ACHIEVEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE
COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS

Task Force on Achievement and Professional Development

2024-2025

Task Force Goals

To assist urban public school systems in teaching high academic standards and social emotional learning competencies in service to closing identifiable gaps in the achievement of students by race.

To improve the quality of professional development for teachers and principals in urban public education in service to (1) closing identifiable gaps in achievement of students by race and (2) retaining and developing highly skilled educators.

To improve the recruitment and retention of highly skilled urban school instructional staff (paraprofessionals, teachers, principals) who have the greatest influence on student achievement.

Task Force Chair

Jill Baker, Long Beach Superintendent

Task Force Members

Sabrina Bazzo, San Diego School Board
Martin Pollio, Jefferson County Superintendent
Sonja Santelises, Baltimore CEO
Deborah Shanley, Brooklyn College
Old Goal Language

1. To assist urban public school systems in teaching all students to the highest academic standards and in closing identifiable gaps in the achievement of students by race.

2. To improve the quality of professional development for teachers and principals in urban public education.

3. To alleviate the shortage of certified teachers and principals in urban schools.

4. To improve the recruitment and skills of urban school principals.

New Goal Language

1. To assist urban public school systems in teaching high academic standards and social emotional learning competencies in service to closing identifiable gaps in the achievement of students by race.

2. To improve the quality of professional development for teachers and principals in urban public education in service to (1) closing identifiable gaps in achievement of students by race and (2) retaining and developing highly skilled educators.

3. To improve the recruitment and retention of highly skilled urban school instructional staff (paraprofessionals, teachers, principals) who have the greatest influence on student achievement.
DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW
Overall Academic Goals, Priorities, and Progress

The goal of the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) academic team is to support the work of urban educators to improve student achievement for all students in our member districts. The team collaborates with expert researchers and local practitioners to determine district systems and resources correlated with improved student achievement. These results inform recommendations to instructional leaders for implementation. The academic team's work has been organized into five main areas, although work beyond those areas is also conducted.

We continue to share high-leverage information through publications and videos, provide virtual support and webinars, on-site strategic support team visits, facilitate role-alike monthly virtual meetings, and job-alike conferences to facilitate networking and collaboration among our members. We collaborate with other national organizations including Student Achievement Partners (SAP), Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), The National Academy of Education (NAEd), the Coalition for Advanced Future Student Success, the Institute of Educational Sciences (IES), and the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), the Hewlett Foundation, and the Gates Foundation in support of raising student achievement for all learners in our member districts.

Monthly role-alike meetings are focused on supporting districts as they continue to work on systematically improving student learning and achievement, including addressing unfinished learning during Tier I instruction, attending to the social, emotional, and well-being of staff and students, and developing and implementing high-quality curriculum and instructional materials, as well as creating more opportunities for cross-collaboration among district leadership to plan and implement coherent streams of support to schools.
Technical Assistance and Support

The CGCS academic team provides on-site and virtual technical assistance for district curriculum leaders and their teams throughout their curriculum development and implementation process. We customize our work for individual districts in determining implications for teaching and learning, curriculum development and refinement, implementation, and raising student achievement. Such technical assistance is available to member districts upon request. For example, the academic team served as a critical friend to Newark Public Schools instructional team by providing technical assistance on their updates and revisions to the district curriculum guidance based on changes in their state standards.

Member Inquiries

The academic team facilitated the receipt of responses to the following member inquiries and distributed them to the requesting district(s):

- Description of district pilots for selecting new curricula resources
- Literacy Framework, Plans, and Strategy
- District Math Plans
- District response to Israel and Hamas War
- Equity policy implementation
- Description of how districts used ARP funding to increase student attendance and address chronic absenteeism
- Description of funding models for English Language Learners and special education services
- Israel / Palestine conflict – district resources
- Established partnerships to implement holistic, whole-city equity driven approaches.
- Rationale behind pivoting from one instructional resource to another high-quality resource
- Share feedback and lessons learned with the instructional resource, MyPerspective
- Request for comparable roles for newly developed managerial and non-supervisory equity professional learning positions to include salary ranges
- Request seeking to identify school districts and cities within the Council that have successfully established partnerships to implement holistic, whole-city equity driven approaches aimed at addressing essential KPIs for students.
- Library media policies
- Services provided by the academic division in member districts

Academic Team Role-Alike Meeting Contacts

The Council of the Great City Schools continues to host and expand role-alike virtual meetings for member districts to provide a safe space to share effective practices, common challenges, and solutions for issues that impact the safety, wellbeing, and success of staff and students. If you would like more information about a role-alike meeting, please use the contact list below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Equity Officers &amp; Equity Directors</td>
<td>Farah Assiraj - <a href="mailto:fassiraj@cgcs.org">fassiraj@cgcs.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chief Academic Officers</td>
<td>Nicole Mancini - <a href="mailto:nmancini@cgcs.org">nmancini@cgcs.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief of Schools</td>
<td>Robin Hall - <a href="mailto:rhall@cgcs.org">rhall@cgcs.org</a></td>
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**Professional Learning**

*Monthly Virtual Meetings and Quarterly Instructional Spotlights*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly Meetings</th>
<th>Chief of Schools</th>
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| **Chief Academic Officers**                                                      | April 2024 – Presentation: Dr. Josiah Phillips, Chief Information Officer, Broward County Public Schools (BCPS, The Big 5: "AI's Impact on Adaptive and Optimal Learning" - Exploring the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in K-12 education"
| April 2024 – Mid-year data and implications for end-of-year, summer school programming, and plan for ARP phasing out. | May 2024 - Open discussion for member support.                                    |
| May 2024 - Open discussion for district member support.                          |                                                                                  |

**Special Education (SPED) Directors and Legal Counsels Working with SPED**

**March 2024** - Supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs; U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights Release; Four new ED resources address common medical conditions that can be disabilities for purposes of Section 504: asthma, diabetes, food allergies, and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD); Additional topics included:
- What does transition look like in your district from PreK to K-5/8?
- How has the DD eligibility impacted accommodations and support in the general education classroom in K-3?
- What challenges are you encountering with transitions overall?
- What percentage of your students are moving from a self-contained setting to a general education setting?

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**May 2024** – Discussion topic focused on providing tiered support for principals and addressing teacher shortages.

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<tr>
<th>Principal Supervisors</th>
<th>English Language Arts &amp; Literacy District Leaders</th>
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| **March 2024** – Supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs; U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights Release; Four new ED resources address common medical conditions that can be disabilities for purposes of Section 504: asthma, diabetes, food allergies, and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD); Additional topics included:
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| **May 2024** – Open discussion for district member support. | |
• What type of programs do your students with disabilities participate in, especially in the upper grades?
• Share out models and exemplars of inclusion in your district – PreK, K-5, 6-8, and 9-12, 12+.

April 2024 – Funding appropriations under IDEA and Chronic Absenteeism; What should we be thinking of in terms of instruction for students with disabilities; Discipline in special education classrooms

May 2024 – Special Ed cases being handled at the moment; Most prevalent issues in current cases; Issues that hearing officers do not seem to view the same; Issues needing legal authority; Additional topics included:
• What types of professional learning and/or training does your district implement for school-based administrators and staff related to the compliance issues brought up?
• What percentage of compliance issues interrupt delivery of educational and supplemental services to students and how is your district handling this?

June 2024 – Court Case Implications: N.D. v. Reykdal, 23-35580 (9th Cir., May 22, 2024); Due process case backlogs; Additional topics included:
• To what extent will district budget cuts impact Special Education services for the upcoming school year?
• How many districts are currently using Artificial Intelligence, and what supports do you foresee needing moving forward?

Chief Equity Officers & Equity Directors

April 2024 - Mary Lawson, CGCS General Counsel joined the equity meeting to present on DE&I Legislation and cases.

May 2024 – Equity leaders discussed state of DEI and ESSER funding cliff impacts on their roles or departments.

June 2024 – Equity leaders joined to discuss summer plans, CRI conference and survey.

June 2024 – Joint End of Year Session on Healing-Centered Engagement for SEL, MH, RJ & Equity Leaders. This session provided an opportunity for district leaders in critical roles such as Social-Emotional Learning, Mental Health, Restorative Justice and Equity to

Social-Emotional Learning, Mental Health, and Restorative Justice Directors

April 2024 – Social Emotional Learning, Mental Health and Restorative Leaders, discussed state of DEI and ESSER funding cliff impacts on their roles or departments.

May 2024 - Social Emotional Learning, Mental Health and Restorative Leaders attended a session with special guest Dr. Charmain Jackman on Mental Health in Schools in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month.

June 2024 - End of Year Session on Healing-Centered Engagement for SEL, MH, RJ & Equity Leaders. This session provided an opportunity for district leaders in critical roles such as Social-Emotional Learning, Mental Health, Restorative Justice and Equity to reflect on this
reflect on this year, apply healing practices and collective care by setting intentions for summer and SY24/25 to sustain their bodies and well-being within urban systems.

<table>
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<th>English Language Arts &amp; Literacy District Leaders</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>March 2024</strong> – Topics included:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assets:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What literacy assets are students bringing to the classroom?</td>
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<td>• How can educators build from those assets?</td>
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<td>Professional Learning (PL):</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What touchpoints do you have for teacher PL?</td>
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<td>• Which teachers/staff are involved (ELA, other content areas, coaches, leadership?)</td>
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<td>• What constraints are there in terms of providing this PL/support?</td>
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<td>Role:</td>
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<td>• What are the biggest barriers in your way of supporting secondary students and teachers?</td>
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<td>• What have been the most successful ways to address those barriers in your work?</td>
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<td>• What tools/resources do you have/use that are successful?</td>
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<td>• What tools/resources do you not have that you feel you need?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>April 2024</strong> - Topics included:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• District Spotlight: Philadelphia - Supporting Early Literacy Practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Discussion: Secondary Literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Look Inside the Classroom: e2 Instructional Practice Learning Walk Tool™</td>
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<td><strong>May 2024</strong> – Topics included:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• District Spotlight: Early Literacy in Long Beach</td>
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<td>• District Spotlight: Secondary Literacy in Long Beach</td>
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<td><strong>March 2024</strong>– Joint session with directors of science and mathematics on Data science and data literacy with Stephanie Melville, IES Fellow, and Evan Shieh, Young Data Scientists.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>April 2024</strong>-Joint session with directors of science and mathematics on instructional technology and AI with Dr. Dan Meyer.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>May 2024</strong>- District leaders will annotate classroom moves and discuss observations after viewing a mathematics lesson. Participants will use their feedback to discuss each component of the e² Instructional Practice Learning Walk Tool.</td>
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<th>History/Social Science District Leaders</th>
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<td><strong>March 2024</strong> – Discussion with Dr. Illyon Woo, Pulitzer Prize winning author of <em>Master Slave Husband Wife</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>April 2024</strong> – Joint session with directors of history/social science and English Language Arts/Literacy on data science and data literacy facilitated by Stephanie Melville, IES Fellow, and Evan Shieh, Young Data Scientists.</td>
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</table>
May 2024 – Discussion on problems of practice curriculum updates, course pathways, professional learning, and any recommendations for the scheduling of science at the elementary level.

May 2024 – District leaders discuss problems of practice that included effective strategies for teaching history/social science; focus of your K-5 program and how are you engaging students in the joy of learning history/social science; inquiry learning in the teaching of history; curriculum revisions and guidance planned for summer; and professional development options.

**Bi-Monthly Meetings**

**Early Learning District Directors (Birth-Pre-K)**

April 2024 – Discussed supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs and trauma-informed practices.

To further guide district leaders with implementation of the Supporting Excellence Curriculum Framework (Second Edition), virtual learning opportunities, called Instructional Spotlights, were designed to provide focused professional engagement on highly relevant curriculum and instruction topics that our instructional leaders have surfaced as areas of interest and need. These quarterly Instructional Spotlights are aligned to and expand upon the key features in the CGCS Supporting Excellence Curriculum Framework (Second Edition). Topics range from addressing early literacy and early mathematics, civic reasoning, and discourse, grading for equity, to telling your data narrative. Presenters included national experts and member district leaders with in-depth experience in these topics. Providing opportunities for districts to share ways that they are operationalizing curriculum guidance so that teachers are using essential instructional content in ELA and Mathematics to plan for Tier 1 grade level instruction, including how to foster positive student mindsets. The first joint Quarterly Instructional Spotlight convened in November and focused on the Second Edition of the Supporting Excellence Framework.

**Joint Quarterly Instructional Spotlight Meetings**

**March 2024** – Presentation by David and Meredith Liben, Carey Swanson, from Student Achievement Partners, and a team from Philadelphia Public Schools on strategies for improving reading performance for older students, such as evidence-based research and practice, recommendations for instructional practice, as well as related professional development opportunities.

**May 2024** - Presentation on Data Science and Data Literacy by Stephanie Melville, K-12 Data Science Education Impact Fellow, Bradley Voytek, Professor & HDSI Faculty Fellow, Halıcıoğlu Data Science Institute, University of California, San Diego, and Evan Shieh, AI Research and Educator, Young Data Scientists League.

**Science Units**

The Council team continues to collaborate with OpenSciEd to provide regular updates and reviews of their draft high school science units and during the development of elementary units. OpenSciEd is a project led by ten states and funded by four foundations committed to improving the supply of high-quality science curriculum aligned to new college and career ready standards. OpenSciEd provides the units free of charge and offers professional development for a fee. The high school level units are designed to address equity gaps in science by reorienting classrooms to be driven by phenomena while cultivating student interest and curiosity.

In addition, the academic team collaborated with the Collaborative Research in Education, Assessment and Teaching Environments for STEM (CREATE for STEM), at Michigan State University, to provide district science directors experiences with project-based learning materials designed to meet Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These units, developed by writers of NGSS, applicable for high school chemistry and physics, are learner-centered, knowledge-centered, and assessment centered.
Summit on Data Science and Data Literacy

The Council, in collaboration with Data Science 4 Everyone, University of Chicago, with philanthropic support from the Gates and Valhalla Foundation, has been invited to join in planning an inaugural national conference on Data Science and Literacy, February 2025, San Antonio, TX.

We hope this will become a wide community-driven effort and engage several education associations throughout the K-12 sector. Our plan is for this to a cross-subject convening space (math, science, social studies, computer science, etc.), that allows for productive conversations on how to teach students about data and data-driven technologies (such as AI) in a thoughtful, intentional, and equitable way, centering equity in both approach and the ultimate student experience.

Additional details include:

- Partnering with the first majority-Hispanic institution to launch a dedicated data science school in higher-education (UT San Antonio),
- Projecting 300-400 attendees, including district leaders, education researchers, K-12 educators, and state education policymakers,
- Facilitating cross-sector conversations, including “flipped sessions” in which district leaders or classroom teachers share their needs and experiences with researchers and curriculum vendors.

Cross Collaboration

The academic team has embraced cross collaboration internally and externally as referenced below:

- CGCS Chief Academic Officers, Chief of Schools, and Principal Supervisors attended a joint meeting with all three groups focused on The Council of the Great City Schools Dashboards facilitated by the Research Team: Akisha Osei Sarfo, Chester Holland, and Brian Garcia.
- The Chief of Academics attended the CIO/CTO monthly role-alike meetings to connect the educational implications of technology selection, implementation, and usage as well as advances in Generative AI and other tech-related educational topics with a focus on student outcomes.
- Collaborated with IES, selected speakers, and the planning committee to draft a proceedings paper about the Mathematics Summit. The proceedings paper will include considerations for improving mathematics teaching and student learning.
- Collaborated with Student Achievement Partners on field testing their Essential x Equitable (e²) Instructional Practice Framework: Toward a vision for high-quality instruction in English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- Convened a virtual meeting of Chief Academic Officers, Research Directors, and Chiefs of Schools on Outcomes-Based Contracting in February 2024, focusing on implications for the education system and how two districts (Jackson Public Schools and Richmond Public Schools) are navigating their journey through the process to ensure positive student outcomes and a return on investment.
- Met with the Procurement Role-Alike group in April 2024 to further discuss Outcomes-Based Contracting taking place in Orange County Public Schools and the importance of procurement to work closely with academics from the onset to be effective in this work.
- Collaborated with external strategic partners to support urban districts with standards implementation, how to accelerate student learning, and the effective use and sunsetting of ESSER funds.
- Provided technical support to districts by reviewing and providing feedback on their curriculum guidance using the Council’s resource Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.
• Collaborated with leading mathematics, science, history/social science, and literacy organizations to surface and share perspectives from policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders on emerging issues and trends in teaching and student learning.
• Co-facilitated an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Maturity Matrix workshop in April 2024 with the CGCS Director of Management Services in Clark County Public Schools to assist them with creating a cross-functional team to begin drafting AI policy and guidelines.
• Coordinated with the CGCS General Counsel to present on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion national cases and implications to address district programs, initiatives and potential legislative impact.
• Created and disseminated the 2024 Instructional Materials Survey to all member districts to ascertain the materials being used in the core content areas from Birth through Grade 12. Results will be aggregated and de-identified in preparation for the 2024-2025 school year, where member districts will be able to connect and collaborate within networks related to the materials they are using.
• Created and disseminated a Mathematics Area of Interest Survey to transition the mathematics role-alike group to work-groups where a small group of district directors can engage in deep learning around a strategy or initiative and receive continuous feedback and support on implementation.
• Continued to meet and attend convenings with Gates Foundation, Hewlett Foundation and Wallace Foundation to align the Academic team’s work with respective grant goals.
• Represented CGCS at the following events:
  o Steering Committee for the National Academy of Education, NAEd project, Addressing Educational Inequities in the Wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic;
  o Virtual conference hosted by Just Equations and facilitated a session on disrupting tracking in mathematics;
  o Planning committee tasked with the design and implementation of a national Summit on Data Science in February 2025.
  o Presentation at the 2024 Bilingual Immigrant Refugee Conference, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support;
  o Panel discussion for the Reading League Summit on Foundational Literacy for English Language Learners; and
  o Presentation at the 2024 Chief Information Officers Annual Conference, Cross-Functional Teaming for Artificial Intelligence.

Annual Conferences and Taskforce Convenings

We will host the 21st Annual 2024 Curriculum, Research and Instructional Leaders Conference in Chicago, IL from July 9-11, 2024, at the Westin Michigan Avenue. The conference theme is From Reality to Results: Driving Improvements in Student Outcomes and will include a keynote address from former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Attendees will hear directly from the Harvard researcher who led the work on the Education Recovery Scorecard – a collection of data on student recovery from the pandemic. Dr. Tom Kane and Phil Daro will share lessons learned on a panel moderated by Dr. Frank Barnes, formerly from Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Conference plenary and role-alike sessions will address how urban districts are continuing to increase student learning and student outcomes by centering high-quality curriculum and instructional strategies, increased focus on positive school culture and climate, addressing unfinished learning, equitable practices in mathematics and English Language Arts, leveraging culturally responsive pedagogy, as well as the strategic use of data and research to inform district decision making. This conference will give participants an opportunity to connect, learn, and strategize across instructional roles in districts in creating and sustaining systems and structures for successful re-engagement of all students in safe and supporting learning environments where they are able to
thrive and experience academic success. Districts are encouraged to bring a team of instructional leaders including Chief Academic Officers, Chief Accountability or Performance Officers, Chiefs of Schools, Equity Officers, Curriculum Directors, Research and Accountability Directors, Principal Supervisors/Instructional Leaders, Principal Supervisors, Special Education Directors, Early Learning Directors, and SEL Directors.

The team also provided academic updates and presented newly released publications and trends in national and district data impacting student outcomes at the Achievement and Professional Development Task Force at the Annual Legislative Conference in March 2024. Additionally, Chicago Public Schools and Metro Nashville Public Schools presented on chronic absenteeism and addressing unfinished learning through acceleration.

**Strategic Support Team Visits**

CGCS strategic support team reviews were conducted in Puerto Rico Department of Education, Albuquerque Public Schools, Hawaii Department of Education, and Fresno Unified Public Schools. These reviews are focusing on implementation of organizational structures that will provide effective and efficient support to schools, high-quality curriculum guidance, special education programming/services, and strategic planning for effective monitoring and achievement of student outcome focused goals respectively.
**Tools, Resources, and Publications**

**Investing American Rescue Plan Funds Strategically and Effectively**

This document lays out a framework for the nation’s large city school systems to spend the new federal dollars strategically and effectively. It sets out overarching goals for the use of funds; articulates broad investment strategies; defines principles for the effective use of funds; and asks a series of questions that leaders and stakeholders should ask themselves as they embark on planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts. The document also draws on lessons learned from previous infusions of federal dollars and summarizes the main provisions of the federal legislation and agency guidance. [https://www.cges.org/Page/1283](https://www.cges.org/Page/1283)

Now updated with Interim Progress Assessment Guides that provide guidance and support to school districts in assessing the investments related to instructional materials and resources. Districts can use this document in the ongoing process of investment planning, implementation, and oversight to ensure that federal relief funds are allocated strategically and effectively. Here is the link to the guides, including Investing in Instructional Resources and Student Support Services: [https://www.cges.org/Page/1430](https://www.cges.org/Page/1430)

**Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures**

While this was released following school closures due to Covid-19, the academic team continues to provide guidance for implementing a districtwide approach to addressing unfinished learning in a just-in-time rather than a just-in-case model. The document emphasized that school districts would need to address the significant social and emotional toll the crisis has taken on children and widespread unfinished learning. We have always had students who entered a grade level with unfinished learning; however, our previous, well-intentioned attempts to use remediation programs had the impact of keeping students from engaging in grade-level content and resulted in their falling further behind their peers. We continue to highlight districts that are making progress in accelerating student learning and achievement in English Language Arts/Literacy and mathematics.

The document highlights key transition grades and illustrates how to focus on essential content for the grade. This approach provides the space and opportunities to address underlying unfinished learning just in time for all students to engage in grade level work, and acquire facility with language demands, skills, and concepts to accelerate their learning. To illustrate these approaches, the document provides examples of just-in-time scaffolds to accelerate student learning in mathematics and English language arts. [https://tinyurl.com/ya4g73f9](https://tinyurl.com/ya4g73f9)

**District Considerations for Universal Dyslexia Screening: Ensuring Appropriate Implementation and Instruction for English Learners**

Many states across the country now have policies requiring districts to implement universal dyslexia screeners and/or processes that identify students at risk for reading difficulties and dyslexia. In response to Council members request for more guidance on the utilization of universal dyslexia screeners with English learners, a brief was developed. The purpose of this brief is to (1) share potential challenges regarding the implementation of universal dyslexia screening for English learners (ELs) and (2) highlight considerations that ensure English learners are appropriately screened given their language development trajectory and the foundational literacy instruction ELs have received. Furthermore, the brief offers
considerations for the appropriate interpretation and use of screener results when districts are required to universally screen for dyslexia, including for students who have limited oral language development and little to no knowledge of English phonemes (e.g., when sound/letter correspondence differs between languages with different writing systems). This brief was released in November 2022. [https://www.cgcs.org/publications#35](https://www.cgcs.org/publications#35)

**Professional Development Framework**

This guide presents district instructional leaders and staff with a core set of criteria for what high-quality professional development entails. What makes this document different and useful is the focus on practical issues of district-level implementation in multiple teaching and learning environments. This is a guide designed by practitioners for practitioners, and it was important to the advisory committee and project team to develop a resource that provides clear, concrete guidance for district leaders based on our collective experience with best practices—and common pitfalls—in selecting, designing, implementing, and sustaining high quality professional development that not only represents what has traditionally worked in the past, but is nimble enough to meet the demands of the present.

The guide lays out a working definition of high-quality professional development, and then briefly reviews the research on what makes professional learning effective including lessons from the field. The framework then presents a set of preconditions and design principles of high-quality professional learning. These principles touch on the “why” (What is the purpose of professional development? How does it serve students, teachers, leaders, and the district as a whole?), the “what” (What knowledge or skills should professional development provide or focus on?), the “who” (Who are we targeting? Who should have access to professional learning opportunities, and who should be deployed to provide, support, and reinforce this professional learning?), and the “how” (How should professional development be structured, delivered, and evaluated to best improve instructional outcomes?). To illustrate these principles in action, the framework then provides a set of annotated exemplars from districts around the country. During SY 2023-24, the academic team will make explicit connections between this framework and the recently updated, *Supporting Excellence Framework* to support effective implementation of the curriculum. [https://www.cgcs.org/Page/660](https://www.cgcs.org/Page/660)

**Supporting Excellence Curriculum Framework, Second Edition**

During the CGCS 2023 Annual Fall Conference in San Diego, CA, the Council shared the second edition of the *Supporting Excellence Curriculum Framework* which includes additional areas of focus:

- Standards-aligned expectations for student work and writing.
- Instructional coherence within and across grade levels and learning environments.
- Culturally and linguistically relevant instruction.
- Current research and best practices on addressing unfinished learning, scaffolding, and support for diverse student populations (including English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, and gifted students).
- Addressing social-emotional learning and trauma.
- Expanded instructional use of technology.

The Curriculum Framework Advisory Committee comprised of Chief Academic Officers, curriculum leaders from the four core content areas, Bilingual Education, and Special Education from our member districts provided guidance and feedback during the revision process as well as national experts who served as technical advisors. [https://www.cgcs.org/curriculumframework](https://www.cgcs.org/curriculumframework)
Curriculum Quality Rubric

Based on the first edition of the Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum, the Academic Team developed a rubric members can use to evaluate the quality of their curriculum guidance materials. The rubric was reviewed by members of the Task Force on Achievement and Professional Development during the 2019 CGCS Legislative Conference and by an advisory committee of Chief Academic Officers, curriculum leaders in mathematics, English Language Arts, Bilingual education, and Special Education from our member districts to provide additional feedback and test the rubric using their curriculum documents. The first version of the Curriculum Quality Rubric: A Self-Assessment Tool for Districts ([https://tinyurl.com/t8xh85hs](https://tinyurl.com/t8xh85hs)) is now in use in curriculum reviews. The academic team started revising the Curriculum Quality Rubric associated with the Supporting Excellence Framework (Second Edition) focusing on the newly included key features first, followed by revising the existing sections. The anticipated completion date is September 2024.

Academic Key Performance Indicators

The Council developed academic key performance indicators (KPIs) in a process like the one used to develop operational KPIs. Using feedback from the Achievement and Professional Development Task Force, indicators were selected for their predictive ability and linkage to progress measures for the Minority Male Initiative pledge taken from a list of 200 potential KPIs.

Since SY 2016-17, the indicators have been refined and are part of the annual KPI data collection and reporting. This now enables districts to compare their performance with similar urban districts and to network to address shared challenges.

Resources from the Early Reading Accelerators Pilot

Recordings from a three-part webinar series from the Early Reading Accelerators Pilot in San Antonio Independent School district is available for district support and implementation of foundational skills instruction in the early grades. In this three-part series, hosted by the Council and Student Achievement Partners, experts and urban school district practitioners presented and discussed: (1) the latest findings about teaching foundational skills and making use of complex text as part of comprehensive literacy approach and (2) the pedagogy related to teaching foundational skills, including phonemic awareness to monolingual students and English Language Learners. The content of the recordings used the science of reading as the umbrella. The recordings for the series and additional resources are available using this link.

Important outcomes of the pilot were the increase in academic rigor and engagement in classrooms, more collaboration and cohesion on school campuses and within the district, instructional environments that became more culturally sustaining and visually rich, and re-ignition of the joy of teaching and learning literacy. This work continues to evolve as we partner with member districts in designing current early literacy plans. To learn more about the details of this pilot, use this link [https://achievethecore.org/page/3360/shifting-early-literacy-practices](https://achievethecore.org/page/3360/shifting-early-literacy-practices) to access the case study, Shifting Early Literacy Practices: The Story of an Early Reading Pilot in San Antonio Independent School District.

Evaluation Tool-Quality Review

CGCS developed the following tools to help its urban school systems and others implement college- and career-readiness standards. These materials continue to be referenced and used by CGCS member districts and staff.
The Grade-Level Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool–Quality Review (GIMET-QR), (English Language Arts). A set of grade-by-grade rubrics and a companion document that define the key features for reviewers to consider in examining the quality of instructional materials in English Language Arts K-12. In addition, the tools are useful in helping teachers decide where and how adopted classroom materials could be supplemented. The documents align with similar tools developed by the Council for English language learners. See below. (2015) http://www.cgcs.org/Page/483

While GIMET-QR was designed to support textbook materials adoption, feedback from Council members using the tool indicates that there are additional uses:

1) to assess alignment and identify gaps/omissions in current instructional materials;
2) to assess alignment of district scope and sequence, and the rigor and quality of instructional tasks and assessments; and
3) to provide professional development that builds capacity and a shared understanding of the CCSS in ELA/Literacy and/or Mathematics.

The Grade-Level Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool–Quality Review (GIMET-QR), (Mathematics). A set of grade-level rubrics and a companion document that define the key features for reviewers to consider in examining the quality of instructional materials in mathematics K-8. The key features include examples and guiding statements from the Illustrative Mathematics progression documents to clarify the criteria. (2015) http://www.cgecs.org/Page/475

While GIMET-QR was designed to support textbook materials adoption, feedback from Council members using the tool indicates that there are additional uses:

1) to assess alignment and identify gaps/omissions in current instructional materials;
2) to assess alignment of district scope and sequence, and the rigor and quality of instructional tasks and assessments; and
3) to provide professional development that builds capacity and a shared understanding of the CCSS in ELA/Literacy and/or Mathematics.

The Text Analysis Toolkit: The Council and Student Achievement Partners partnered to provide CGCS ELA/Literacy District Leaders opportunities engage in professional development of this toolkit. This toolkit aims to support educators in selecting and analyzing texts based on complexity and cultural relevance. The resources focus on tools for reflecting on the identities of educators and the students they serve, analyzing texts with multiple lenses, and considering implications for use in their specific context. https://achievethecore.org/page/3369/text-analysis-toolkit


Re-envisioning English Language Arts and English Language Development for English Language Learners. A framework for acquiring English and attaining content mastery across the grades in an era when new college- and career-readiness standards require more reading in all subject areas. (2014, 2017) [http://tinyurl.com/yasg9xc4](http://tinyurl.com/yasg9xc4)

A Framework for Re-envisioning Mathematics Instruction for English Language Learners. A guide for looking at the interdependence of language and mathematics to assist students with the use of academic language in acquiring a deep conceptual understanding of mathematics and applying mathematics in real world problems. (2016) [http://tinyurl.com/y7flpyoz](http://tinyurl.com/y7flpyoz)

Indicators of Success: A Guide for Assessing District Level Implementation of College and Career-Readiness Standards. A set of indicators districts might use to track their implementation of college- and career-readiness standards. Indicators are divided into seven sections, including: vision and goal setting, resource allocation, parent and community outreach, curriculum, instruction, professional development, assessment, and student data. Each section provides descriptions of what “on track” or “off track” might look like, along with examples of evidence to look at in determining effective implementation. (2016) [http://tinyurl.com/hh6kesd](http://tinyurl.com/hh6kesd)

Calendar of Questions. A series of questions about ongoing implementation of college- and career-readiness standards, arranged by month, focusing on aspects of implementation for staff roles at various levels of the district, as well as milestones for parents and students. (2013) These types of questions are still valid and can be customized for any districtwide project implementation. The Academic Department will be reviewing and updating this document with an anticipated completion date of December 2024. [http://cgcs.org/Page/409](http://cgcs.org/Page/409)
CURRICULUM, RESEARCH, AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS MEETING
21st ANNUAL

Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference

Agenda Book

July 9-12, 2024

Chicago, IL
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 78 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:
Marcia Andrews, Board Member
Palm Beach County School District

Chair-Elect:
Sonja Brookins Santelises, CEO
Baltimore City Public Schools

Secretary-Treasurer:
Valerie Davis, Board Member
Fresno Unified School District

Immediate Past-Chair:
Kelly Gonez, Board Member
Los Angeles Unified School District

Executive Director:
Ray Hart
Council of the Great City Schools
The Council of the Great City Schools is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Composed of 78 large city school districts, its mission is to promote the cause of urban schools and to advocate for inner-city students through legislation, research 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.

Total number of students served by Council member district schools: 7.84 million

Student Enrollment Characteristics:
- 44% - Hispanic
- 26% - African American
- 18% - White
- 7% - Asian/Pacific Islander
- 1% - Alaskan/Native American
- 17% - English Language Learners
- 70% - Eligible for free/reduced price lunch
- 17% - Students with Individualized Education Programs

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

School districts eligible for membership must be located in cities with populations of 250,000 or more and student enrollments of 35,000 or more. School districts located in the largest city of many states are also eligible for membership, regardless of size.
## Agenda

### Tuesday, July 9
- **7:30 am**: Breakfast on your own
- **8:00 am**: Registration (7:30 am – 4:00 pm)
- **9:00 am**: Keynote Speaker & Cross-District Reflection Time (8:45 am – 9:45 am)
- **11:30 am**: Registration (11:00 am – 4:00 pm)
- **12:00 pm**: Welcome Remarks & Lunch (12:00 pm – 12:45 pm)
- **2:00 pm**: Break 2:15 pm - 2:30 pm
- **5:00 pm**: On-site Reception (5:00 pm – 6:30 pm)

### Wednesday, July 10
- **7:30 am**: Breakfast (8:00 am – 8:45 am)
- **8:00 am**: Registration (7:30 am – 4:00 pm)
- **9:00 am**: District-Led Presentations (9:00 am – 11:20 am)
- **11:00 am**: Registration (11:00 am – 4:00 pm)
- **12:00 pm**: Lunch (12:00 pm – 1:00 pm)
- **2:00 pm**: District-Led Panel: A Comprehensive Approach to Student Engagement (2:00 pm – 2:45 pm)
- **4:00 pm**: District-Led Presentations (3:00 pm – 5:00 pm)

### Thursday, July 11
- **7:30 am**: Breakfast (8:00 am – 8:45 am)
- **8:00 am**: Registration (7:30 am – 4:00 pm)
- **9:00 am**: Cross-District Reflection Time (11:00 am – 11:25 am)
- **11:00 am**: Networking 11:20 am – 12:00 pm
- **12:00 pm**: Welcome Remarks & Lunch (12:00 pm – 12:45 pm)
- **2:00 pm**: Keynote Speaker & Cross-District Reflection Time (1:30 pm – 3:00 pm)

### Friday, July 12
- **7:30 am**: Breakfast (8:00 am – 8:45 am)
- **8:00 am**: Registration (7:30 am – 4:00 pm)
- **9:00 am**: Artificial Intelligence (AI) Session (8:45 am – 11:00 am)
- **11:00 am**: Cross-District Reflection Time (11:00 am – 11:25 am)
- **12:00 pm**: Lunch: Grab & Go (11:30 am – 12:00 pm)
- **2:00 pm**: Keynote Speaker & Cross-District Reflection Time (1:30 pm – 3:00 pm)
- **5:00 pm**: On Your Own

**End of Conference**

*See you next year!*
## Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Tuesday, July 9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:00 am – 4:00 pm</td>
<td>Conference Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 – 12:45 pm</td>
<td><strong>Lunch (Michigan Ballroom)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Welcome and Opening Remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Akisha Osei Sarfo, PhD, Director of Research, Council of the Great City Schools</td>
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<td>- Nicole M. Mancini, EdD, Chief of Academics, Council of the Great City Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:45 – 12:50 pm</td>
<td>Transition</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:50 – 1:15 pm</td>
<td><strong>Opening Kickoff &amp; Ice Breaker (Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)</strong></td>
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<td>Farah Assiraj, Chief of Teaching and Learning, Council of the Great City Schools</td>
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<td>1:15 – 2:15 pm</td>
<td><strong>Math Equity Panel (Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)</strong></td>
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<td>During this facilitated panel, we will hear from district leaders from New York City Public Schools and East Baton Rouge public schools as they share their experiences and achievements in implementing the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Research and Development Partnership for Math Equity.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Nicole Williams, Executive Director, STEM, NYC Public Schools</td>
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<td>- Beth Wehner, Senior Director for Math &amp; Science, NYC Public Schools</td>
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<td>- Lauren Goldenberg, PhD, Senior Director, Research &amp; Evaluation, NYC Public Schools</td>
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<td>- Justin Robicheaux, Instructional Data Coordinator/Curriculum Director, East Baton Rouge Parish Public Schools</td>
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<td>- Suzanne Navo, Coordinator of Grants, East Baton Rouge Parish Public Schools</td>
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<td>- Stacey Terrio, Research Associate, Louisiana State University – Social Research &amp; Evaluation Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:15 – 2:30 pm</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
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<td>2:30 – 3:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Role-Alike Sessions</strong></td>
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<td>Curriculum, Chiefs of Schools, Principal Supervisors, Chief Academic Officers, SPED, Early Learning, and Instructional Leaders Role-Alike Session (Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)</td>
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<td>Equity + Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (SEL + MH + RJ) Leaders Role-Alike Session (Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Leaders connect, build, and network</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Research Leaders Role-Alike Session (Lincoln Park Room)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Research Director icebreaker and networking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Tuesday, July 9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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</table>
| 3:00 – 4:00 pm | **Role-Alike Sessions**  
Curriculum, Chiefs of Schools, Principal Supervisors, Chief Academic Officers, SPED, Early Learning, Instructional Leaders Role-Alike Session (Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)  
Equity + Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (SEL + MH + RJ) Leaders Role-Alike Session (Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)  
“Equity Based Multi-Tiered Systems of Support: Strategic Implementation, Accountability and Sustainability”  
– Farah Assiraj, Chief of Teaching and Learning, Council of the Great City Schools  
– Toni DeMello, MTSS District Manager, Chicago Public Schools  
**Research Leaders Role-Alike Session** (Lincoln Park Room)  
Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research in School Districts  
“Evaluating Summer Programming in Philadelphia: Turning Insights into Action”  
– Tonya Wolford, PhD, Chief of District Evaluation, Research, and Accountability, School District of Philadelphia  
“Summer 305: Participation, Teacher Perception, and Academic Impact”  
– Vanessa Gonzalez-Hernandez, PhD, Director Research Services-Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis, Miami-Dade County Public Schools  |
| 4:00 – 5:00 pm | **Role-Alike Sessions**  
Curriculum, Chiefs of Schools, Principal Supervisors, Chief Academic Officers, SPED, Early Learning, and Instructional Leaders Role-Alike Session (Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)  
Revising the **Supporting Excellence Curriculum Framework Rubric**: A Close Look  
– Interactive presentation and discussion  
**Research Leaders Role-Alike Session** (Lincoln Park Room)  
High Impact and Evidence-Building Research Designs  
“Summer Programming to Recover Instructional Time Lost to COVID-19: Quasi-Experimental Evidence from Summer 2022”  
– Nicholas D’Amico, Ph.D., Executive Director of School Performance, Cleveland Metropolitan School District  
– Eric Jett, Data Analyst, Cleveland Metropolitan School District  |
| 5:30 – 6:30 pm | **Welcome Reception** |
## Agenda

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<td>Breakfast <em>(Michigan Ballroom)</em></td>
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<td>8:45 – 9:50 am</td>
<td><strong>Keynote Speaker and Cross-District Reflection Time</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>(Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)</em></td>
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<td><strong>Welcome Remarks</strong>&lt;br&gt;– Bogdana Chkoumbova, Chief Education Officer, Chicago Public Schools</td>
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<td><strong>Introduction of Speaker</strong>&lt;br&gt;– Ray Hart, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Council of the Great City Schools</td>
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<td><strong>Speaker</strong>&lt;br&gt;– Arne Duncan, Managing Partner, Emerson Collective, Former U.S. Secretary of Education</td>
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<td><strong>– Dr. Stacey Gray Akyea, Executive Chief, Equity, Strategy &amp; Innovation, St. Paul Public Schools (Moderator)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:50 – 10:00 am</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 11:00 am</td>
<td><strong>Role-Alike Sessions</strong>&lt;br&gt;Curriculum, Chiefs of Schools, Principal Supervisors, Chief Academic Officers, SPED, Early Learning, and Instructional Leaders Role-Alike Session&lt;br&gt;<em>(Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)</em>&lt;br&gt;Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Cultivating Joy, and Student Agency in Mathematics&lt;br&gt;(PK-12)&lt;br&gt;– CGCS Academic Team; Aly Martinez and Jennie Beltramini, Student Achievement Partners (SAP)</td>
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<td><strong>Research Leaders Role-Alike Session</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>(Lincoln Park Room)</em>&lt;br&gt;Subtractive Value: Leveraging Analytics to Help Your Agency Do Less, Better&lt;br&gt;– Dave Hersh, Ph.D., CEO, In Tandem</td>
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While many of us appreciate the value of leveraging analytics to help our agencies make better decisions using return on investment (ROI), most of us miss the role of analytics in identifying what are often the largest ROI decisions an agency can make. ROI guides us by highlighting that as costs rise, so must impact. Yet we routinely fail to recognize a critical implication of this: something with zero or negative cost needs very little impact to have a large ROI. This is a key insight of subtractive value. In a world where everyone is overwhelmed (Do any of us work in organizations where staff are sitting around with tons of excess capacity?), using analytics to unlock subtractive value could be the single most impactful thing we can do for our agencies. In this session, you will engage in a problem-solving exercise designed to help you explore the magic of subtraction. Along the way, we will delve into some of the behavioral insights underlying humans' tendency to miss opportunities to subtract. Hopefully you'll come away with an appreciation for how
## Agenda

**Wednesday, July 10th**

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<td><strong>Research Leaders Role-Alike Session</strong> (Lincoln Park Room) &lt;br&gt;Make it Worth Your Time: Maximizing External Partnerships to Advance School District Priorities&lt;br&gt; – Matt Linick, Ph.D., Chief Research and Evaluation Officer, McRel International&lt;br&gt; <em>In this session, we will explore the benefits and challenges of partnering with external research organizations.</em></td>
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<td>12:00 – 1:00</td>
<td><strong>Lunch (Michigan Ballroom)</strong></td>
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<td>1:00 – 2:00</td>
<td><strong>Keynote Speaker and Cross-District Reflection Time</strong> &lt;br&gt;(Great Lakes Grand Ballroom) &lt;br&gt;<strong>Keynote Speaker</strong> &lt;br&gt;– Janice Jackson, Chief Executive Officer of Hope Chicago, Former CEO of Chicago Public Schools</td>
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<td><strong>Cross-District Reflection Time</strong></td>
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<td>2:00 – 2:45</td>
<td><strong>District-Led Panel</strong> &lt;br&gt;(Great Lakes Grand Ballroom) &lt;br&gt;A Comprehensive Approach to Student Engagement &lt;br&gt;“Dallas ISD Reimagining Student Behavior Management”&lt;br&gt; – Sherry Christian, Deputy Chief of Staff, Dallas ISD &lt;br&gt;– Keisha Crowder-Davis, Executive Director of Student Engagement and Support, Dallas ISD</td>
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<td>“Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and SEL Impact on Student Engagement”&lt;br&gt; – Jusmar Maness, Chief Academic Officer, Guilford County Schools</td>
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<td>– Kimberly Steinke, Chief of Exceptional Children and Student Services, Guilford County Schools</td>
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<td>2:45 – 3:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 – 5:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>District-Led Presentations (See Breakout Sessions Chart)</strong></td>
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| 5:00 – 6:00 pm | **Cocktail Hour**  
Sponsored by College Board                                                      |

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<tr>
<td>11:20 am – 12:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Networking on Your Own</strong></td>
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</table>
| 12:00 – 1:30 pm | **Awards Luncheon (Michigan Ballroom)**  
Special Presentation of Awards  
Curriculum Award Sponsored by Curriculum Associates  
Research Team Award Sponsored by NWEA  
Equity Leader Award Sponsored by Amplify  
Lighthouse Award Sponsored by Bluum |
| 1:35 – 3:00 pm | **Keynote Speaker Panel and Cross-District Reflection Time**  
(Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)  
Speakers  
– Thomas Kane, Walter H. Gale Professor of Education and Economics at Harvard University  
– Frank Barnes, Faculty Director of the Director of Education Leadership Program and Senior Lecturer on Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education  
– Phil Daro, Leading Mathematics Expert, Member of the Executive Committee of the International Society for Design and Development in Education  
Cross-District Reflection Time |
| 3:00 – 4:00 pm | **Role-Alike Sessions**  
Curriculum, Chiefs of Schools, Principal Supervisors, Chief Academic Officers, SPED, Early Learning, and Instructional Leaders Role-Alike Session  
(Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)  
Cultivating Joy and Efficacy in Secondary Literacy (Part 1)  
– Facilitated by Carey Swanson and Adrienne Williams (SAP)  
– Panel Q and A with Dr. Robin Hall, Chief of Schools, CGCS and Dr. Nyshawana Francis-Thompson, Chief of Curriculum and Instruction, The School District of Philadelphia |
## Agenda

### Thursday, July 11th

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<tr>
<td><strong>Research Leaders Role-Alike Session</strong> <em>(Lincoln Park Room)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>Insights from Pandemic Research and Planning Future Studies</em>&lt;br&gt;“The Impact of COVID-19 on Third Grade Reading Proficiency”&lt;br&gt;– Sonya T. Stephens, Ph.D., Chief Performance Officer, Guilford County Schools&lt;br&gt;– Enkhnasan Enkhbold, Data Strategist, Guilford County Schools&lt;br&gt;– Jeff Uhlenberg, Director of Alternative Assessments, Guilford County Schools</td>
<td>Reflection &amp; Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Equity + Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (SEL + MH + RJ) Leaders Role-Alike Session</strong> <em>(Washington Park 2 Room)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>Use of Problem of Practice Protocol by Topic</em></td>
<td><strong>Role-Alike Sessions</strong>&lt;br&gt;Curriculum, Chiefs of Schools, Principal Supervisors, Chief Academic Officers, SPED, Early Learning, and Instructional Leaders Role-Alike Session <em>(Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>Cultivating Joy and Efficacy in Secondary Literacy (Part 2)</em>&lt;br&gt;– Facilitated by Carey Swanson and Adrienne Williams (SAP)&lt;br&gt;– Panel Q and A with Dr. Robin Hall, Chief of Schools, CGCS and Dr. Nyshawana Francis-Thompson, Chief of Curriculum and Instruction, The School District of Philadelphia</td>
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<td>4:00 – 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Night on your own</td>
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### Friday, July 12th

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 – 8:45 am</td>
<td>Breakfast <em>(Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:45 – 11:25 am</td>
<td>Artificial Intelligence (AI) Session <em>(Great Lakes Grand Ballroom)</em></td>
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### Agenda

**21st Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference**  
**July 9 to July 12, 2024 – Westin Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL**

#### Friday, July 12th

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<tr>
<td>11:25 – 11:30 am</td>
<td>Cross-District Reflection Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 am – 12:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch (Grab and Go)</td>
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This session will provide an overview of the rapid advances in Artificial Intelligence as it relates to multiple aspects of the educational system as a cross-functional team, utilizing a “horizontal thinking” approach.

- **Dr. Nicole M. Mancini**, Chief of Academics, Council of the Great City Schools
- **Mary Beck**, Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Chicago Public Schools
- **Norm Fleming**, Chief Information Officer, Chicago Public Schools
- **Stephanie Melville**, IES Data Science Fellow, U.S. Department of Education
- **Evan Shieh**, AI Researcher and Executive Director, Young Data Scientists

**Closing Remarks**
## 21st Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference
July 9 to July 12, 2024 – Westin Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL

### Agenda

#### District-Led Breakout Sessions
**Wednesday July 10 @ 3:00 pm**

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<tr>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Wednesday July 10 @ 3:00 pm</th>
<th>Session Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td><strong>Session 1:</strong> Data Literacy in EVERY PreK-12 Classroom? A Joyous and Necessary Revolution! San Diego Unified School District</td>
<td>Data are everywhere, and many educators report feeling woefully unprepared to address it and teach about digital safety in their classes. This interactive session will demonstrate just how easy it is to infuse data literacy (and data science!) into any classroom, irrespective of course content, curriculum, instructional materials, or textbook adoption. The presenter will demonstrate ways to enhance your lessons using free and easily accessible digital tools that help students meaningfully engage with data. Whether you teach ELA, STEM, VAPA, or World Language, we can all benefit from utilizing data and data visualizations in our classrooms.</td>
<td><strong>Stephanie Melville</strong>, IES Data Science Fellow, U.S. Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huron (Panel)</td>
<td><strong>Session 2</strong> Unlocking Potential: The MTSS Pathway for English Learners Chicago Public Schools</td>
<td>This session will provide participants and opportunity to see the connection between targeted universalism and an equity based MTSS framework. Discussion time will be provided to deepen understanding regarding the alignment as well as best practice in implementation.</td>
<td><strong>Toni DeMello</strong>, MTSS District Manager</td>
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<td><strong>Session 2</strong> Engaging Youth Voices to Promote SEL and Academic Success: Black and Latino Male Achievement Milwaukee Public Schools/ Imagine Learning</td>
<td>This presentation centers on how Chicago Public Schools has established a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) throughout the district and incorporated the additional level of complexity; determining the most appropriate supports for our English Learners (ELs). As we know, ELs encompass a diverse set of needs that may include academic support, linguistic support, SEL support, or a combination of all three.</td>
<td><strong>Will Luedtke</strong>, Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erie</td>
<td><strong>Session 3:</strong> Making Meaning: Targeted Universalism and Equity Based MTSS Chicago Public Schools</td>
<td>In this session, we use student voice to influence the creation of a visionary blueprint for fostering inclusive Black and Latino Male Achievement through in schools. We will briefly discuss innovative strategies and engage in meaningful conversations that empower individuals to excel; breaking down barriers and promoting inclusivity in diverse settings. This session aims to inspire positive change by harnessing the power of dialogue to shape a future where every male has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to a more inclusive society.</td>
<td><strong>Monica Zaragoza</strong>, CPS District MTSS Specialist</td>
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<td><strong>Session 3:</strong> Building the Infrastructure and Habits to Level Up Instruction Detroit Public Schools/ Leading Educators</td>
<td>This living case study session will explore how Detroit Public Schools is working to grow instructional leadership, expand curriculum-specific coaching, and leverage job-embedded professional learning to shift instructional practice at scale. Participants will learn how the district has worked with Leading Educators to sequence coherent instructional efforts, including vision setting, implementation of new high-quality instructional materials, professional learning design, and coaching for instructional leaders to set up educators and students for greater success.</td>
<td><strong>Leenet Campbell-Williams</strong>, Chief Academic Officer, <strong>M. Keli Swearingen</strong>, PhD, Senior Director of Midwest Programming, Leading Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln Park</td>
<td><strong>Session 4:</strong></td>
<td>In this session, participants will explore Denver Public Schools’ data dashboard, School Vitals, and learn how DPS integrated district and school performance targets</td>
<td><strong>Danielle Johnson</strong>,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington Park 1</td>
<td><strong>Session 5:</strong> Enacting the Guilford Country Strategic Direction through the GCS Math Teacher Leader Cohort (TLC)</td>
<td>Jusmar Maness, Chief Academic Officer</td>
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<td><em>Guilford County Schools</em></td>
<td>Dr. Emily Hare, Director of K-12 Mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington Park 2</td>
<td><strong>Session 6:</strong> Systems Don’t Change Until People Do</td>
<td>Dr. Tracey L. Durant, Senior Executive Director</td>
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<td><em>Baltimore City Public Schools</em></td>
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**District-Led Breakout Sessions**  
**Wednesday July 10 @ 4:00 pm**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td><strong>Session 7:</strong> NYC READS: Large Scale Implementation of Science Based Literacy Instruction</td>
<td>Jason Borges, Executive Director of Literacy and Academic Intervention Services</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>New York City Department of Education</em></td>
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### 21st Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference
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| Huron      |                             | Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBRPSS) embarks on groundbreaking research initiatives to address the persistent learning disparities in mathematics among children of color and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Over the span of three years, our comprehensive math equity grant endeavors to dissect the multifaceted factors influencing students' mathematical proficiency, particularly emphasizing the integration of digital supplementary programs. Additionally, our latest grant delves into the implementation of generative AI tools to bolster teachers' capacity in devising tailored small-group differentiated instruction (DI) activities and lessons. Leveraging a cutting-edge generative AI educational platform, educators are empowered to craft personalized lesson plans catering to the diverse academic needs of students, with a specific focus on Black, Latino, and economically disadvantaged populations. Through prioritizing differentiation, we are steadfastly committed to advancing educational equity for all. The objective of this presentation is to explore research findings, exchange insights on effective practices within a Research Practice-Partnership (RPP), and examine future directions.                                                                                                                                      | • Suzanne Navo,  
Coordinator of Grants  
• Justin Robicheaux,  
Instructional Data Coordinator |
| Erie       |                             | We know coherence matters for instruction- but how do we create coherence and build shared values across the wide range of roles encompassed in the district? Guilford County Schools is in the midst of working towards an answer to this question as the Teaching and Learning and Equity Departments work to establish a collective and collaborative vision of and actions toward High-Quality, Equitable Learning across departments that are too often siloed. In this session, district academic leaders will share the work-in-progress in Guilford County. They will be joined by Carey Swanson and Jennie Beltramini from Student Achievement Partners to share how SAP's conception of equitable and essential (e2) instruction is supporting systems-level change in the district. | • Jusmar Maness,  
Chief Academic Officer  
• Karen Ellis,  
Executive Director of Academics  
• Carey Swanson,  
Director of Literacy, SAP  
• Jennie Beltramini,  
Director of Math, SAP |
| Lincoln Park |                             | This session will present the multiple components of CPS's targeted universalism approach to expanding access and equity to Middle Grades Algebra. Participants will walk away with an in-depth understanding of Chicago’s multi-faceted work around middle grades algebra, supporting the district’s priorities around equity and increased student participation in advanced and college-level math courses prior to graduation. We will share about existing algebra programs in our city and our work to expand opportunity for more teachers, schools, and students:  
- District-funded coursework for teachers at our partner university  
- Clear promotion criteria to support equitable student placement in                                                                                                                                   | • Laura Margaret Burbach,  
Math Programs Manager  
• Dr. Corey Morrison,  
Math Director |
## Agenda

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<td><strong>Washington Park 1</strong></td>
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<td>high school - Expanded course access through virtual Algebra Access Hubs initiative - Teacher professional learning around student-centered instruction - Student enrichment and professional development via Summer of Algebra program</td>
<td>• Tanya Campos, Senior Director Equity &amp; Engagement • Heather Cowan, Senior Director Equal Opportunity Services/Title IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 11:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Leveraging Compliance to Create Equitable Environments</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Albuquerque Public Schools</strong>&lt;br&gt;It has not been the norm for K-12 Equity Departments and Civil Rights Departments to leverage each other’s work to progress work around the equity mission. Even though these departments have fundamentally had the same goals in a K-12 school system, they typically exist as separate entities and are effectively siloed. For the past six years, the Civil Rights Department in Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) has been a department within the Equity Division. In this time, APS has begun to align traditional compliance work; district policies, procedures and complaints of discrimination and harassment, to work that has been typically part of Equity; training, professional development, community and family engagement, and personnel supports. This presentation will provide you tools and best practices to align your Equity and Compliance Departments, even if they are not in the same division. We will interpret compliance language into Equity themes and vice versa, which will allow you to demonstrate to risk management, upper leadership, legal, and others why Equity’s work is not only aligned, but intertwined with compliance. We will give you an overview of the federal laws you can use to leverage your Equity mission and goals.</td>
<td>• Dr. Effie McMillian • Dr. Raketa Ouedraogo-Thomas</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Washington Park 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Session 12:</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Operationalizing Equity in School Systems: Crafting a Blueprint for Transformation</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools</strong>&lt;br&gt;In our dynamic educational landscape, the imperative to foster equity in school systems has never been more pressing. Therefore, during this session, we will address the urgency by presenting a comprehensive approach to develop a robust blueprint or framework. This tool will serve as a guide equitable decision-making at every level of the organization.</td>
<td>• Dr. Effie McMillian • Dr. Raketa Ouedraogo-Thomas</td>
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## District-Led Breakout Sessions
### Thursday July 11 @ 9:00 am

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<tr>
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| Ontario      | Session 13: Selecting, Implementing and Monitoring High Quality Instructional Materials to Increase Students’ Achievement | - Jusmar Maness, Chief Academic Officer  
- Karen Ellis, Executive Director of Academics |
| Huron (Panel) | Academic Recovery Academy Summer 2023 Program Evaluation: Amplifying and Capturing Stakeholder Voice to Measure Program Success | - Dr. Monique O'Bryant, Director of Research and Evaluation  
- Dr. Rashida Askia, Sr. Research Associate  
- Erin Kruger, Sr. Research Associate, |
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| Erie | High-dosage tutoring has emerged as a powerful tool for addressing learning loss and accelerating student achievement. This panel brings together researchers from the University of Chicago Education Lab alongside district leaders to discuss the evidence supporting high-dosage tutoring, key design principles for effective implementation, and strategies for scaling and sustaining these programs. Panelists will share insights from randomized control trials on tutoring efficacy, highlight ambitious efforts to expand access to quality tutoring nationwide, and explore how districts can adapt research-based models to meet their unique needs. Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of the potential of high-impact tutoring and practical strategies for developing tutoring initiatives in their own contexts. | • Peter Leonard, Executive Director, Student Assessment & MTSS  
• Alexandria Tabasso, Manager of Implementation, University of Chicago Education Lab |
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<td>Lincoln Park</td>
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<td>to Chicago Public School students’ post-pandemic reading recovery. Participants will gain an understanding of the multi-pronged, research-based CPS PK-12 Vision for Advanced Literacy and the aligned, strategic investments CPS has made to drive learning acceleration prior to, and emerging from, the pandemic.</td>
<td>Nancy Waymack, Director of Partnerships &amp; Policy, SCALE, Stanford University, Kara Hamilton, Tutoring Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Park 1</td>
<td>Session 16: High-Impact Research on High-Impact Tutoring in Guilford County Schools</td>
<td>This session will focus on using research of high-impact tutoring to inform district practices and policies. Guilford County Schools has been working with Stanford University for three years to support their high-impact tutoring with research. We’ll focus on how Guilford County Schools partnered with the National Student Support Accelerator at Stanford University to identify research projects related to high-impact tutoring, execute a study (Tips for Tutors), and use the results to inform the district policies and practices going forward. We’ll discuss the guardrails created by district and state policy and ways to design research projects that respect them while generating the information needed to inform decisions.</td>
<td>Kelly Rivers, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, Terra Baker, Director of Early Childhood Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington Park 2</td>
<td>Session 17: Maximizing Literacy Outcomes for our Earliest Learners</td>
<td>Columbus City Schools has outlined 3 strategies to increase literacy achievement for students even before they enter our doors as exciting new Kindergartners! The strategies for our earliest learners are: Professional Development rooted in evidence-based instruction for each teacher of literacy focused on all critical areas of literacy including: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing. Clarity in instruction at each tier for each of these areas to ensure our children are best equipped for all of the opportunities available before them. Quality literacy resources and supports for families and community partners aligned to the Science of Reading. Come learn about the District’s 5-star rated program and our efforts to establish universal Pre-Kindergarten!</td>
<td>James Arangio, Math Instructional Lead, Scott Wolfson, Math Instructional Lead</td>
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<td>adoption of high-quality instructional materials in their districts and reflect upon the change management processes that worked or did not work for their communities. The NYCPS Math Shifts support the movement away from mathematics as a series of established procedures that must be demonstrated and explained, to mathematics as a discoverable, meaningful, and connected collection of big ideas and disciplinary practices. Implementing these shifts will require that both teachers and students have ample time and effective structures for collaboration and collective sensemaking. These shifts will help principals and teachers across the city provide equitable math instruction to all NYCPS students as they implement new core curriculum options in math.</td>
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### District-Led Breakout Sessions

**Thursday July 11 @ 10:20 am**

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<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
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<td>Many large urban districts have adopted a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework in order to take a data-driven and equitable approach to proactively meet the needs of all students. Yet, many schools feel like they are in emergency-responder mode when it comes to supporting students' social-emotional and behavioral health needs. With so many of our students in need of urgent support, it can seem like there is no space to get ahead of the problem and put proactive systems in place. We’ve been there! But even in the toughest circumstances, there are practical steps you can take over time to shift mindsets and move past a reactionary approach. In this session, we will share real-life examples and resources to help you determine priorities and take proactive steps to build more positive behaviors and school culture across your district by leveraging MTSS structures that incorporate a holistic student support approach.</td>
<td>• Tara Sukaskas, School Psychologist Specialist • Elisy Blanco-Mercado, Social Work Specialist • Eva Dundas, Chief Academic Officer, Branching Minds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Huron</td>
<td>Session 19: Shifting from Reaction to Action: Building Proactive Student SEL and Behavioral Health Support through MTSS</td>
<td>Learn how the Guilford County Math Department juggles literature from implementation science and mathematics education research to create a strong research-to-practice pipeline that is bi-directional and values knowledge and perspectives from multiple disciplines and stakeholders. Participants will see an example of how the work of the math department is shifting historical narratives to align to high-quality and equitable mathematics instruction and engage in collaborative ideating around connections to their own context.</td>
<td>• Jusmar Rodriguez Maness, Chief Academic Officer • Dr. Emily Hare, Director of K-12 Mathematics, Guilford County Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Huron</td>
<td>Session 20: Leading Convergence: The Union of Implementation Science, Math Ed Research, and the Real-Life Practice of District and Schools</td>
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| Erie         | Thursday July 11 @ 10:20 am | **Session 21:** Creating Systemic Access to Excellence  
*Chicago Public Schools/ThinkCERCA*  
Chicago Public Schools (CPS) will showcase CPS’s innovative strategies for post-pandemic recovery and achieving equitable education. They will emphasize CPS’s dedication to delivering high-quality education through academic progress, operational excellence, and trust-building. Key initiatives include utilizing data for informed decision-making, focusing on student-centered instruction, expanding dual credit opportunities, and adopting a culturally relevant digital curriculum. These efforts aim to enhance student identity, community engagement, and success in college, career, and civic life.  
• Bogdana Chkoumbova, Chief Education Officer  
• Eileen Murphy, CEO and Founder, ThinkCERCA |
| Lincoln Park | Thursday July 11 @ 10:20 am | **Session 22:** Supporting the Academic Growth of Students with Disabilities: Evidence-Based Practices and Programs to Increase Student Achievement  
*Guilford County Schools*  
Effective literacy and math instruction grounded in the science of reading and math is essential to improving outcomes for our students with disabilities. To ensure equitable access to high-quality instruction, our district has invested in multiple programs that have an explicit scope and sequence and emphasize building foundational skills for our students. This presentation will discuss the impact that the intentional use/training of evidence-based programs and practices has had on students with disabilities. Learn about the “why” behind using evidence-based practices and programs and providing resources that educators can use to increase access for students to the general curriculum in both literacy and math.  
• Dr. Kimberly Steinke, Chief Exceptional Children and Student Services Officer  
• Tara Santiago, Senior Executive Director, Exceptional Children Services |
| Washington Park 1 | Thursday July 11 @ 10:20 am | **Session 23:** Empowering Employee Engagement: Omaha Public Schools’ Journey with Qualtrics  
*Omaha Public Schools/Qualtrics*  
Omaha Public Schools (OPS), the largest district in Nebraska, recognized the pressing need to revitalize its employee experience. Faced with the challenges of evolving organizational demands, OPS embarked on a transformative journey to improve key aspects of its employee lifecycle management. Partnering with Qualtrics, they set out to implement impactful strategies designed to enhance onboarding, engagement, and overall support for their staff.  
Information utilization played a pivotal role in driving organizational adoption of these new practices. By harnessing detailed insights from employee feedback and operational data, OPS was able to enhance training programs, offer high-level support, and identify potential turnover intentions proactively. This data-driven approach enabled the district to make informed decisions, optimize resource allocation, and improve overall employee satisfaction and retention.  
Join this session to explore how OPS and Qualtrics collaborated to transform the employee experience. Discover actionable insights and practical tools to enhance your own organization’s employee lifecycle management, drive meaningful improvements, and foster a thriving, engaged workforce.  
• Jace Dallman - Research Data Scientist, Research Division  
• Scott SchmidtBonne - Executive Director, Research Division,  
• Brett Callahan - K-12 Enterprise Team Lead, Qualtrics |
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A pioneer in K–12 education since 2000, Amplify is leading the way in next-generation curriculum and formative assessment. Our captivating core and supplemental programs in ELA, math, and science engage all students in rigorous learning and inspire them to think deeply, creatively, and for themselves. Our formative assessment products turn data into practical instructional support to help students at every skill level build a strong foundation in early reading and math.

Bluum

At Bluum, everything we do is driven by our vision to create a future where everyone has access to a great education. By empowering educators and students with technology, we’re creating a fast track to a world where every child is equipped with the knowledge to reach their highest potential. Within every educator, there is a desire to leave the world a better place. We firmly believe teachers inspire human potential, cultivating curiosity and confidence while giving students the opportunity to create a better future. This creates a ripple effect that can transform generations. Together, we can expand every child’s ability to change the world for the better.

Branching Minds

Branching Minds is a highly respected K-12 services and technology company that leverages the learning sciences and technology to help districts effectively personalize learning through enhancements to their MTSS/RTI practice. Having worked with hundreds of districts across the country, we bring deep expertise in learning sciences, data management and analysis, software design, coaching, and collaboration. Combined with our extensive toolkit of resources, PD, and technology, we provide a system-level solution. We are more than a service or a software provider, we are partners who will deliver sustainable results for educators, and a path to success for every learner.
Curriculum Associates was founded by four passionate educators with a mission to make classrooms better places for teachers and students. Since then, we’ve partnered with educators to develop instructional and diagnostic solutions like i-Ready that support you as you help every learner grow to their personal best.

Discovery Education is the worldwide edtech leader whose state-of-the-art digital platform supports learning wherever it takes place. Discovery Education partners with districts, states, and trusted organizations to empower teachers with leading edtech solutions that support the success of all learners. Explore the future of education at www.discoveryeducation.com.

Elevate K-12 proudly presents our comprehensive live teaching services, expertly crafted to address the instructional needs of K-12 school districts. Boasting the largest network of live, U.S.-certified teachers, we excel in transforming traditional classrooms into dynamic educational spaces. Our service includes direct instruction, complete management of live class setups, daily operations, and on-demand support, guaranteeing a smooth integration into your schools.

EveryDay Labs unites behavioral science, data science, and family engagement to improve attendance, maximize learning opportunities, and empower educators to optimize student support districtwide. To date, we have prevented over 2.3 million absences, increasing instructional time for students by over 880 million minutes. The company earned the coveted “Strong Evidence” rating from Evidence for ESSA. Learn more at everydaylabs.com.
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt is a learning technology company committed to delivering connected solutions that engage learners, empower educators and improve student outcomes. As a leading provider of K–12 core curriculum, supplemental and intervention solutions, and professional learning services, HMH partners with educators and school districts to uncover solutions that unlock students’ potential and extend teachers’ capabilities. HMH serves more than 50 million students and 4 million educators.

Every classroom, every student is bursting with potential. That’s why we pursue relentless innovation at the intersection of technology, people, and curricula. Imagine Learning creates K–12 digital-first solutions fueled by insights from educators, working alongside educators to support 15 million students in over half of the districts nationwide. Our core portfolio includes Twig Science®, Imagine Learning Illustrative Mathematics®, and Imagine Learning EL Education®.

Intuit is a multinational financial software company that provides business and financial management solutions to help customers and small businesses save time and make financial decisions.

IXL’s acclaimed all-in-one teaching and learning platform is used by 1 in 4 students nationwide. Our comprehensive, standards-aligned PK-12 curriculum adapts to each student, providing targeted, individual instruction. With a first-of-its-kind assessment suite and actionable analytics, educators have everything they need to maximize learning for every single student.

Just Right Reader’s Science of Reading decodables engage students in phonics practice in the classroom and at home. Over 700+ titles align to all phonics curriculums and come with tools to support classroom implementation and small group instruction. Just Right Reader decodables accelerate every student’s journey to confident reading.
Leading Educators helps school systems and states leverage research on how students learn, what teachers need to excel, and how systems improve to nurture instructional excellence in every classroom.

MagicSchool’s AI tools help teachers do the wide range of tasks placed on their shoulders 10x faster to help fight burnout and ensure great teachers thrive in the classroom.

Make Music Count is a program that uses music, specifically playing the piano, to teach math concepts. It’s geared towards students from 3rd to 9th grade.

In our education practice, we provide education consulting services and technology solutions that help schools, school districts, and state education agencies/ministries of education, improve programs and processes, optimize financial resources, and generate powerful gains in teaching and learning. Recently, we launched Skyline, a customized K-12 ELA and Math curriculum developed for Chicago Public Schools (CPS). This initiative has contributed to CPS being ranked #1 in post-pandemic early reading gains among large urban districts, with significant growth observed among Black and Latino students, as noted by CPS leaders.

Qualtrics XM for Education allows schools and universities to listen to real-time student, faculty, and staff feedback wherever they are — through surveys, online reviews, call center conversations, social media, and more.
On-demand professional development, to fast digital data management, to active learning strategies, to streamlined IEP goal writing, to curriculums that align to learning outcomes, there’s a RethinkEd solution for every educational challenge.

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Once is an early-reading program for Pre/K/1 that delivers daily, one-on-one, in-person instruction. We train school-based support staff (i.e. paras, aides) to follow a scripted curriculum based on the Science of Reading. All instructional sessions are recorded and instructors receive weekly coaching from the Once team. In DCPS, the percentage of K students in 7 schools scoring at or above benchmark in DIBELS went from 0% to 84%; their median percentile increased from 28 to 66.

At Riverside Insights®, we share your commitment to helping individuals elevate their learning potential. That’s why we offer proven, trusted, precise assessments such as CogAT®, the Iowa Assessments™, the DESSA suite, ESGI, easyCBM®, and Logramos®. These solutions provide the clarity and perspective needed to create a meaningful impact.

Saga Education is the nation’s trusted nonprofit with extensive scientific research evidence for its framework for high impact tutoring. Saga helps districts like Chicago, Fulton County GA, Orange County FL, Fairfax County VA; and states including New Mexico and Maryland, to implement highly effective tutoring within their school days. Saga coined the term “high dosage tutoring,” and has been a leader of this work for 20 years.

We are a next-generation learning company that combines new ideas, new ways of thinking, and new ways of interacting to create innovative learning solutions.
Excellent teaching is the foundation of equitable schools. At SchoolKit, we work in partnership with local educators to improve instruction and leadership through content and curriculum-specific training, coaching, and strategic planning. Together, we build schools and systems that help all students succeed.

SchoolLinks is a software company focusing on college and career readiness for middle and high schoolers. Their platform acts as a one-stop shop for students to explore colleges and careers, set goals, track progress on applications, and access resources for essays, scholarships, and financial aid. By offering a user-friendly interface and helpful tools, SchoolLinks aims to empower students during the college and career planning process, while also providing support systems for school districts and educators.

College Board reaches more than 7 million students a year, helping them navigate the path from high school to college and career. Our not-for-profit membership organization was founded more than 120 years ago. We pioneered programs like the SAT® and AP® to expand opportunities for students and help them develop the skills they need. Our BigFuture® program helps students plan for college, pay for college, and explore careers.

SmartStart Education provides staffing and in-person High-Impact Tutoring. Since 2007, we have partnered with 100s of schools across the US. We are recognized for high-quality teachers and exceptional customer service.
ThinkCERCA, a Chicago edtech company founded in 2012, empowers students (grades 3-12) with critical thinking skills through argumentative writing. Their web-based platform features an award-winning curriculum (CERCA) that incorporates close reading and writing across subjects, fostering analytical thinking beyond just English class. ThinkCERCA integrates AI to provide real-time, personalized feedback on student writing, helping them strengthen arguments and improve critical thinking within their work. This approach has been lauded by Bill Gates and research shows it effectively improves reading and writing skills.

Tutor.com & The Princeton Review® partner with K–12 schools to provide 24/7, no-cost, 1-to-1 tutoring and homework help in 250+ subjects.

Zearn is the 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization behind Zearn Math, the top-rated math learning platform used by 1 in 4 elementary-school students and by more than 1 million middle-school students nationwide. Everything we do is driven by the belief that every kid is a math kid.
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