celebrate Pi Day! Engaging Pi Day Activities for Teachers**

**Aaron Hallien**

*(MS, HS)*

Join us for a dynamic presentation on celebrating Pi Day in the classroom and school wide! Discover a variety of innovative classroom activities that make learning about pi both educational and fun. Explore creative art projects themed around pi, and receive recommendations for cool pi day books, videos, and class activities to inspire your students. I will teach you some fun games to play on Pi day as well as cover ideas for an exciting all-school assembly, featuring a pi reciting contest, pie eating competitions, a pie tossing event, and even pie relay races. Don't be irrational, equip yourself with everything you need to make Pi day a memorable and educational yearly event.

**Aaron Hallien** has been teaching math in the upper grades for 25 years. It's his sense of humor and his ability to make math fun that has kept students engaged in the subject of math.

[Return to Sectional B](#)

---

### **B-04: Approaching Difficult Conversations with Courage**

**Angela Shirley**

*(ALL)*

"How can we better prepare ourselves to communicate difficult information and share hard truths with our parents, colleagues, and leaders? The courage to have a hard conversation comes through intentional communication and conscious preparation.

Powerful communication is an art that fosters understanding, strengthens relationships, improves teamwork, and builds trust. We will begin our session looking at the intricacies of communication and its various forms, and most importantly, we will learn how to grow and strengthen our ministries through effective, assertive communication. We will then explore a practical, step-by-step process that will reduce anxiety and fear, preparing you to have that difficult conversation."

**Angela Shirley** has served in Lutheran school ministry for 28 years. She received both her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and Master's degree in Administration from Concordia University Chicago. She taught at the early childhood, elementary, and middle school levels until, in 2013, she accepted the Call to serve as the Director of Early Childhood Education at Christ Community Lutheran School in St. Louis. She oversees the multi-site program that serves 300 students, infants through pre-kindergarten, across four campuses. She has been a presenter and keynote speaker at multiple conferences including the National LEA Convocation, the National LEA Administrators conference, BPM Conference, and several LCMS District Education Conferences. She also enjoys consulting with schools and ministries throughout the country.

[Return to Sectional B](#)

---

### **B-05: The Tech Challenge + What You Can Do About It**

**Brock Murphy and Joshua Adams**

*(ALL)*

In this conversation, we'll explore the hidden agenda and backstory of today's tech giants, looking at the good, the bad, and the ugly of the top platforms while also highlighting practical tips to keep our schools, churches, communities safe.

**Brock Murphy** is a graduate of St. Paul Lutheran School, Saxony Lutheran High School, Texas A&M University with time spent in the agriculture industry, at the White House, and at SpaceX. After being approached by parents and teachers to solve various problems about new technology and applications, he co-founded Parent ProTech to help empower parents and educators with the tools and knowledge needed to safely navigate technology.

**Joshua Adams** is the creative director at Parent ProTech, a company dedicated to equipping the next generation to safely navigate technology. He oversees all content and curriculum used in 200+ communities across 12 states.

As a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Wofford College, Joshua's professional pursuits have included work at the White House, South Carolina Governor's Office, and South Carolina House of Representatives. Most recently, he managed YouTube channels with over five million subscribers in four languages as a YouTube strategist at Elevation Church.

**B-06: Multiplying Mission with Microschools**

**Rev. Matt Hoehner**

*(ALL)*

Learn how microschools can multiply the mission of Christ-centered education. Discover how these small, flexible learning environments enable schools to reach more children with a faith-based curriculum, ensuring personalized attention and a strong community feel. We will explore the practical steps to establish and manage microschools, showcasing their efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and potential for impactful spiritual and academic growth. Learn how to multiply your mission and extend Christ's love and teachings to a broader audience through the innovative model of microschools.

**Rev. Dr. Matt Hoehner** - Since July 2019 has held the position of Executive Director at Christ Community Lutheran School. In 2022, he spearheaded the creation of the CCLS Academy micro-school in partnership with Bethlehem Lutheran School. Prior to this role, Matt was actively involved in the development of a network of schools and afterschool programs in St. Louis.

[Return to Sectional B](#)

---

**B-07: Instituting a Faith Based Summer Program**

**Jennifer Jankowski**

*(EC, EL, MS)*

This presentation will be power point based. We will be going over the process of starting a summer program in our school in 2023 and will also include our expansion in numbers by over half this summer. We will be going over how including God into the daily routine, the changes we have seen in children and families from the community who have not previously had the Word of God in their lives. Sixty percent of the summer school day involves expanding a bible passage to encompass art, science, social emotional learning and daily prayers. We also have the students attend a chapel each week. We will also spend time on what worked for our program and what needed revising according to our age range and increase in numbers. We will also focus on increased enrollment of our regular school year and how parents came about making the decision to come to Martin Luther School for the coming school year.

**Jennifer Jankowski:** Jennifer has worked at Martin Luther for the last two years. She teaches an afterschool Science Club, substitute teach as needed, runs the yearly Summer Program, as well as being the schools Behavioral Specialist. She has experience in ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis), PBIS, and Social Emotional Learning. She sees students individually and on a classroom basis, and works with students who may need extra support educationally, emotionally, and behaviorally.

[Return to Sectional B](#)

---

**B-08: Building the Bridge**

**Ron L. James CHOICES**

*(ALL)*

Parent Engagement Night is an opportunity for educators to highlight the invaluable skills parents/guardians can acquire. These sessions not only empower parents to foster their child's character development and academic success but also equip them with tools for year-round collaboration with teachers and staff. By creating a cohesive support system, parents can emerge as leaders in schools and communities, actively contributing to a strengthened parent-school-community network. The sessions, aptly titled "Building the Bridge," embody the essence of bridging the gap between the community and administrators. This collaborative effort, akin to co-parenting, serves the common goal of benefiting students in their exploration of diverse career options. Making way for students to tap into their own gifted abilities and become the best visions of themselves.

**Presented by the Ron L James CHOICES team**

**Ron James** is an inspirational speaker, storyteller, professional development trainer, entrepreneur, life coach, and author of the book CHOICES

For 25+ years of his life, Ron L James was in and out of prison because of choices. While in prison, he was encouraged to write his life story. As he wrote, he realized that he did not like the man he had become. It was then that he began intentionally making different choices. Ten years ago, Ron was released from prison and has been a productive member of society ever since. He has been drug and alcohol free for over sixteen years. He is passionate about helping others understand that they can avoid making the mistakes he made. As a result of this passion, he now shares his message across the country as a Keynote speaker for businesses, schools, and originations. His message on CHOICES continues to influence and inspire people to help "Make their next choice their best choice."

**Tamika Thomas** is a highly experienced life coach, author, and mentor who has dedicated over a decade of her life to teaching kids how to manage their emotions through social emotional learning. Throughout her life Tamika has faced numerous challenges but has never given up on her mission to empower children with the tools they need to succeed.



Tamika's passion for teaching social emotional learning was born out of her own struggles and challenges. She knows firsthand what it's like to face adversity and overcome obstacles, and she is passionate about sharing her experiences with others. Tamika believes that every challenge we face in life can be turned into a treasure, and she works tirelessly to teach others how to do the same.

**Jeo Ramos** is a life-speaker, rhyme-sayer, bridge-builder. "I'm passionate about the stories of all people; how they became who they are today and what unique role they play in the world. I'm here to encourage & empower them to discover their dopeness and gifts. Whether it's through rapping, speaking, photos/graphic design or Restorative Practices, my aim is to highlight the *truth, beauty, and goodness* in all of us and how we're all here to make the world better."

**Stephanie Gutierrez-Vega** is originally from Puerto Rico and moved to Lancaster, PA in January of 2014. She has been in the field of restorative practices since 2017. For four years, she worked in a charter school as a restorative practices coordinator. With the support of the school principal, she was able to create a plan to improve behaviors, reduce suspensions, and build stronger relationships between staff and students. By working with low-income inner-city students, she was able to identify the gaps of the educational system.

Her implementation of restorative practices led her to discover that even the students classified as "problematic" could become great leaders. She gave the students the space to cope with negative behaviors and taught them how to better communicate, which yielded noticeable shifts in their conduct. Her relationship with students builds on her desire to be a youth mentor as she advocates for what they need to positively redirect them.

As a Latina, that also was raised in the projects, she understands the importance of trust and opportunities. She believes that students will only give you the best version of themselves when they completely trust you. She believes that: "When students trust you, you will have the opportunity to build relationships, truly know the students and have experiences that you never imagined you could have with them".

Steph's Vision is created with the mission to serve our communities by developing strong relationships within school, organizations, and workplaces. Her vision is to use individual values, emotion coping tools and restorative knowledge to create safe and healthy environments.

[Return to Sectional B](#)

---

### **B-09: Building and Keeping a Healthy Donor Database**

**Leah Sieveking**

(AD)

This breakout will take a look at what it takes to acquire donors and keep them engaged with your mission! Tips and tricks covering everything from tracking giving habits, modes of donating, ways of showing appreciation, and more will be shared.

**Leah Sieveking** has served as the Director of Advancement for the last seven years. In her role, she works with both donors and taxpayers in order to provide funding for statewide ministries and MOScholars. Prior to her joining the district, she coordinated direct mail, online giving and giving by phone efforts at the International Center of the LCMS.

[Return to Sectional B](#)

---

### **C-01: A School's Journey to Being a Missouri State School of Character**

**Brandi Hallemeier**

(ALL)

In January 2024, Child of God Lutheran School in St. Peters, MO, was named a State School of Character through Character.org, the first recognition of its kind for Lutheran schools. Brandi Hallemeier, the presenter, will walk the participants through Child of God's journey to a State School of Character by highlighting Character.org's 11 Principles Framework. Additionally, participants will walk away with an action plan moving forward for intentional, holistic, and evidence-based character development within their schools. This presentation will benefit administrators or teacher leaders interested in developing or deepening character in their staff and students.

**Brandi Hallemeier**, Assistant Principal at Child of God Lutheran School in St. Peters, MO, has a background in special education and is certified in leadership for character education. She is in her second year of doctoral studies in educational leadership with an emphasis on character education and citizenship. In the past year, she has led her school to be a Missouri State School of Character by making character development an authentic priority of the school.

[Return to Sectional C](#)

---

### **C-02: A Guide to Receiving Special Education Services**

**Teresa Wapelhorst**

(All)

This session will discuss how to determine when to seek professional services and how to go about obtaining services through a public school district.

Topics will include:

- What to look for in child development
- Documentation
- Communication with the family
- Determining if/when services are necessary and preparing documents to assist in the referral process
- Establishing a Care Team

**Teresa Wapelhorst** has been in the education field for over 30 years and has a Bachelor's Degree in Communications Management and a Lifetime Certification in Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Special Education.

Teresa was thrown into the world of special education when her first teaching job challenged her with several situations (like a new ADHD diagnosis, a child with Downs Syndrome, a student with Auditory Processing Disorder, and a child diagnosed as gifted/exceptional.) She had 29 students and threw herself into the world of special education in order to serve these children the best way possible.

She began learning what it takes to receive special education services when her son was in third grade in parochial school and began displaying subtle signs that he was not functioning in the same way as his peers. Subtle signs turned into very clear red flags, but since he was not a behavior concern in the classroom, she couldn't get the assistance he needed. So she began a very long and frustrating seven-year journey before finally getting the help he needed.

Through this experience, Teresa now shares the knowledge that she gathered to help educate and provide resources for parochial school teachers (which includes know how to access help outside of their school.)

[Return to Sectional C](#)

---

### **C-03: Teaching in a Multi-Grade Classroom**

**Beth Haubein**

*(EL)*

Schools are turning to multi-level classrooms more and more due to a shortage of qualified teachers in our nation. To say the least, this type of classroom set-up can be challenging. However, it is not impossible. This break-out session will provide you with ways to build a classroom family, strategies to organize your day, and techniques that will lessen your stress.

**Beth Haubein:** Beth has been Lutheran practically her entire life. She has been a teacher for 41 years and has enjoyed every minute of it. She presently teaches at Martin Luther School, Joplin. She's married to a wonderful, God loving man who supports her in everything she does for her career.

[Return to Sectional C](#)

---

### **C-04: Navigating the Two-Year-Old World**

**Janelle Hendricks**

*(EC)*

Spending each day with twos-turning-three is a unique teaching experience. Older than infants and younger than preschool, this age is often skipped over in literature. This session will focus on the joys and challenges, curriculum and methods, and knowledge of child development that is key to serving this age with love and joy. Participation and discussion will be welcome and encouraged as we tap into the experiences of everyone attending.

**Janelle Hendricks:** This is the fifteenth-year teaching two-year-olds at Immanuel for Janelle Hendricks. She has a degree in elementary education and a Master's in Early Childhood, both from Concordia Nebraska. Her passion is to nurture an environment where young children can grow in all areas of their development with the loving support of the adults in their life. Understanding young children and their needs is integral to this goal.

[Return to Sectional C](#)

---

### **C-05: Breaking Out of the Ordinary: Using Breakout Boxes in the Middle School Classroom**

**Lyla Glaskey**

*(All)*

Breakout boxes bring an escape room like experience to your classroom. In this session we will cover why you might want to use them, what they do for you as a teacher, and what the benefits are for your students. Get your hands on a break out box and try it for yourself!

**Lyla Glaskey** has taught middle grades for over twenty years in Lutheran schools. She loves harnessing the crazy enthusiasm of middle schoolers to learn in creative and meaningful ways. She teaches language arts, social studies, religion, drama, and technology.

**C-06: Getting Ready for NLSA Protocol G**

**Dr. Melissa Sandfort**

(AD)

This session will review the newest version of the NLSA self study Protocol G. Participants will learn about changes in general indicators, required standards and scoring. Time for questions will be allotted.

**Dr. Melissa Sandfort** currently serves as the Administrator at Child of God Lutheran School in St. Peters, MO. She is also the NLSA Commissioner for the MO District and an instructor/mentor for the SLED program.

[Return to Sectional C](#)

---

**C-07: Advantage - Concordia Retirement Plan!**

**Brian Page**

**Why the CRP pension is strong, stable and good for LCMS ministries and workers**

(AD)

Workers are attracted to retirement benefits and capitalizing on this attraction can enhance your recruitment and retention efforts. In this interactive and engaging session, we'll uncover best practices for integrating the CRP pension and CRSP 403(b) plans into your comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy. Additionally, you'll get a closer look at the CPS retirement plans and gain insights into confidently talking about them. You will laugh, learn and leave excited about using retirement benefits for retaining and recruiting talent.

**Brian Page** brings to Concordia Plans more than 20 years of retirement plan industry experience. During his career he has developed a deep understanding of best practices and effective strategies for achieving worker and employer goals. He is excited to use this experience within the LCMS culture of "caring for workers" to position ministries and workers with the best odds of success. Prior to joining Concordia Plans, Brian managed the retirement plan team for a national investment advisory firm and the consulting team for a recordkeeper. He holds the following industry credentials: Qualified 401(k) Consultant (QKC), Qualified Pension Administrator (QPA), Accredited Investment Fiduciary (AIF®) and Certified Plan Fiduciary Advisor (CPFA™).

[Return to Sectional C](#)

---

**C-08: Restorative Practices**

**Ron L. James CHOICES**

(ALL)

Restorative Practices break out sectional: we will delve into the significance of implementing this approach in schools. Restorative Practices offer numerous benefits, fostering improved relationships among students, teachers, and peers, ultimately contributing to a more positive school culture with reduced conflict incidents. Emphasizing accountability, this approach focuses on repairing harm and addressing underlying causes, encouraging students to take responsibility for their actions. By reducing suspensions and expulsions, Restorative Practices support academic progress and social-emotional development. Creating a positive and inclusive environment, these practices enhance attendance, engagement, and academic outcomes. Additionally, they positively impact mental health by alleviating stress and fostering a sense of connection. The breakout sessions will cover restorative practices basics, building relationships, restorative conversations, circles, addressing harm and conflict, and strategies for implementation and sustainability.

**Presented by the Ron L James CHOICES team**

**Ron James** is an inspirational speaker, storyteller, professional development trainer, entrepreneur, life coach, and author of the book CHOICES

For 25+ years of his life, Ron L James was in and out of prison because of choices. While in prison, he was encouraged to write his life story. As he wrote, he realized that he did not like the man he had become. It was then that he began intentionally making different choices. Ten years ago, Ron was released from prison and has been a productive member of society ever since. He has been drug and alcohol free for over sixteen years. He is passionate about helping others understand that they can avoid making the mistakes he made. As a result of this passion, he now shares his message across the country as a Keynote speaker for businesses, schools, and originations. His message on CHOICES continues to influence and inspire people to help "Make their next choice their best choice."

**Tamika Thomas** is a highly experienced life coach, author, and mentor who has dedicated over a decade of her life to teaching kids how to manage their emotions through social emotional learning. Throughout her life Tamika has faced numerous challenges but has never given up on her mission to empower children with the tools they need to succeed. Tamika's passion for teaching social emotional learning was born out of her own struggles and challenges. She knows firsthand what it's like to face adversity and overcome obstacles, and she is passionate about sharing her experiences with others. Tamika believes that every challenge we face in life can be turned into a treasure, and she works tirelessly to teach others how to do the same.

**Jeo Ramos** is a life-speaker, rhyme-sayer, bridge-builder. "I'm passionate about the stories of all people; how they became who they are today and what unique role they play in the world. I'm here to encourage & empower them to discover their dopeness and gifts. Whether it's through rapping, speaking, photos/graphic design or Restorative Practices, my aim is to highlight the *truth, beauty, and goodness* in all of us and how we're all here to make the world better."

**Stephanie Gutierrez-Vega** is originally from Puerto Rico and moved to Lancaster, PA in January of 2014. She has been in the field of restorative practices since 2017. For four years, she worked in a charter school as a restorative practices coordinator. With the support of the school principal, she was able to create a plan to improve behaviors, reduce suspensions, and build stronger relationships between staff and students. By working with low-income inner-city students, she was able to identify the gaps of the educational system.

Her implementation of restorative practices led her to discover that even the students classified as "problematic" could become great leaders. She gave the students the space to cope with negative behaviors and taught them how to better communicate, which yielded noticeable shifts in their conduct. Her relationship with students builds on her desire to be a youth mentor as she advocates for what they need to positively redirect them.

As a Latina, that also was raised in the projects, she understands the importance of trust and opportunities. She believes that students will only give you the best version of themselves when they completely trust you. She believes that: "When students trust you, you will have the opportunity to build relationships, truly know the students and have experiences that you never imagined you could have with them".

Steph's Vision is created with the mission to serve our communities by developing strong relationships within school, organizations, and workplaces. Her vision is to use individual values, emotion coping tools and restorative knowledge to create safe and healthy environments.

[Return to Sectional C](#)

---

### **C-09: Financial Wellness for All Ages**

**Laura Scheer**

(ALL)

While the underlying foundations of financial wellness are the same at every age, we have different goals at different points in our lives. This session will teach you how to create and maintain healthy financial habits and give actionable items for different life stages, ages and financial concerns such as managing debt and saving for retirement.

**Laura Scheer** joined Concordia Plans in 2011, overseeing the administration of the Concordia Retirement Savings Plan 403(b). Now she engages directly with workers, using her financial coaching experience to help them build healthy financial habits and reach their financial goals. By educating workers about the important role their benefits play, she helps them improve their overall financial health. Laura has a bachelor's degree from University of Missouri – Columbia, is an Accredited Financial Counselor® and a Certified Employee Benefit Specialist focusing on church retirement plans.

[Return to Sectional C](#)

---

### **D-01: Restorative Practices**

**Ron L. James CHOICES**

(ALL)

Restorative Practices break out sectional: we will delve into the significance of implementing this approach in schools. Restorative Practices offer numerous benefits, fostering improved relationships among students, teachers, and peers, ultimately contributing to a more positive school culture with reduced conflict incidents. Emphasizing accountability, this approach focuses on repairing harm and addressing underlying causes, encouraging students to take responsibility for their actions. By reducing suspensions and expulsions, Restorative Practices support academic progress and social-emotional development. Creating a positive and inclusive environment, these practices enhance attendance, engagement, and academic outcomes. Additionally, they positively impact mental health by alleviating stress and fostering a sense of connection. The breakout sessions will cover restorative practices basics, building relationships, restorative conversations, circles, addressing harm and conflict, and strategies for implementation and sustainability.

**Presented by the Ron L James CHOICES team**

(Bio listed in Session C-08)

---

**D-02: Five Steps to Being Well**

**Steve Gruenwald**

(ALL)

Our busy work and family schedules combined with our American culture create challenges for us to be as well as we can be, so that we can serve our families and ministries. Learn about practical ways – five steps – that you can take now and incorporate into your weekly routines that will help you improve your health.

**Steve Gruenwald** graduated from Concordia University Chicago with a Bachelor of Arts in Lutheran secondary education. For 12 years he taught English, speech and drama in Lutheran high schools before joining Concordia Plans in 1995 as a staff writer. In 2006, Steve completed the requirements to become a Certified Wellness Program Manager, and he helped introduce and guide the “Be Well, Serve Well” initiative. Steve currently leads our team of wellness educators who encourage LCMS church workers to care for their physical, emotional and financial health. He is passionate about helping members be well so they can worry less about their health and focus on their families and ministries.

[Return to Sectional D](#)

---

**D-03: High Performance Instructional Leadership**

**Dr. Jon Bernhardt**

(AD)

As a school administrator, do you find yourself not being able to serve as the instructional leader or coach you desire to be? Are you going through the motions of the traditional teacher observation process, and question its effectiveness? Much too often the demands of running a school hinders your ability to serve as an effective instructional leader. Come learn about a model for instructional leadership that places you, the administrator in classrooms daily, allows you to make informed operational and instructional decisions, fosters rich professional relationships, and deepens student learning. This unique approach could be transformative for you as an educational leader and for your school as a learning organization. This session would be of value for principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, department leaders and teacher mentors.

**Dr. Jon Bernhardt** has served as a Lutheran High School administrator for over 20 years. In 2022 he completed his doctorate in educational leadership from Missouri Baptist University where he presented a final dissertation on the induction of the Generation Z teacher in a Lutheran High School. Jon has a passion for serving as an instructional leader for his teachers and cultivating a school climate where students are nurtured spiritually, academically, and personally.

[Return to Sectional D](#)

---

**D-04: Planning for Retirement with Concordia Plans**

**Laura Scheer**

(ALL)

If retirement is on the horizon for you, learn more about preparing for retirement in this session. We'll focus on understanding your Concordia Plans benefits, including the pension and the 403(b) savings plan; how to estimate your income in retirement; and what to consider for health care in retirement.

Laura Scheer joined Concordia Plans in 2011, overseeing the administration of the Concordia Retirement Savings Plan 403(b). Now she engages directly with workers, using her financial coaching experience to help them build healthy financial habits and reach their financial goals. By educating workers about the important role their benefits play, she helps them improve their overall financial health. Laura has a bachelor's degree from University of Missouri – Columbia, is an Accredited Financial Counselor® and a Certified Employee Benefit Specialist focusing on church retirement plans.

[Return to Sectional D](#)

---

D-05: EdCamp (Round Table Discussions)                      High School

[Return to Sectional D](#)

---

D-06: EdCamp (Round Table Discussions)                      Grades 6-8

[Return to Sectional D](#)

---

D-07: EdCamp (Round Table Discussions)                      Grades 3-5

[Return to Sectional D](#)

---

D-08: EdCamp (Round Table Discussions)                      Grades K-2

[Return to Sectional D](#)

---

D-09: EdCamp (Round Table Discussions)                      EC

[Return to Sectional D](#)