



**BEST PRACTICES IN AMERICA'S BEST SCHOOLS AND  
SPECIAL SESSIONS FEATURING OUR STRATEGIC BUSINESS  
PARTNERS**

***VIRTUAL CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE***

***\*Eastern Standard Time***

**Welcome to the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence (BRSE) Conference, Virtual Format. We hope you enjoy this reimagined event and commitment to creating learning connections without boundaries.**

**DAY ONE - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2020**

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM KEYNOTE ADDRESS /Main Stage - *Principal Baruti Kafele*  
10:15 AM – 11:15 AM CONCURRENT SESSIONS A (Sessions 1-5)  
11:30 AM – 12:30 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS B (Sessions 1-5)  
12:45 PM – 1:45 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS C (Sessions 1-5)  
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS D (Sessions 1-5)

**DAY TWO - FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2020**

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM KEYNOTE ADDRESS/Main Stage - *Dr. Donyall D. Dickey*  
10:15 AM – 11:15 AM AFTER PARTY/Main Stage - *Conversation with Dr. Dickey*  
10:15 AM – 11:15 AM CONCURRENT SESSIONS E (Sessions 1-5)  
11:30 AM – 12:30 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS F (Sessions 1-5)  
12:45 PM – 1:45 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS G (Sessions 1-5)  
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS H (Sessions 1-5)

## DAY ONE - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10

**9:00 AM – 10:00 AM KEYNOTE ADDRESS I – Principal Baruti Kafele**

### **10:15 AM – 11:15 AM CONCURRENT SESSIONS A**

#### **SESSION A1**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Making a Big School Feel Like "Its a Small World."* Attendees will take away real world strategies to transform their school into a more connected, personal and engaging place. Delaware Hayes High School is in year six of implementing its "House system". House has provided more opportunities for connections, interventions, clubs, leadership, mentoring and culture building. In today's educational climate, the need for more emotional support, safety and student connections is more important than ever. The House system has transformed our large high school into a more personal and connected learning community. If attendees are looking for ways to enhance school culture and provide more opportunities for student and teacher leadership, this is your session.

**PRESENTERS:** Dr. Ric Stranges, Principal, and Rex Reeder, Assistant Principal, Delaware Hayes High School, Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, Ohio.

#### **SESSION A2**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Leadership for Equity: Closing the Opportunity Gap for Under-served Students...Disrupting Business as Usual.* This session will feature work of EOS school districts and first-hand experiences from EOS district partners. The first part of the program will be a conversation on the topic of equity and excellence in American high schools. The second part will provide an overview of the data-driven survey tools used by schools to develop outreach to underrepresented students, engage staff to collaborate on equity of enrollment of students in AP/IB/Dual-Credit course work, and the development of support structures and instructional change to support first-time course takers. Finally, the third part will be conversation about the topic of equity and change management.

**PRESENTER:** Nicholas Wahl, Regional Director of Strategic Initiatives, Equal Opportunity Schools, Washington.

#### **SESSION A3**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Motivating Teachers - Empowering the Heart.* Our nation faces a severe teacher shortage and teachers are leaving the profession at alarming rates. The audience will leave this session with strategies to engage their staff in our most important work; developing meaningful relationships with all of our students. In so doing, not only will our best teachers remain in teaching- they will thrive.

**PRESENTER:** Dr. Akil Ross, 2018 NASSP National Principal of the Year, South Carolina. Dr. Ross is also a National Blue Ribbon School Principal and Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Principal.

#### **SESSION A4**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *"C a Trauma Informed Transformation."* Session attendees will learn about the 5 C's that helped Madison County Elementary, a Pre-K to 8th grade school in Gurley, Alabama, follow our quest to become a trauma informed school. Participants will learn about specific strategies that can be implemented at their own schools to build a positive culture/climate, create a student centered focus, develop structures that will help a school to have more consistency, engage in partnerships that can be developed with community agencies, and seek other collaborative opportunities to apply for grants and introduce additional programming when they return to their school. This session can be enjoyed by participants who are just beginning to use social emotional learning strategies in their school and those that are looking for fresh ways to keep the momentum going with their faculty and students.

**PRESENTER:** Amy Mason, Principal at Madison County Elementary School, Alabama and a Two -Time Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Principal.

#### **SESSION A5**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Changing School Culture Using Brain Compatible Learning: A Recipe for School Success.* Do you want your students to enjoy school while also being challenged and engaged in their work? Do you want them to achieve at higher levels than ever before? Then consider brain compatible learning! Learn the common sense, research based strategies that this three time National Blue Ribbon School and Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School used to improve student achievement while creating a kid friendly, teacher friendly learning environment. The challenge for today's educators is to plan, design, and create environments that foster maximum student learning and development. This session will discuss changing a school's culture and the implementation, benefits, and success of brain compatible learning environments.

**PRESENTER:** Johnny Calder, Three - Time National Blue Ribbon School Principal, Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence Principal, and Senior Assessor, Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, South Carolina.

### **11:30 AM – 12:30 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS B**

#### **SESSION B1**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *School Leadership Lessons for Turbulent Times.* Schools have never been in a more tumultuous situation. The coronavirus pandemic necessitated immediate change in how we educate our students, from PreK to graduate school. The impacts of COVID-19, along with issues of social injustice and divisive politics, have changed the fabric of our communities to one of uncertainty, discord and disagreement. How can school administrators (and teacher leaders) learn to operate effectively in this environment? Lessons learned from international expert on change and education Michael Fullan and presidential author Doris Kerns Goodwin give some good examples of how to successfully lead in this current culture of change.

**PRESENTER:** Edward Bernetich, Professor, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio, and 2005 International Distinguished Principal, Xi'an, China. Ed is a former National Blue Ribbon School Principal, Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Principal, and Malcom Baldrige School Principal.

## **SESSION B2**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Seven Step to Leading Change: “The Way to Get Started is to Quit Talking and Begin Doing” Walt Disney.* The strategies in the change toolbox will provide the user with a comprehensive plan that considers all aspects of the change process. First and foremost, the participants will use the change toolbox to evaluate their current reality and the alignment of that reality to their organization’s mission and vision. An honest reality check of the current situation is absolutely paramount for the foundation of any real and sustainable change. The partnerships and stakeholders audit will provide the participants with an analysis of who is, who is not, and who should be at the table to support the change process. In order for any organization to move forward, the organization needs to rely on its stakeholders to support and lead the change. Using the best practice Theory of Action, or If-Then statement, participants will begin to identify possible actions and solutions to their defined obstacles to move from their current reality to their desired mission and vision. Finally, participants will gain the skill of continuous program evaluation and revision through the Plan Do Study Act cycle of continuous improvement. Participants will leave this session with strategies and tools that they can immediately use to engage in improvement efforts within their own organizations.

**PRESENTERS:** Dr. Paula Dillon, Assistant Superintendent, Barrington Public Schools and Dr. Andrew Anderson, Principal, Barrington Middle School, National Blue Ribbon School, Rhode Island.

## **SESSION B3**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *How to Create a World Class Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School.* The original design of our conference was conceived as an integral part of a process that develops schools of excellence. 1. The process begins with analyzing and determining what is working and what needs improvement. We have developed a tool that determines this information by using researched-based education questions designed specifically for administrators, teachers, support staff, students, and parents. An algorithm was developed after gathering the data from these groups to analyze the data determining what is working and what is in need of improvement. 2. Our conference specifically selects educators who have successfully developed strategies that have made major improvements in schools. Some examples of these successful and award-winning educators who will be making presentations and sharing their expertise are Jayne Ellspermann, 2015 National Principal of the Year; Dr. Akil Ross, 2018 National Principal of the Year; Dr Luke Clamp, 2019 National Principal of the Year; Johnny Calder, winner of three national Blue Ribbon Awards; Nancy Guzman, National Distinguished Principal in two states and National Blue Ribbon Principal; Dr. Mike Hall, National Blue Ribbon Lighthouse Principal; Dennis Bega, former National Director of Regional Operations and Rural Development, U.S. Department of Education along with forty-plus National Blue Ribbon winning principals who will share their successes with you. This information from all of these education experts will plug into the information you need to build your school of excellence. Enjoy your Journey!

**PRESENTER:** Bart Teal, President and Founder, Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence, South Carolina.

#### **SESSION B4**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *This Session Has Been Rated PG-13 for Inappropriate Student Language and Behavior: Content May Result in Decreased Student Challenges and Increased Teaching Time.* Is inappropriate student behavior taking up valuable teaching time and sapping your energy? What could be accomplished if student discipline challenges decreased by 90%? Let me introduce you to five research and evidence-based classroom management strategies to bring your school to Blue Ribbon Excellence! These strategies will help you effectively respond to low-level behaviors - strategies you can easily implement in your classroom tomorrow! In this session, teachers will learn how to reclaim precious instructional time leaving administrators free to address issues other than discipline. Be forewarned: This session does NOT present a “program,” but rather a philosophy on how to treat students with dignity and respect and receive the same in return. Attendees will discover overwhelming staff, student, and parent buy-in of these evidence-based strategies and will walk away with tangible tools they can implement the day they return to their campuses.

**PRESENTER:** Dee Dee Vicino, Retired Administrator, Hollywood Academy of Arts and Science, Florida.

#### **SESSION B5**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *The Way We Do the Things We Do.* A positive and successful culture and climate energizes an institution of learning. Consequently, “The Way We Do the Things We Do” is paramount in making sure we have successful schools in America. This session will focus on strategies to enhance the culture and climate of a school. Two different schools with opposite socio-economic factors set the stage for the presentation. The culture and climate of the schools are similar, and the underlined goals for the students are the same. Both schools have shown significant success in their own rite as thriving elementary programs. School A is a Magnet school and school B is an inner-city school. The focus is to describe how the culture and climate of the schools have improved over the years yielding great benefits for student academic success. Highlighted in the presentation will be the importance of professional development for all stakeholders, organizational systems, and various forms of communication all of which are integral parts of improving the culture and climate of a school.

**PRESENTERS:** Hattie Alexander, Principal, W.H. Council School, National Blue Ribbon School, Terrel Bell Award winner, and Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, and Dianne Reynolds, Principal, Spencer Westlawn Elementary School, National Blue Ribbon School and Terrell Bell Award winner, National Title I Distinguish School and an Alabama Torchbearer School, Alabama.

## 12:45 PM – 1:45 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS C

### SESSION C1

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *The 21st Century Whole-child: Resetting to Meet Their Needs.* In 2014, Weiner Elementary was riddled with overwhelming challenges that faced many of Arkansas' rural schools. Family farms were failing due to low crop prices and rising production costs. School numbers dropped, changing student demographics dramatically --with many children now living in poverty. The community, which always supported the school, grieved when the high school was consolidated, leaving only the elementary school. The staff at Weiner Elementary set out to transform their remaining school into an exemplary environment that was innovative, effective, honored the multidimensional 21st Century Whole Child, and re-energized the entire community. This process would be no gradual trickling in of change, but rather a deliberate and complete "RESET." The overarching goal of that "RESET" was enabling children to be excited about their future, to feel "part" of the world and not "apart" from the world. The "RESET" focused on new dimensions of today's 21st Century Whole Child and the demands of an ever-changing world. While test scores remained an important focus of that "RESET," the school branched out, giving just as much emphasis on the Social Emotional Learning of our students by focusing on things like creativity, communication skills, character education/community service, world cultures, learning a second language, and command of technology as a tool for learning and sharing. The "RESET" tore down barriers, honoring the belief that each child deserves the opportunity to live the life they choose --not a life determined by their circumstances. This presentation, led by Weiner Elementary's 2016 Terrell Bell Award winning principal shares the school's journey from a school with seemingly insurmountable problems to a School of Innovation and a 2016 Blue Ribbon School. The presentation also shares 21st Century Whole Child innovation strategies and resources that work, as well as the inherent challenges that accompany a school-wide "RESET."

**PRESENTERS:** Pam Hogue, Principal, and Patricia Heese, Lead Teacher and GT Facilitator, Weiner Elementary School, National Blue Ribbon School, Arkansas.

### SESSION C2

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Digital Storytelling.* This session will focus on the power of the Pixar Story Spine combined with Flipgrid or Apple Clips. Participants will develop unique stories using the Pixar Story Spine and amplify their voices and unique stories through video creation. Participants will leave with an understanding of how story creation can be used in a remote / physical classroom setting.

**PRESENTER:** Rachel Lamb, NBCT, Apple Distinguished Educator, PBS Digital Innovator and Henry Ford Teacher Innovator and Steven Lamb, Apple Distinguished Educator, PBS Digital Innovator, The Henry Ford Teacher Innovator, TEDx Speaker, Inspire Elementary School, Colorado.

### **SESSION C3**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Designing Engaging Work in Challenging Times.* Getting students to learn at higher levels and retain what they have learned is a challenge that teachers face every day. What, in particular, causes students to put forth their best effort and commit time and energy to the work they are asked to do? Engaging work! What is it that makes work for students engaging? When teachers are responsive to students' motives, needs, and values in the way work is designed, we increase the likelihood that more students will be engaged. This session introduces the Schlechty Center's 10 Design Qualities that are foundational in the design of engaging work. Learn how the Design Qualities can be used when designing new work or redesigning work for your students.

**PRESENTERS:** Dr. Nancy Rindone-Doughney and Deanna Howard, Senior Associates, Schlechty Center.

### **SESSION C4**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *A Flex Mod High School Schedule – Lessons Learned and Reflection.* River Bluff High School, Lexington, South Carolina, first high school to design and implement a Flexible Modular Schedule in 2013 has now learned over its 7-year history. Join this session to learn their story and process for establishing one of the biggest flex mod schools in the USA. During this session Dr. Clamp will discuss their student outcomes, impact on teachers, and lessons learned over the years of flex mod implementation.

**PRESENTER:** Dr. Luke Clamp, Principal, River Bluff High School, 2019 NASSP National Principal of the Year, South Carolina.

### **SESSION C5**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *How the National Teacher of the Year Connects Preschoolers and Senior Citizens, Even During the Pandemic.* Tabatha Rosproy, a 10-year veteran Kansas teacher, is the first early childhood educator to be named National Teacher of the Year. She teaches preschool for Winfield Early Learning Center (WELC) in Winfield, Kansas. Housed in Cumbernauld Village, a local retirement community and nursing home, her inclusive classroom is an inter-generational program that provides preschoolers and residents with multiple daily interactions and serves special education and typically developing preschoolers in a full-day setting. As the COVID-19 pandemic forced the closure of school buildings across the country, Rosproy served as a co-chair of the educator task force that helped compile Kansas's continuous learning guidance. A career preschool educator, Rosproy hopes to bring a voice to the important role early childhood education plays in our society and to highlight the value of social-emotional education at all age levels.

**PRESENTER:** Tabatha Rosproy, 2020 National Teacher of the Year, Winfield Early Learning Center, Kansas.

## **2:00 PM – 3:00 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS D**

### **SESSION D1**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Moving from Good to Great: Changing a Culture from the Inside Out.* Through this session, learners will be exposed to different methods that will help them realize the potential of their building and the professionals that make up their school's culture. Different strategies will be shared through experiences in order to enlighten learners on how changing the culture comes from within ones' self. Learners will be challenged and pushed outside their comfort zones in order to reevaluate their building's culture and how changes can be made. Along with this, learners will be encouraged to look within themselves and how changes to one's wellness can change the culture of a building.

**PRESENTER:** Joe Toomey, Principal, and Lauren Rodgers, Signature Academy Specialist, Murphy High School, Alabama.

### **SESSION D2**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Teacher Evaluation as a Growth Process.* True growth and improvement happen when the organization is fostering and supporting individual growth of employees based on collected evaluation data. As a lifelong educator, I believe that it is within all of us to want to do well. Employees who feel that their input and service is valued are more likely to strive for improvement of performance. As educational leaders, we must ensure that feedback is meaningful, not only for individual employee improvement, but for the success of our schools as a whole. Are we analyzing trend evaluation data to drive professional development? Are we analyzing evaluator data to ensure that they are consistently providing appropriate feedback? When these criteria are met, we increase our chances of providing meaningful, intrinsic feedback for teachers and ultimately improving schools for our students. Administrators can no longer skip evaluations for years at a time, nor count a note or quick comment as constructive feedback. Administrators are now being asked to report teacher evaluation data as a summative number to their state agencies for the first time in their careers. Of greater significance, we have an obligation to those in our employee to apply best practices when applicable. We want to make sure that feedback is consistent, timely, and embedded into the culture of our schools, and not just a brief summary on an annual performance review. While this session focuses on evaluation of teachers, it is actually about fostering professional growth and improvement. The underlying theme is that evaluation data be utilized to drive professional development and growth, leading to reduction of teacher attrition and improved learning for students. We include practical tips for creating this culture and maximizing opportunities for feedback, and examine traditional methods of evaluation and why these fell short in giving meaningful feedback to teachers. We will share innovative trends in teacher evaluation, and how these can be utilized to drive teacher growth, ultimately leading to improved student achievement.

**PRESENTER:** Dr. Dianna Whitlock, Vice President of Higher Education Solutions, Standard for Success, Indiana.



### **SESSION D3**

#### **SESSION DESCRIPTION: *How Can Your School Be a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence?***

*\*We offer the program and process in three formats - traditional, hybrid and virtual.* How does your school measure up to the highest performing schools in the nation? Where do you start and what can you expect? If you would like to become a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence this is the session for you. Find out what is a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence and learn about the process to become one. We will share all the details from the application process to being named a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.

Interested in the Blue Ribbon School of Excellence process, but you are concerned because school does not look like it did a year ago? Come to this session and you will put your concerns aside. The Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence process is for your school regardless of how you are serving students this year. Find out how the process works in different school delivery models and how you can start or continue the process when schools are serving students remotely.

**PRESENTER:** Jayne Ellspermann, BRSE Vice Chair, 2015 National Principal of the Year, Educational Consultant, Leadership Coach, and Trainer, Florida.

### **SESSION D4**

#### **SESSION DESCRIPTION: *“From Seed to Harvest” Cultivating a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Environment.***

Tour the Alabama Outdoors Classroom at Lynn Elementary School. Discover how butterflies, birds, turtles, and frogs foster community partnerships, parent involvement, and academic enrichment. Explore new “potencies” of potatoes, radishes, onions, and peppers. Participants will “harvest” ideas for cultivating a school culture of excellence and take with them “seeds” of potential opportunities to grow a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence environment.

**PRESENTERS:** April Waltz, Alabama Wildlife Federation; Lisa Davis, Library Media Specialist/Site Coordinator Bear Necessities 21st Century CCLC, Lynn Elementary School; and Jennifer Baker, Principal, Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, Lynn Elementary School, Alabama.

### **SESSION D5**

#### **SESSION DESCRIPTION: *Dealing With Angry Ducks: The Art of Positive Parent-School Interactions.***

Discuss strategies and supports to help teachers, counselors, and school leaders deal with difficult conferences and situations in a positive, student-focused manner. Referencing current texts, the presentation will provide insight into how a proactive approach and a calm, confident response can help avoid the potential pitfalls that lead to ineffective school conferences and interactions. This presentation will equip participants with strategies to share, model, and role-play with their staffs to build stronger conferencing and conflict mitigation skills.

**PRESENTERS:** Gales Scroggs, Fort Mill High School, South Carolina, and Caryn Scroggs, Assistant Principal, Gold Hill Middle School, South Carolina.

## DAY TWO - FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

**9:00 am – 10:00 am KEYNOTE ADDRESS II – Dr. Donyall D. Dickey**

### **10:15 AM – 11:15 AM CONCURRENT SESSIONS E**

#### **SESSION E1**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Moving the Academic Needle: Utilizing Priority Standards and Proficiency Scales.* Following our Blue Ribbon Site Visit, the feedback we received helped us to develop a framework to improve academic performance, reduce failures, increase student engagement and build a system for school improvement. We will provide attendees with the methods, skills and takeaways to replicate our successes in their own schools and districts. Schools today are faced with far too many standards for students to master. We have developed priority standards and proficiency scales across disciplines and have seen remarkable gains in academic success, student engagement and teacher ownership. If your school is facing similar challenges, this is the session for you!

**PRESENTERS:** Dr. Ric Stranges, Principal, and Rex Reeder, Assistant Principal, Delaware Hayes High School, Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, Ohio.

#### **SESSION E2**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *The Effort of Equity.* Join us as national equity expert Dr. Donna Elam presents the "Equity of Effort" framework guiding educators in understanding and implementing equity in practice across all sectors of our educational systems. The Equity of Effort framework provides an explicit process for educators to use school data with a different approach – one that emphasizes academic achievement. While equity is a goal that everyone in education can support, a clear definition is important to inform educators of what is meant by educational equity and to clearly differentiate it from equality. Join us to understand how those definitions differ while gaining an understanding of how to utilize this data for achievement gains.

**PRESENTER:** Dr. Donna Elam, National Equity Expert, Elam Leadership Institute, Florida, and Silverback Learning, Utah.

#### **SESSION E3**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Impactful Instructional Reading Strategies for K-3.* Dr. Rhonda Booth, principal of Mt. Carmel Elementary School, and Dr. Rachel Evans, Instructional Technology Specialist for Madison County Schools (AL), teamed up for a joint research project for Samford University. They were determined to discover which instructional strategies have the highest impact on student learning. In order to do so, they identified high-performing Title I elementary schools throughout the state of Alabama. Dr. Booth and Dr. Evans surveyed the educators at these high-performing, high-poverty elementary schools in order to recognize and determine which instructional strategies work the best for students living in poverty. The data showed major trends that will impact teaching and learning in elementary schools for all who attend. In order to increase reading achievement, three major factors must be in place: (1) small group, individualized, differentiated reading instruction, (2) a systematic K-2 phonics progression, and (3) multi-sensory, high-quality instruction.

**PRESENTERS:** Rachel Evans, Instructional Technology Specialist, Madison County School District and Dr. Rhonda Booth, Principal, Mt. Carmel Elementary School, Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, Alabama.

#### **SESSION E4**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Dealing with Adversity.* This session will focus on discussions with students about Coronavirus, illness and loss. One of the most difficult things for a young adult to process is witnessing or hearing about a loved one or a friend falling ill. Even the thought of hearing ‘someone went to the hospital’ is frightening. Obviously, different personalities types, levels of maturity and age factor into what is the most appropriate response to that student. This session will focus on incorporating these issues in formulating ‘ what we say’. It will also stress the importance of following medical guidelines even though young adults think they are invincible.

**PRESENTER:** Rabbi Zev Friedman, Dean, Rambam Mesivta High School, National Blue Ribbon School, New York.

#### **SESSION E5**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Using Data and Relationships to Drive Students’ Educational Pathways.* Our system of monitoring student progression through our English curriculum creates the best possible opportunity for challenging students to grow educationally and to help them be an integral part of developing their own educational pathway. Data analysis is our starting point. Using multiple data points, benchmarks are set for advancement as students complete middle school. Instead of just placing students after reviewing those data points, we involve parents and students in conversation to provide the option for an advanced 9th-grade placement, which leads to being able to take more AP classes at the end of their high school career and earn college credits. We start with advancing qualified freshman to English 10 but will revisit advancement opportunities throughout the four years of high school. We also retain students in ELA as needed as determined by those benchmarks. We have developed and now utilize an English Essentials course for freshmen who are not ready for high school-level English courses. Through this remediation, most students are able to progress to English 10 at the end of their freshman year instead of taking English 9 as a sophomore. All placements are based on skills attainment, not behavior.

Making ALL students feel relevant to society is another key factor to student success at NBHS. It doesn’t matter if students go on to tech school, community college, university, etc., we emphasize that we want them to be productive members of society. College matters, but we realize that not ALL kids need to go to college, and we honor that. By meeting kids where they are academically, socially, and emotionally, we celebrate their career aspirations and honor their life goals. By providing authentic tasks and activities, we also help students make real world parallels. It is common to hear teachers making statements such as, “I am trying to grow you,” while providing real-world experiences. Teachers bring to the forefront of activities an awareness in how students should present themselves now and in the future as they go on to further education and look for jobs. Our end goal: produce productive members of society.

**PRESENTERS:** Wayne Butler, Principal and Kris Totzke, Teacher, New Buffalo High School, National Blue Ribbon School, Michigan.

## 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS F

### SESSION F1

#### **SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *A Data-Driven Approach to Successfully Navigating Your School's Journey Towards Excellence (and Tips for Admins for Driving the Bus!)*

Before you begin the journey of school improvement and the transformation process, you need to know your school's exact "location" first! This school-wide transformation, "your school's journey" to achieving excellence is what the Blue Ribbon process is truly about! This session highlights the importance of using data and implementing a school-wide progress monitoring system along your journey to achieving excellence.

**PRESENTER:** Cathy Giles, Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Lighthouse Principal, Massachusetts.

### SESSION F2

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Hello, Can You Hear Me Now?* Ever wonder...How do we get all students to pay attention and stay engaged? Ever wonder...why are their video's are off, and why do they stay muted and barely use the chat. Do they care...do they? How can your staff find the time to really get to know every student? During these unprecedented times it is hard to support and engage our students. It is hard to show up and give our best every day. Participants will discover not only the how... but what's behind the why! This session will focus on five steps to help your everyday students and staff get motivated and engage in their learning community. Let's give your community a simple system to increase their belief, boost their confidence, strengthen their grit, and desire to do their best work every day. We can do more than just provide social emotional learning...let's give them social emotional leadership to become leaders for life!

**PRESENTERS:** Vanessa Banner, Principal Pacific Middle School; Kris Menon, CEO Ignite Nation; and Dr. Rhonda Blackburn, CLO Ignite Nation and President, USDLA, Washington.

### SESSION F3

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *"Re-thinking Your Daily Schedule Under Covid.* This session will provide vital information for any school leaders that are trying to make efficient change in their schools. In today's educational settings, nothing is more important than Professional dialogue and collaboration. This presentation can serve as a model to assist in providing a framework for school reform. Scott's presentation will focus on how to create a daily schedule that will provide the flexibility that school's need to be successful. Specifically, Scott will share information on how to create more time for Student Intervention, Professional Collaboration, Personalization and Capacity Building within your school.

**PRESENTER:** Scott L. Stewart is a senior member of the Blue Ribbon Assessment Team and has worked with over 100 schools in the Unites States, China and Germany. Scott has been instrumental in changing the school day schedules in over 40 Middle and High Schools throughout the United States. Scott has been a secondary Principal for over 15 years and served as Principal for three Blue Ribbon Schools. He was most successful at New Albany High School in Columbus Ohio. New Albany earned the Blue Ribbon Award, the Lighthouse Award and the Intel 21<sup>st</sup> Century School of Distinction Award.

#### **SESSION F4**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *How to Achieve 1.5 years growth in Math and Reading while Conquering Poverty in Inner City Schools.* The presenter will share best practices that school leadership teams use in their schools to close the achievement gap and experience high test scores. Do you feel pressure to close the achievement gap? The added layers of servicing students with disabilities, minority students, students living in poverty - all while in charters operating with limited resources makes this task seem impossible. This highly skilled turnaround specialist will demonstrate to participants how to achieve 1.50 years' worth of growth for all students through implementing culturally responsive teaching strategies, facilitating data dialogs, planning purposeful professional development, and establish sustainable partnerships. Participants will learn to utilize data driven instruction to progress monitor student achievement focusing on closing the achievement gap. They will understand how to form partnerships with stakeholders to provide resources in schools. Leaders will learn to assess, understand, and describe best practices to build capacity within your school.

**PRESENTER:** Shawn Hurt, School Turnaround Principal, Inkster Preparatory Academy, Michigan.

#### **SESSION F5**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Leading from a Distance.* Leadership has expanded beyond school walls. Learning looks different, however, we are still held accountable with traditional measures. What do we need to do to ensure a successful 2020-2021 school year and beyond? This session will focus on how school leaders can support the new learning environment with confidence while creating a supportive culture for all stakeholders.

**PRESENTER:** Jayne Ellspermann, BRSE Vice Chair, 2015 National Principal of the Year, Educational Consultant, Leadership Coach, and Trainer, Florida.

### **12:45 PM - 1:45 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS G**

#### **SESSION G1**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Using Shared Spaces to Elevate Learning and Connection for Teachers.* The Digital Engagement Series is an eight module online experience where teachers from all across the nation can participate in 32 hours of professional learning on their own time. The courses are designed to address the unique challenges that teachers entering the 2020–2021 school year face. Embedded in the courses are shared spaces that invite teachers to connect as they upload evidence of their learning. These shared spaces are a catalyst for teachers looking to connect and grow during this incredibly isolated time. Find out how shared spaces provide a platform that encourages teachers to capitalize on their professional growth.

**PRESENTER:** Kat Crawford, Executive Director of Digital Innovation, Schlechty Center, Kentucky.

#### **SESSION G2**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Dancing in the Rain: A Much Needed Approach to Facing the Realities of an Unanticipated Need to Pivot.* It's time to play the music. It's time to light the lights. It's time to greet our students, and start the year off right. Learn from a team of Administrators in Massachusetts that found the silver lining between March and present day of 2020, and how they are working with stakeholders to continue on the "paths of pivot" as the new normal allows for laughter, levity, and a chance to reflect upon all that is possible in the field of education. Prepare to laugh and leave inspired.

**PRESENTER:** Aaron Polansky - Superintendent, Award Winning Keynote Speaker and Author, Massachusetts

### **SESSION G3**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Providing a Safe and Healthy Environment That Helps to Improve, Student Achievement, Teacher Effectiveness and Stakeholder Engagement.* CrisisGo has been assisting school leaders in the area of emergency preparedness and management, school safety and mass notification, since 2013. COVID-19 has added another layer to the responsibility of School Leadership, in the day- to- day operations of their schools. It is for this reason that we developed Safety iPass. In our session you will learn how this cloud based platform will provide the tools needed for efficient and effective Health Screening, Temperature Checks, Data Collection, Data Transparency, Stakeholder Engagement and Safe Entry into all school facilities and onto school buses. You will walk away knowing that there is a more effective way to reopen you schools, regardless of the model you are using, Virtual, Blended or Full Attendance.

**PRESENTER:** Dave Kavlick, Vice President, K-12 Solutions, CrisisGo Inc., South Carolina

### **SESSION G4**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Structuring the Reading Block to Achieve Double-Digit Gains in One Year.* This session will provide evidence of the importance of foundational reading, and will share “what to teach” and “how to teach it” during the reading block for each grade. Grouping students to provide struggling readers more time and support, as well as providing more challenging learning for readers who perform at/above grade level will be addressed. This structure has proven to be extremely effective in four struggling turnaround schools. Students in these schools outperformed students in more affluent schools across this large urban school district.

**PRESENTER:** Nancy Guzman, North Carolina and South Carolina Distinguished Principal, National Blue Ribbon Principal, and BRSE Senior Assessor, North Carolina.

### **SESSION G5**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Flexible Programming: Making the Most of Your Day!*

We will be presenting on Small Group Instruction (SGI) and flexible programming. During SGI teachers have the opportunity to provide additional lessons to their students for intervention as well as enrichment needs. Flexible programming of the schedules of our special education students provides them with the opportunity to receive their education to the maximum extent appropriate in classrooms and activities with their peers that do not receive special education services. We decided to invest in human resources in order to provide teachers with the additional period for SGI. During the SGI period, a social studies or science teacher teaches the whole class while the classroom teacher provides instruction to a small group of selected students. Flexible programming allows for a special education program to be designed for an individual student in the 12:1:1 setting or the ICT setting to meet the students’ unique needs while adhering to LRE (least restrictive environment classroom) guidelines. The School Implementation Team studies and evaluates a student’s academic performance, behavioral characteristics, teacher evaluation and recommendations. Then, the least restrictive environment is considered in order for the student to receive the best practices of instruction and additional support needed to progress.

**PRESENTERS:** Tony Wu, Principal; Maria Strongilis, Assistant Principal; Kristi Pollock, Assistant Principal; Elen Stratis, Instructional Coach; and Kaitlyn Ryan, Teacher, P.S. 170, The Ralph A. Fabrizio School, Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, New York.

## **2:00 PM - 3:00 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS H**

### **SESSION H1**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Connecting to Opportunities in a Virtual World.* Join Tallo's Education Coordinator, Emily Todd, to learn about [Tallo](#), a free app and online platform that students, age 13+, can use to build their professional online presence. On Tallo, students can connect to colleges, showcase their skills to companies, and apply for opportunities like scholarships, virtual career and college fairs, and internships. Unlock your mentor account and learn how to use Tallo's classroom resources to help your students build their digital portfolio.  
**PRESENTER:** Emily Todd, Educator Coordinator, Tallo, South Carolina.

### **SESSION H2**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Elementary Connections - Forming a Foundation to Prevent Adolescent Suicide.* Historic suicide prevention efforts have largely targeted adolescent and young adult populations. For this presentation, the presenter will share the success of providing preventative supports at the elementary level. The presentation will provide background experiences, structural recommendations and provide a holistic lens on systemically educating an entire district. Participants will analyze the quality and purpose of interactions and systematic supports for all students. Participants will be able to create or revise their current district or schools structure for assessing students social and emotional needs. Participants will be able to create or revise structural goal setting in order to plan meaningful professional development and responsible staffing to ensure the support and growth of all students.  
**PRESENTER:** Bradley G. Larrabee, Principal, Iron River and Northwestern Elementary Schools, National Blue Ribbon School, Wisconsin.

### **SESSION H3**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Embracing The Challenge: Applying SEL in a Covid-19 Environment.* We believe that all humans need to feel accepted, need a place to belong, and need to know they matter. This culture is fostered by using social-emotional approaches that draw out and build on assets that facilitate understanding and learning. Join us for this exciting workshop that meets the challenges of today and builds hope for tomorrow. In this workshop, participants will experience impactful and adaptable strategies that support student and adult well-being.  
**PRESENTERS:** Melanie Lance and Emily Offord, Training Specialist, Clemson University, South Carolina.

### **SESSION H4**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Supporting Cross Curricular Connections Through Literacy and Visual Arts in the Early Childhood Classroom.* You don't have to be an artist to enjoy this fun and interactive workshop! Participants will engage in hands-on visual arts activities for early childhood students integrating children's literature, math, science, and social studies. Participants will create fascinating projects and activities using inexpensive materials. The purpose of this interactive workshop is to expand the knowledge and teaching methods of early childhood educators with hands-on activities to take back to classroom to integrate art, children's literature, math, science, and social studies.  
**PRESENTERS:** Dr. Amanda Pendergrass, Associate Professor of Elementary Education; Dr. Sallie Harper, Professor of Elementary Education; Dr. Lynn Kelley, Associate Professor of Elementary Education; Dr. Dana Rolison, Professor of Elementary Education, University of West Alabama; Mrs. Linda Paparella, University Clinical Educator, University of West Alabama; and Miss Anna Lynn Pendergrass, 1st grader, Demopolis City Schools.

## **SESSION H5**

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** *Early Learning Program Assessment – Why It Matters.* Many early learning programs were implemented quickly to meet community needs, and assurances of success may be absent. Following the COVID-19 quarantine, parents returning to work will be searching for quality early learning opportunities. As young learners enter or re-enter our schools, it is critical to address any learning gaps that occurred during this unprecedented time. Therefore, we need to assess our ELP's with fidelity. Mr. Manuszak, AASA Early Learning Cohort chair, and Mr. Whitlock will share a research-based evaluation tool for early learning programs. Our communities and students deserve early cognitive learning environments evaluated on researched best practices.

**PRESENTERS:** Edward Manuszak, Superintendent, Dundee Community Schools, Michigan and Todd Whitlock, CEO, Standard for Success, Indiana.