



# Concordia Summit

for Educators and  
Leaders

Sponsored by  
CUW  
School of Education  
&  
LCMS  
South Wisconsin  
District

**Date :**

August 8, 2025

**Time :**

8:15am - 3:00pm

*Fellowship Hour to follow*

**Location :**

Concordia University Wisconsin Campus



# Schedule of Events

**8:15AM - 9:00AM**

**1**

**Registration and Gathering**  
Vendors open

**9:00AM - 10:00AM**

**2**

**Welcome and Opening Devotion**

**10:15AM - 11:15AM**

**3**

**Session A**

**11:30AM - 12:30PM**

**4**

**Lunch and Bonus Sessions**  
Vendors open

**12:45PM - 1:45PM**

**5**

**Session B**

**2:00PM - 3:00PM**

**6**

**Session C**

**3:15PM - 5:00PM**

**7**

**Happy Hour Fellowship-  
Highland House**

*Early Childhood Registry Hours will be available for those interested.*

# Workshops: Session A

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## **A1-Teacher Triage: A Call to Action to Protect and Prioritize Your Wellbeing for Effective Teaching by Professor Laura Adameak & Dr. Laura Kaae**

According to several studies, teaching is one of the most stressful jobs in the country. Teachers are focused on taking care of and supporting students, often without prioritizing their own wellbeing. Your mental health isn't only important to you, teacher wellness is also linked to stability in schools and student achievement. We will discuss ways to protect and prioritize your wellbeing so that you can be more effective in the classroom as you serve students in a ministry you love. This presentation combines the knowledge and experience of a seasoned teacher/school counselor and clinical background of a psychologist. [All]

## **A2-Truth, Identity, Purpose in Post Christian America by Dr. Brad Alles**

In today's America we hear there is no truth, a person's identity is bound in their race, class, and gender, and their purpose is to fight the oppressors. Learn why this has occurred and how to engage the culture with a biblical and Christ-centered approach. [All]

## **A3-Ignore It, Ban It, Use It—Oh My! Co-creating AI Classroom Policies with your Students and Faculty by Professor Jonny Balsman**

This session helps educators understand the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in education, deciphering true and false claims, and practical classroom applications. Participants will explore the capabilities and limitations of AI, develop meaningful classroom policies, and discover how to use AI as a tool to enhance creativity, critical thinking, and student engagement. Rooted in a values-driven approach, this workshop empowers teachers to harness AI effectively while maintaining the human connections and spiritual foundation that are essential to learning. [Elementary, Middle School, High School, Administrators]

## **A4-The Emotions Behind Burnout and What to Do About Them by Professor Jennifer Bargmann**

This workshop will provide attendees with information about the emotions behind burnout in the helping professions. Attendees will learn about the basic emotions, how to identify various emotions, and leave with information about how to notice the emotions arising and what steps to take when the emotions are noticed. [All]

## **A5-Universal Design for Learning: Guidelines 3.0 for PreK-12 Educators by Janis Chapman**

Learn more about the new (July 2024) Universal Design for Learning Guidelines 3.0. for PreK-12 educators, including the core concepts and foundations of UDL, practical applications of UDL to lesson design, and how to support flexible, inclusive instruction. [Elementary, Middle School, High School]

## **A6-In This School We Believe: Lutheran School Teaching in the Era of the Yard Sign by Dr. Preston Cosgrove**

Teachers in Lutheran schools are tasked with the incredible opportunity to form their students via Romans 12:2: transforming their minds while helping them not conform to the world. But what are the patterns of our world? This sectional will highlight the ubiquitous yard signs as a culprit. Not for the causes the yard signs proclaim, but for the more fundamental principles those causes emerge from; beliefs that cross all political lines. The sectional will unmask these views while also offering strategies for teachers who find themselves on the "front lines" of culture wars. [Middle School, High School, Administration]

# Session A

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## **A7-Enhancing Student Engagement through Experiential Learning: Practical Strategies for Secondary Educators by Katie Daane**

With the growing challenge of motivating and engaging students, experiential learning offers a proven approach to making learning more dynamic and meaningful. This session equips secondary educators with practical strategies and resources to implement experiential learning in the classroom. Participants will learn how to connect learning objectives with real-world experiences to create engaging, authentic lessons. The presentation will provide a resource guide with discipline-specific recommendations and activities to improve student outcomes and classroom experiences. Whether new to experiential learning or looking to refine your approach, this session offers actionable ideas to enhance your teaching and foster deeper student engagement. [High School]

## **A8-Passport Adventures and American Adventures by Trisha DePasquale**

Children have such a curiosity about the world. Their young minds are able to absorb so much and a little imagination can go a long way! In this session, you'll go on a "Passport Adventure" to learn tips and techniques on how to bring the world into your classroom. You will leave this session with ready-to-use resources to get your students traveling. Now boarding: all interactive early childhood educators! [EC]

## **A9-Understanding Trauma: Its Impact on the Brain, Learning, and Relationships by Professor Amanda DeSua**

Trauma can profoundly shape how individuals think, learn, and connect with others. This session will explore the science behind trauma and its effects on the brain, offering insights into how it influences behavior, emotional regulation, and cognitive functioning. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of how trauma impacts learning processes and the ability to build and maintain relationships. Attendees will learn practical strategies to support individuals affected by trauma, fostering resilience, empathy, and healing. [All]

## **A10-Unlocking Literacy Foundations: The Science of Reading K-3 by Dr. Karla Erwin and Professor Deborah Rehmann**

Discover the core principles of the Science of Reading in this engaging session tailored for K-3 educators. Participants will explore evidence-based strategies to build strong literacy foundations, focusing on phonics, phonemic awareness, and early reading interventions. Gain practical tools and insights to enhance instruction and support young readers' success. [EC, Elementary]

## **A11-Foundations First: Building Behavior Management for Lasting Learning by Dr. Kirsten Kasten and Professor Sarah Mayer**

Unlock the secrets to effective behavior management by focusing on the foundation—you! Explore five key concepts (self-awareness, emotional regulation, consistency, grace, and environment) that transform classroom dynamics and inspire growth. Discover how intentional actions and mindset shifts can reduce disruptions, build relationships, and create spaces that promote growth, accountability, and respect. Walk away with fresh ideas to maintain balance, set boundaries, and build a positive tone that lasts all year long. [EC, Elementary, Middle School, High School]

## **A12-From the Ground Up: Building a Marketing Strategy for Your School by Dana Kirchoff**

This session is focused on helping school ministries develop a strong marketing foundation. Attendees will learn how to construct a comprehensive marketing strategy that supports their mission, amplifies their Gospel message, and effectively connects with families in their community. The session will wrap up with a Q&A to explore practical aspects like budgeting, branding, websites, and social media. [All]

# Session A

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## **A13-ZOOM: Ecological Perspective-Taking with Young Scientists by Dr. Amy Lindgren**

Young scientists learn about the world around them through their senses, play, and active exploration. However, the phenomena children wonder about are often difficult to observe, occur over periods of time, or are abstract. To avoid scientific misconceptions, it is important that children learn to hone their skills of observation, but more importantly, learn to actively “participate with” living creatures and non-living elements in the world around them. In this sectional, we will explore how to capitalize on “zooming,” or play with a change of perspective, as a way to hone observational skills and develop a sense of place. Join us to explore strategies and children’s literature that promote key scientific competencies in young scientists including perspective-taking, inquiry, observation, and a sense of wonder. [EC, Elementary]

## **A14-Enhancing Social Studies Education with AI: Tools and Techniques for High School Teachers by Mike Loveless**

Join us for a dynamic seminar where high school social studies teachers will explore AI tools to enhance teaching. With the growing interest in AI and its transformative potential, this is the perfect time to discover how it can revolutionize your classroom. This session will present innovative ideas and provide a forum for participants to share experiences and strategies. Learn how AI can automate tasks like grading, offer personalized learning, and enrich lesson planning. By the end, you'll have practical strategies to integrate AI into your teaching, making education more effective and engaging. Don't miss this opportunity to stay ahead of the curve and inspire your students with the power of AI! [High School]

## **A15-Cracking the Code: Engaging Students in Word Problem Sense-Making by Dr. Nicole Muth**

Word problems engage students in the work of mathematicians as they translate math stories into number sentences. Short stories can connect students' prior learning and experiences to the math concepts they are learning and teach them how to use math to represent relationships in the world around them. However, many students have difficulty decoding word problems. In this breakout session, you will learn research-backed strategies to engage students in sense-making and avoid practices that circumvent it. [Elementary Grades 1-6]

## **A16-Visualize, Connect, Master: A Representation-Based Math Journey by Dr. Adam Paape**

Unlock the transformative power of mathematical representations to anchor learning and deepen understanding at every level of math instruction. This session explores how visual and conceptual tools, including innovative strategies like clotheslines, can be used to represent mathematical operations and properties in engaging and meaningful ways. Learn how a representation-based philosophy of teaching math fosters students' mastery of essential concepts and procedures, empowering learners of all ages to make connections and build confidence. Be ready to engage with hands-on activities and leave with practical strategies to enrich your math instruction! [Middle School, High School]

## **A17-The Leadership Kitchen: Key Ingredients and Supplies for the Church Worker (So You Can Cook) by Dr. Jim Pingel**

Discover the essential tools, skills, and “ingredients” every church worker needs to lead effectively and serve faithfully. Just like in a well-stocked kitchen, a successful and faith-filled ministry requires preparation, creativity, and the right resources (including inspiration from THE Source of all). This section offers practical insights and strategies to equip you for leadership challenges and opportunities so that you can glorify God and flourish in the ministry He has given to your care. [All]

# Session A

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## **A18-Cultivating a Positive School Culture and Climate by Dr. Christine Scudella**

This session will help leaders understand their role in fostering a culture and climate where students and staff can thrive. The key topics covered will be culture vs. climate, leadership strategies for creating a positive culture, how to address toxic environments, engaging families and communities, and how to measure and sustain a positive climate. [Middle School, High School, Administration]

## **A19-“Students or Language Learners”: How Can We Leverage 1st Language Acquisition Strategies in the 2nd Language Classroom by Rob Seder**

We will journey through the nature of language, the role of comprehensible input in acquisition, learning about language vs. acquiring language, importance of reading and listening, and the power of total physical response in the path to second language acquisition. We will also sift through topics of communication, development, and measuring learner progress. Attendees will leave with a list of resources and practical approaches to use immediately in the classroom. I am excited to meet with you all! [Elementary, Middle School, High School]

## **A20-Empowering Readers: The Science of Reading Grades 4-8 by Professor Seth Marie Westfall**

This session will focus on the essential strategies derived from the science of reading to enhance literacy instruction for students in grades 4-8. Participants will learn evidence-based techniques for improving word recognition, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension. Key topics include explicit phonics instruction, decoding strategies, text structure analysis, and integrating vocabulary and comprehension skills into content-area teaching. Practical tools and activities will be shared to support differentiated instruction, ensuring all students, including struggling readers, can thrive. Educators will leave with actionable strategies to foster stronger literacy skills in classrooms. [Middle School]

## **A21-Resilient Leadership: Strengthening Lutheran Schools and Churches by Dr. Steven Witt**

Explore resilient leadership strategies tailored to strengthen Lutheran schools and churches in this engaging session with Dr. Steven Witt. Drawing from his book *Leadership Resilience: Path to Possibilities*, extensive research, and decades of experience as an executive director, principal, and nonprofit board member. Dr. Witt will share practical approaches to navigating trauma, fostering professional and personal growth, and cultivating a thriving organizational culture. Learn how to lead with faith, purpose, and resilience to support and empower your school and church communities. [Administration]

# Workshops: Session B

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## **B1-Teacher Triage: A Call to Action to Protect and Prioritize Your Wellbeing for Effective Teaching by Professor Laura Adameak & Dr. Laura Kaae**

According to several studies, teaching is one of the most stressful jobs in the country. Teachers are focused on taking care of and supporting students, often without prioritizing their own wellbeing. Your mental health isn't only important to you, teacher wellness is also linked to stability in schools and student achievement. We will discuss ways to protect and prioritize your wellbeing so that you can be more effective in the classroom as you serve students in a ministry you love. This presentation combines the knowledge and experience of a seasoned teacher/school counselor and clinical background of a psychologist. [All]

## **B2-Clarity and Care for Children with Gender Confusion by Dr. Brad Alles**

Gender issues are everywhere in this post-Christian culture, creating confusion and chaos. Christian day school administrators, teachers and pastors are pleading for resources they can use with confidence. This sectional provides scientific clarity in caring for children with gender dysphoria, or the distress caused by misalignment of body and mind. Additionally, a biblical perspective is shared regarding God's design for humans and their proper care. [Middle School, High School, Administration]

## **B3-Math and Faith: Comforts in God's Blueprint by Professor Jonny Balsman**

In a survey of over 1,000 Christian educators, mathematics was reported as the subject with the lowest influence of faith on teaching. This session explores how the precision and beauty of mathematics reflect God's intentional design and purpose. Participants will examine practical ways to connect mathematical concepts to God's presence in the world, using Scripture to highlight concepts of order, logic, and creation. From patterns in nature (Psalm 19:1: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands") to the unchanging truth of mathematical principles (Malachi 3:6: "I, the Lord, do not change"), educators will uncover how math provides a lens to see God's handiwork. Rooted in a faith-driven perspective, this session inspires awe in God's creation while fostering deeper engagement with both mathematics and faith. Together, we'll celebrate the comforts of faith that math reveals, leaving space for the Spirit to transform hearts (Romans 5:5: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us"). [Middle School, High School]

## **B4-Highly Sensitive People: Why It is Important to Recognize this Personality Trait by Professor Jennifer Bargmann**

Highly Sensitive People (HSP's) make up 20-30% of the population and experience the world differently than those who are non-HSPs. A highly sensitive person takes in twice as much information as their non HSP counterparts which means they experience the world differently. The needs of a highly sensitive in everyday life may be different due to how they process information. In this workshop attendees will learn what traits are part of being an HSP, learn if they are an HSP themselves, and how they may need to respond differently in the classroom when responding to an HSP. [All]

# Session B

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## **B5-The Urgency and Challenges of Teaching Literature in Today's Digital Media Landscape by Dr. Bob Bruss**

Contemporary digital media technologies offer a number of new challenges for teaching traditional print-based literature. Our attention spans are short and so is our reading stamina. Why struggle with a challenging text, when we can just look it up on GradeSaver, CourseHero, or ask ChatGPT to write something seemingly brilliant for us? This session focuses on how studying literature slowly and deeply can serve as a powerful and valuable antidote to the efficiency-obsessed pressures that are inhibiting our abilities to think critically, creatively, and clearly. Rather than teaching to emphasize content, teach in a way that prioritizes the skills and mindsets needed to approach literature meaningfully, and then demonstrate how transferable and important those same skills and mindsets are to other realms of our lives, whether social, emotional, political, spiritual, theological, etc. Despite new challenges, teaching literature has the potential to save the world! [Middle School, High School]

## **B6-Passport Adventures and American Adventures by Trisha DePasquale**

Children have such a curiosity about the world. Their young minds are able to absorb so much and a little imagination can go a long way! In this session, you'll go on a "Passport Adventure" to learn tips and techniques on how to bring the world into your classroom. You will leave this session with ready-to-use resources to get your students traveling. Now boarding: all interactive early childhood educators! [EC]

## **B7-Diversifying Your Repertoire: Resources for Secondary Music Teachers by Dr. Alexa Doebele and Prof. Johanna Anderson**

In an increasingly global society, music educators have an opportunity to expose their students to a wider range of music and composers. In this session, ensemble directors will be encouraged to think about ways to incorporate both standard repertoire and music from a variety of perspectives in their teaching. This session aims to support music educators in making positive, incremental curriculum changes, and music educators will be provided with practical resources to help expand their current music repertoire toolbox. This session is primarily for secondary choral and instrumental music educators, but all music teachers are welcome! [Middle School, High School]

## **B8-Unlocking Literacy Foundations: The Science of Reading K-3 by Dr. Karla Erwin and Professor Deborah Rehmann**

Discover the core principles of the Science of Reading in this engaging session tailored for K-3 educators. Participants will explore evidence-based strategies to build strong literacy foundations, focusing on phonics, phonemic awareness, and early reading interventions. Gain practical tools and insights to enhance instruction and support young readers' success. [EC, Elementary]

## **B9-Whose Toenail is This? Stories and Lessons Learned from 40 Years as a Special Educator by Dr. Linda Hensel**

Unpack and explore lessons learned, best practices, and ministry moments which can assist you in your journey as educator, whether you are just starting out or a veteran teacher. There will be a few humorous stories along the way, too! [All]

## **B10-Relational Grace: Building Flourishing Teams to Strengthen Mental Health and Ministry by Dr. Kirsten Kasten**

The rapid pace of immense social change, a lack of connection, and the absence of supportive relationships add to daily pressures that impact mental health and ministry. Alongside professional mental health care and healthy self-care, supportive care strengthens connections and is essential for social, emotional, relational, and spiritual well-being. This session explores teacher mental health and the power of relational grace, focusing on building a community of support and compassion, strengthening the body of Christ. [All]

# Session B

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## **B11-Coaching Today: A Look into Coaching in Lutheran Schools by Dr. Val Keiper**

This interactive session will cover any and all areas of coaching in a Lutheran school setting. Come and ask questions and dialogue with athletic coaches from CUW and other area schools. [Middle School, High School]

## **B12-From the Ground Up: Building a Marketing Strategy for Your School by Dana Kirchoff**

This session is focused on helping school ministries develop a strong marketing foundation. Attendees will learn how to construct a comprehensive marketing strategy that supports their mission, amplifies their Gospel message, and effectively connects with families in their community. The session will wrap up with a Q&A to explore practical aspects like budgeting, branding, websites, and social media. [All]

## **B13-What Do I Do When My Students Struggle to Learn? Generative AI Can Help! by Ryan Kirchoff**

Discover how generative AI tools can empower educators to support struggling students effectively. This session explores practical strategies to leverage AI for personalized learning, scaffolding complex concepts, and fostering student confidence. Whether you're a tech novice or an experienced user, you'll leave with actionable insights to integrate AI seamlessly into your classroom practices. [Elementary, Middle School, High School]

## **B14-Discovering the Literacy Leader Within by Professor Sid Larson**

This session promotes your potential to be a literacy teacher/leader. A school's capacity to close the literacy gap increases when the entire school embraces a school-wide culture of disciplinary literacy. This interactive workshop will use the Gradual Release Model to illustrate how literacy strategies unique to certain subjects will deepen the comprehension of that subject. You can be the teacher/leader supporting this process! Topics to be explored include what close reading of art looks like, and what a science think-aloud sounds like. We will delve into what disciplinary literacy is...and is not. [Middle School, High School]

## **B15-Beautiful Oops: Moving Beyond Crafts to Spark Creativity in Young Children by Dr. Amy Lindgren**

At this session, we will consider how the types of activity that we plan for our classrooms can either promote or hinder a creative mindset. We will experience how product-focused crafts differ from process art explorations in facilitating children's development. Finally, we will share ideas for modifying existing activities to better promote a creative mindset in all young learners. [EC, Early Elementary]

## **B16-Physical Education Best Practices Made Simple by Tim Mueller**

Want to make your PE classes more engaging while helping students build essential movement skills? This hands-on session will showcase easy-to-implement activities that will energize your PE curriculum. You'll walk away with a toolkit of fun, practical activities and best-practice strategies to keep your students active and excited about physical education. [Elementary, Middle School]

## **B17-Cultivating Critical Thinking in the Age of AI by Dr. Nicole Muth**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to revolutionize our lives, work environments, and social interactions. However, it also poses significant risks. In the fast-evolving landscape of AI, equipping students with critical thinking skills is essential to guide them to become responsible and ethical users of technology in the future. Critical thinking sets the stage for navigating the challenges and opportunities of using AI in professional and personal contexts. Join us as we explore practical strategies for fostering critical thinking in the application of AI in K-12+ classrooms. [EC, Elementary, Middle School, High School]

# Session B

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## **B18-Interactive Classrooms Made Easy with Desmos by Dr. Adam Paape**

Discover how the Desmos activity builder can revolutionize student engagement in your classroom, whether you're teaching Elementary, Middle, or High School. Originally designed for mathematics, this versatile tool can enhance learning in any content area. Learn the essentials of creating your own interactive activities or customizing pre-made ones to suit your needs. Explore strategies that promote dynamic student-to-teacher connections, collaborative student-to-student interactions, and engaging whole-class experiences. Come ready to participate hands-on—bring a device (cell phones work, but tablets or laptops are ideal) and experience the potential of Desmos for yourself! [Elementary, Middle School, High School]

## **B19-From Insight to Impact: Growing Your Emotional Intelligence by Dr. Jim Pingel**

Everyone knows how critical EQ is to be an effective teacher, administrator, or leader. But how do you grow and expand your EQ capacity? This session provides practical strategies to strengthen self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills, empowering you to navigate challenges and connect more effectively with others. Build your EQ capacity to grow personally and professionally. [All]

## **B20-"Ugh, I Have to Teach WHAT?" Tips and Tools for Teaching Writing at the Middle and High School Level by Dr. Jenna Roeske**

For many Lutheran educators, teaching writing is something they HAVE to do rather than WANT to do. Regardless of how much we like teaching it, however, equipping students with writing skills sets them up for success as they progress through their academic (and professional!) careers. The sectional is geared towards educators teaching writing at the middle school or early high school level. It will provide strategies and instant access to activities and resources to build a solid writing foundation for your students. Whether you are teaching writing by choice or obligation, this sectional is for you! [Middle School, High School]

## **B21-How to Create a Culturally Responsive Environment for our Youngest Learners by Professor Kristine Wegner**

In this session, we will highlight the importance of actively incorporating children's diverse cultural backgrounds, languages, and experiences into classroom learning, creating an inclusive environment where every child feels seen, valued, and connected to the curriculum through relevant and meaningful activities that reflect their unique identities and family traditions. [EC]

## **B22-Empowering Readers: The Science of Reading Grades 4-8 by Professor Seth Marie Westfall**

This session will focus on the essential strategies derived from the science of reading to enhance literacy instruction for students in grades 4-8. Participants will learn evidence-based techniques for improving word recognition, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension. Key topics include explicit phonics instruction, decoding strategies, text structure analysis, and integrating vocabulary and comprehension skills into content-area teaching. Practical tools and activities will be shared to support differentiated instruction, ensuring all students, including struggling readers, can thrive. Educators will leave with actionable strategies to foster stronger literacy skills in classrooms. [Middle School]

## **B23-Off to College: What's Involved with the College Application & Admissions Process by Dr. Angela Walmsley**

Participants will explore many of the key components of the college admissions process: What is needed in high school for a strong application, How to choose a college list, How to prepare for the ACT/SAT, What the Common Application is, and Understanding how the college admissions timelines work. This session would be beneficial to anyone who helps counsel middle school and high school students. [Middle School, High School, Counselors, Administration]

# Workshops: Session C

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## **C1-Faith Integration Strategies by Dr. Brad Alles**

Learn 4 strategies for integrating faith in any classroom. Instead of isolating faith development to religion class or occasionally addressing faith issues, see how Contextual, Illustrative, Conceptual, and Experiential approaches to faith integration can be part of your daily routine. [Elementary, Middle School, High School]

## **C2-Ignore It, Ban It, Use It—Oh My! Co-creating AI Classroom Policies with your Students and Faculty by Professor Jonny Balsman**

This session helps educators understand the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in education, deciphering true and false claims, and practical classroom applications. Participants will explore the capabilities and limitations of AI, develop meaningful classroom policies, and discover how to use AI as a tool to enhance creativity, critical thinking, and student engagement. Rooted in a values-driven approach, this workshop empowers teachers to harness AI effectively while maintaining the human connections and spiritual foundation that are essential to learning. [Elementary, Middle School, High School, Administrators]

## **C3-Highly Sensitive People: Why It is Important to Recognize this Personality Trait by Professor Jennifer Bargmann**

Highly Sensitive People (HSP's) make up 20-30% of the population and experience the world differently than those who are non-HSPs. A highly sensitive person takes in twice as much information as their non HSP counterparts which means they experience the world differently. The needs of a highly sensitive in everyday life may be different due to how they process information. In this workshop attendees will learn what traits are part of being an HSP, learn if they are an HSP themselves, and how they may need to respond differently in the classroom when responding to an HSP. [All]

## **C4-Teaching Writing Rhetorically by Dr. Bob Bruss**

In his provocatively titled book, *Why We Can't Write*, John Horner argues that students see writing as simply following the rules, rather than making informed choices. This mindset can be a real stumbling block for students as they transition into writing for college, but even more so when it comes to writing for their lives and careers. This is often true even for the most dutiful, straight-A high school students. This sectional offers an approach to teaching writing by teaching rhetorical awareness first and foremost. Learn a simplified, practical version of rhetorical theory, how to build space for students to make meaningful choices, and how to shift student thinking about what makes "good" writing. Adopting this perspective aligns more with what writing is like outside school, and it often leads to greater buy-in from students, better peer feedback, students who are more able to adapt to new situations, and yes, more effective writing. [Middle School, High School]

## **C5-Preparing High School Students for Post-Secondary Education by Janis Chapman**

Review the transition and readiness skills that high school students need to prepare for college and life-independence, self-advocacy, and self-determination skills to get them off on the path to success. [Middle School, High School]

# Session C

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## **C6-The Amish Don't Scroll: Tech Obsession, Discernment, and Prioritizing What Matters Most by Dr. Preston Cosgrove**

For all our fears of Artificial Intelligence becoming too human, the hidden issue is that we're becoming too much like robots. That is, the characteristics and dispositions that our culture and schools prize—being efficient, productive, reliable, etc.—speak more to machines than they do to human beings. This presentation will trace how such an oxymoronic development occurred, realizing that since our tech dependency is so entrenched, simple solutions won't do. Instead, an unlikely group will be highlighted to help frame what tech discernment looks like: the Amish—yes, the Amish—who may just be the most tech-savvy people around. [All]

## **C7-Whose Toenail is This? Stories and Lessons Learned from 40 Years as a Special Educator by Dr. Linda Hensel**

Unpack and explore lessons learned, best practices, and ministry moments which can assist you in your journey as educator, whether you are just starting out or a veteran teacher. There will be a few humorous stories along that way, too! [All]

## **C8-The Inside Scoop on Child Development Research by Dr. Kathleen Kannass**

Dive deeper into meaningful research on child development that can be applied to everyday settings with developmental psychologist Kathleen Kannass. We'll dig into research on play, learning, attention, cognition, and the importance of teacher-child closeness. Come learn what research has to offer you and optimize your early childhood classroom. [EC, Elementary]

## **C9-Breaking Through Barriers: Effective Strategies for Supporting Others by Dr. Kirsten Kasten**

It can be challenging to know what to say or do when those around us are hurting. Whether it is a student, colleague, or family member, we can feel empathy and compassion, yet allow fear, doubt, or burnout hinder our ability to connect and offer support. This workshop is focused on cultivating our capacity to offer genuine support and comfort to students and colleagues alike. Become equipped with effective, compassionate communication strategies to use in both professional and personal contexts to help those who are experiencing stress or difficulties. Assess your own habits, behaviors, and mindsets to identify the barriers that prevent you from knowing what to say and do to reach out and support others. Learn specific phrases and techniques to use- and which to avoid- when talking to someone who is struggling, empowering you to navigate these conversations with care and confidence. [All]

## **C10-Church Worker Wellness: What Does the Research Say? by Dr. Val Keiper**

Take a dive into the wellness of teachers and church workers and the response locally as well as in St. Louis. Find out how you can improve your own wellness as well as the wellness of those you serve. [All]

## **C11-The Organizational Building Blocks of a Thriving Christian School by Dana Kirchoff**

Every school leader has two critical responsibilities:

CRITICAL JOB 1: Provide Christian education. This is what takes up a majority of time for most school teams: teaching, assessing, planning, supporting, counseling, coaching, disciplining, discipling, and leading educational and extracurricular activities for students and their families.

CRITICAL JOB 2: Build sustainable school ministry organizations. This is the work that is constantly in danger of being buried beneath the day-to-day urgencies of serving students and their families. It falls under the title of "organizational development" and includes work like strategic planning, team development, and marketing. Learn the 7+1 components (building blocks) necessary for sustainable school ministries and recognize the key indicators of stability and growth within each component. Attendees will leave with a checklist tool to take back to their school teams and boards for self-assessment. [Administration, All]

# Session C

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## **C12-Using John Hattie's Research to Create Engaging Conversations with Teachers...and Students by Ryan Kirchoff**

John Hattie's groundbreaking research on visible learning provides a clear path for increasing student achievement. In this session, explore how to use his evidence-based findings to foster meaningful, data-informed conversations with teachers and students. Learn how to translate research into practice, creating an environment where feedback and dialogue drive engagement and growth. [All]

## **C13-Discovering the Literacy Leader Within by Professor Sid Larson**

This session promotes your potential to be a literacy teacher/leader. A school's capacity to close the literacy gap increases when the entire school embraces a school-wide culture of disciplinary literacy. This interactive workshop will use the Gradual Release Model to illustrate how literacy strategies unique to certain subjects will deepen the comprehension of that subject. You can be the teacher/leader supporting this process! Topics to be explored include what close reading of art looks like, and what a science think-aloud sounds like. We will delve into what disciplinary literacy is...and is not. [Middle School, High School]

## **C14-Nature Journaling with Children by Dr. Amy Lindgren**

If recent years have taught us anything, innovative strategies and whole-child learning are keys for success. Many have rediscovered that spending time in God's creation is a healthy and meaningful way to learn and connect. Nature journaling is not only an easy way to get outside with our learners, but it is an especially effective way to integrate writing, art, science, and many other subject areas. At this session we will explore the value of nature journals, share practical advice for using nature journals with young children, consider the steps to get started with nature journaling, and brainstorm possibilities for integration and nature journal bookmaking! Join us to discover how nature journaling can facilitate a sense of wonder and curiosity, promote creative thinking, and scaffold inquiry-based observation in young learners! [EC, Elementary]

## **C15-Creating a Positive Classroom Environment Through Movement by Tim Mueller**

Looking to foster a positive classroom atmosphere, boost student engagement, and nurture character development in fun and innovative ways? This dynamic session is tailored for K-8 teachers and focuses on incorporating "learning through movement" in classroom-friendly formats. You'll discover how to use brain-break games and activities to build character and empower students with practical, hands-on strategies. Join us to get inspired and leave with a wealth of character-building lesson ideas you can start using immediately! [Elementary, Middle School]

## **C16-Cultivating Critical Thinking in the Age of AI by Dr. Nicole Muth**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to revolutionize our lives, work environments, and social interactions. However, it also poses significant risks. In the fast-evolving landscape of AI, equipping students with critical thinking skills is essential to guide them to become responsible and ethical users of technology in the future. Critical thinking sets the stage for navigating the challenges and opportunities of using AI in professional and personal contexts. Join us as we explore practical strategies for fostering critical thinking in the application of AI in K-12+ classrooms. [EC, Elementary, Middle School, High School]

## **C17-From Insight to Impact: Growing Your Emotional Intelligence by Dr. Jim Pingel**

Everyone knows how critical EQ is to be an effective teacher, administrator, or leader. But how do you grow and expand your EQ capacity? This session provides practical strategies to strengthen self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills, empowering you to navigate challenges and connect more effectively with others. Build your EQ capacity to grow personally and professionally. [All]

# Session C

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## **C18-Improving Parent Communication by Dr. Jenna Roeske**

This session is for teachers and administrators looking to improve communication with parents and reduce conflicts. This is meant for the new or experienced educator seeking strategies to form and maintain positive, Christian relationships with parents. We can all agree that parents are different today than a decade ago. This session will help you better understand this generation of parents and how to adapt to their communication styles and needs. After all, we can waste our energy complaining about parents, or we can make simple changes in our perspective and practices to improve our relationship with them instead! [All]

## **C19-Building and Leading High-Performing Teams by Dr. Christine Scudella**

This session will help school leaders assemble, develop, and lead collaborative teams to achieve school goals. Key topics explored include team dynamics, effective hiring practices, fostering collaboration, professional development, conflict resolution, and celebrating success. [Middle School, High School, Administration]

## **C20-Social-Emotional Learning in the Early Childhood Classroom by Professor Kristine Wegner**

Learn the importance of developing foundational skills including self-awareness, emotional regulation, relationship building, and responsible decision-making in young children. Several SEL curricula will be presented as well as practical strategies that can be incorporated into your existing daily practices. [EC]

## **C21-Word Strategies to help Every Student Retain Phonics Skills/Strategies by Dr. Steven Witt and Professor Cheryl Cario**

Discover practical literacy strategies to support every learner with a focus on phonics skill retention. In this session, Dr. Steven Witt and Professor Cheryl Cario will share effective word study techniques that engage students and enhance their understanding of phonics, while connecting these strategies to assessments, reading, and writing. Learn how to implement these practices in your classroom to improve student outcomes and foster a love of literacy. [Elementary]



# Lunch & Learn

## Sessions

### **Stepping into Leadership: Christian School Leadership at CUW by Dr. Christine Scudella**

Are you ready to take the next step in your calling as an educator? Concordia University Wisconsin's new Christian School Leadership non-licensure Master's degree equips Lutheran and Christian school educators with the skills, knowledge, and faith-based leadership principles needed to transition into leadership roles. In today's evolving educational landscape, an advanced degree is essential for those seeking to make a lasting impact as principals or administrators. Join us at our lunch breakout session to discuss your questions and explore how this program can support your leadership journey.

### **Thinking About a Degree in Counseling? by Dr. Laura Kaae & Professor Laura Adameak**

Do you find joy in supporting your students' success, not only in the classroom but within their relationships and healthy emotional development? Do you have a knack for noticing a student's unique strengths and how God might use those in a future vocation? Then School Counseling might be your calling! Join us to learn more about the Counseling Program at Concordia and meet the program directors. If you are not looking for a career change, but want to consider a master's degree in an area that explores biopsychosocial development, mental health, and counseling skills, then our non-licensable Counseling Foundations degree might be for you. We can also provide you with information regarding our Clinical Mental Health Degree. We look forward to seeing you and discussing how our program might be the right fit for you!

### **A Doctoral Candidate: To Be or Not To Be by Dr. Kathleen Kannass**

If you've ever thought about getting your doctorate, especially at a prestigious Christian university, come join our Leadership in Innovation and Continuous Improvement (LICI) doctoral team. Ask any questions you want about the doctoral journey—making the decision to go or not go, the challenges and joys of the doctoral journey, and what your desired outcomes can become. This is a no pressure, informative session to help you decide if God is calling you for a next level education. At CUW, we offer you two exceptional doctoral degree options with faith, integrity, and rigor. Whether you choose our LICI EdD program or LICI PhD program, your degree will support you in excelling in your leadership capacity and professional development. But when is the right time to start? How will I be successful and balance doctoral coursework, work, and life in general? And why would I want to do this? Come explore these questions, learn about what CUW has to offer you, and have some fun!

### **Teacher Candidate Placement and Trends in Calling/Hiring New Teachers by Dr. Jim Juergensen**

Are you a new administrator still trying to figure out the ins and outs of the placement process and how to request a candidate? Are you a veteran administrator with wisdom to share about past experiences or wondering how things have changed in the placement/call process over the years? What are some strategies for requesting candidates and/or "recruiting" candidates? What in the world is a designation, and why do we use that process with first placement candidates? What are the latest trends in the world of teacher placement across all of the Concordia University system? This session will be an informal time to ask questions and share successes and concerns regarding teacher candidate placement. Grab your lunch and join us for some great conversation!

# Sectional Leaders



**Laura Adameak**, MSE, Licensed School Counselor, currently serves as the Assistant Director of the Graduate Counseling Program at Concordia University Wisconsin. She also serves at the practicum and internship coordinator for graduate clinical and school counseling students. Prior to her current role, she served as a high school counselor and art educator for over 20 years. She believes in the transformative power of relationships in the educational setting, and is passionate about supporting educators and counselors in the field. Professor Adameak can be reached at [Laura.Adameak@cuw.edu](mailto:Laura.Adameak@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Brad Alles** is an Associate Professor of Education at Concordia University Wisconsin, with 37 years of teaching experience. He has won the Concordia Nebraska Outstanding Student Teacher Award, the Milwaukee Lutheran HS/Heartland Funds Teacher of Merit Award, the South Wisconsin District Teacher of the Year Award, and the CUW Master Educator Award. Besides speaking nationally in 26 states, Brad has two books: *Life's Big Questions, God's Big Answers* and *Starting at the End*. He also has a video called *Big Questions, Biblical Answers* which is also available on Vimeo. You can visit his website which focuses on apologetics and worldviews at [bradalles.com](http://bradalles.com), and he can be reached at [Brad.Alles@cuw.edu](mailto:Brad.Alles@cuw.edu).

**Johanna Anderson** is in her tenth year as Associate Director of Instrumental Music at CUW, where her primary responsibilities include directing the University Band and the Falcon Pep Band and Drumline, as well as working with the admissions department to recruit students to the music program. Preparing, advising, and mentoring future music educators is an important part of her teaching philosophy. Prof. Anderson has undergraduate degrees in K-12 Music Education and K-12 Spanish Education from CUW ('13), and she received her Master of Music in Music Education from Boston University ('18). She is currently a candidate for a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Music Education, also through Boston University. Professor Anderson is also the music director and conductor of the Lakeshore Symphonic Band, a community band based in Cedarburg, Wisconsin. Professor Anderson can be reached at [Johanna.Anderson@cuw.edu](mailto:Johanna.Anderson@cuw.edu).

**Jonathan Balsman** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Education at Concordia University Wisconsin, joined the full-time faculty in 2022. Before that time, Jonathan taught high school Math and Theology. An alumnus of Concordia University Wisconsin, Jonathan received his BA in Lutheran Secondary Education and Mathematics in 2014 and his MA in Math Education from Aurora University in 2019. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership at Liberty University. Jonathan is blessed with a wonderful wife, Kate, and two girls – Marigold and Liliana. The Balsmans live in Jackson, WI. Professor Balsman can be reached at [Jonathan.Balsman@cuw.edu](mailto:Jonathan.Balsman@cuw.edu).

**Jennifer Bargmann**, MS, LPC, LMHC is a humanistic, strengths based, emotions focused, professional counselor who provides services to a variety of humans in four states (Colorado, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa) through teletherapy. Her practice focuses on highly sensitive people, working with others in the helping professions, eating disorders, self injury, and narcissistic abuse. Jennifer supervises others who are entering the counseling profession, is a trained school counselor, and presents on a variety of topics throughout the year. She has developed an innovative way to utilize Sandtray Therapy through teletherapy with the support of another professor and professional counselor. Professor Bargmann can be reached at [Jennifer.Bargmann@cuw.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Bargmann@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Bob Bruss** is a professor and the department chair of English at CUW. He teaches most things associated with English here. He has a PhD in Literature and Cultural Theory from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, but he also served on the Writing Program Administration, training new instructors and developing curriculum for the first-year-writing programs at UWM and Marquette before coming to CUW. His current research explores the implications of generative AI for college writing classrooms. Dr. Bruss can be reached at [Bob.Bruss@cuw.edu](mailto:Bob.Bruss@cuw.edu).

**Cheryl Cario** is a seasoned Reading Specialist and Literacy Coach with over 25 years of experience in both public and private schools. She currently serves as the Reading Specialist at St. John's in Glendale, WI, the only Lutheran school in the area with a dedicated reading specialist. In addition to her role at St. John's, she is an adjunct Literacy Professor at Concordia University and a literacy consultant. She has presented at the Wisconsin State Reading Convention and co-authored a Sight Word Intervention Book, contributing to effective literacy instruction and intervention strategies.

**Jan Chapman** has a vast background and years of experience in special education administration working in both the public and private sector. Jan has been a Special Education and Pupil Services Administrator, a teacher, and she has served as a parent mentor and advocate for families with children with special needs. Jan has served on various national, state and local boards as an educational consultant. She is a member of the Council for Exceptional Children – Division of Career Development and Transition, Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services, and the Association on Higher Education and Disability. Jan is currently employed at Concordia University as the Director of Alternative and Graduate Special Education Programs, and as an Adjunct Professor in the Educational Administration Licensure Program. Professor Chapman can be reached at [Jan.Chapman@cuw.edu](mailto:Jan.Chapman@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Preston Cosgrove** is a Professor in the School of Education at Concordia University Wisconsin, where he teaches research and design thinking courses in the leadership doctoral program. He and his wife Jennifer have been married for 20 years and have two teenage daughters. Beyond work, he enjoys being outdoors with his family, prioritizing reading, and also playing wheelchair basketball (seriously!). Preston and his family are active in their church, where he currently teaches a teenage Sunday school class and leads a weekly men's bible study. He can be reached at [Preston.Cosgrove@cuw.edu](mailto:Preston.Cosgrove@cuw.edu).

**Katie Daane** is a secondary educator with over twenty years in the high school English classroom and a recent graduate of Concordia's Masters of Education program. Committed to enhancing her students' educational experience, she continuously adapts her instruction to meet students' needs and embraces innovative teaching strategies. As an educator and Academic Dean at an all-boys Catholic seminary high school, her work is more than just a profession—it is a vocation that has profoundly shaped her life as she prepares her students to live with faith and purpose.

**Trisha DePasquale** makes teaching social studies fun with realistic travel lessons for you and your students. Trisha has been an early childhood educator for more than 18 years and a world traveler. Teaching kids about the world and providing teachers with resources to bring the world to their classrooms has become her passions. She founded Passport Adventures and American Adventures as a unique way to make children feel as if they are actually traveling to these places.

**Dr. Amanda DeSua** is a first-generation college student who works as a School Counselor in Waukesha, WI. She has been in the profession for over 20 years. She also teaches as an adjunct professor for Concordia and Lakeland's counseling graduate programs. She has written two children's books, *Frog Slime: A Child's Guide to Calming Down* and *Panda's Pause* that promote healthy coping skills and mindfulness practices for children. She is passionate about trauma informed practices and promoting empathy for others. Dr. DeSua can be reached at [Amanda.DeSua@cuw.edu](mailto:Amanda.DeSua@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Alexa Doebele** is professor of music, director of choral activities, and director of graduate church music at Concordia University Wisconsin, where she conducts Kammerchor, Selah, and the Chapel Choir, as well as teaches courses in music education and parish music. She is a frequent clinician, adjudicator, and guest conductor, and is active as an editor of choral music. She is also active as both a solo and choral singer, having appeared with the Milwaukee Chamber Choir, Vox Antiqua, the Milwaukee Choral Artists, the Colorado Conductors' Chorus, the Ars Nova Singers, and St. Martin's Chamber Choir. She serves as the Adult Choir director at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa. Dr. Doebele can be reached at [Alexa.Doebele@cuw.edu](mailto:Alexa.Doebele@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Karla Erwin** has held various roles within K-12 public schools, including classroom teacher, ESL teacher, Instructional Coach, and Reading Specialist. For the past 13 years, Dr. Erwin has been a professor at CUW, where she teaches in the graduate literacy program. In addition to her teaching roles, Dr. Erwin is dedicated to educational research, curriculum development, and professional development initiatives, aiming to bridge gaps in literacy and learning. She can be reached at [Karla.Erwin@cuw.edu](mailto:Karla.Erwin@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Linda S. Hensel** is a Professor of Education and Department Chair of Special Education at Concordia University Wisconsin. She teaches behavior management, curriculum and methods and assessment courses for pre-service special educators. Prior to coming to higher education, she taught learners with a wide variety of abilities at the early childhood level. Her research interests include educating learners with varying abilities in private schools, using problem-based learning with students studying education, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. Dr. Hensel can be reached at [Linda.Hensel@cuw.edu](mailto:Linda.Hensel@cuw.edu).

**Dr. James D. Juergensen** (Dr. J), an Associate Professor in the School of Education and Director of LCMS Teacher Placement, joined the faculty of Concordia University Wisconsin in 2011. Before that time, he served as a teacher, coach, and administrator in Lutheran middle and high schools for 10 years. He then served for 8 years as the Director of Secondary Education at Concordia University in Seward, Nebraska. An alumnus of Concordia University Wisconsin, Dr. J received his BA in secondary education in 1993 and his MS in Educational Administration in 1995. He earned his doctorate in educational leadership from Cardinal Stritch University in 2004. Dr. J is a member of the Concordia University Wisconsin athletic hall of fame for basketball and baseball. Dr. J is blessed with an awesome wife Stephanie (a CUW grad) and 3 great children – Jessie, Jimmy, and Ellie. Jessie and Jimmy are current Lutheran school teachers and Ellie is a junior at CUW preparing to be a Lutheran school teacher as well. Dr. Juergensen can be reached at [J.Juergensen@cuw.edu](mailto:J.Juergensen@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Kathleen Kannass** is the director of the Leadership in Innovation and Continuous Improvement (LICI) PhD ([www.cuw.edu/phd-lici](http://www.cuw.edu/phd-lici)) and EdD ([www.cuw.edu/edd-lici](http://www.cuw.edu/edd-lici)) programs at CUW. She is a developmental psychologist by training, and her areas of expertise include cognitive development in infancy and early childhood, research methodology, and statistics. Kathleen enjoys teaching Sunday School and is a member of the Faith Development committee at her church. She and her husband have twin 11-year-old boys, and they enjoy spending time outdoors, especially in northern Wisconsin. Dr. Kannass can be reached at [Kathleen.Kannass@cuw.edu](mailto:Kathleen.Kannass@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Laura Kaae, PsyD** is the program director for Concordia's graduate program in School and Clinical Mental Health Counseling. She is a licensed clinical psychologist and current behavioral health officer for the Wisconsin Army National Guard. Prior to her role at Concordia, she has served as a military psychologist throughout the US and in the horn of Africa region. She holds a masters degree from Texas A&M- Central Texas in Counseling Psychology and doctorate in Clinical Psychology from American School of Professional Psychology in Washington, D.C.

**Dr. Kirsten Kasten** has spent the past 25 years shaping minds and hearts, from the tiniest learners in early childhood classrooms to aspiring doctoral scholars. As the Director of Licensure and Assessment and an Assistant Professor at Concordia University, she teaches human relations, instructional best practices, and research methods, while also serving as a dissertation chair. Her research dives deep into teacher mental health and relational grace, exploring how the power of connection impacts education, well-being, and public health. When she's not teaching, mentoring, or researching, she's spending time with her three amazing daughters (21, 17, and 11) alongside her husband of 25 years, a fellow educator and coach. With a heart for learning and the goal of supporting others, Dr. Kasten is on a mission to make education not just effective and engaging, but deeply meaningful and relational. She can be reached at [Kirsten.Kasten@cuw.edu](mailto:Kirsten.Kasten@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Val Keiper** received his Master's degree from University of Wisconsin Milwaukee and his Ph.D. from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He is the last connection between the old Concordia campus near downtown Milwaukee and now in Mequon. He began both the Early Childhood program at Concordia in 1983 and the baseball program in 1982. He has been married to his wife, Karen, for 41 years. He has raised 3 boys- all of which graduated from CUW- and has 2 grandchildren. Dr. Keiper tirelessly works to develop relationships with the students, faculty, and staff God places around him. He can be reached at [Val.Keiper@cuw.edu](mailto:Val.Keiper@cuw.edu).

**Dana Kirchoff** is the Founder and Principal Consultant at [Blueprint Schools](#). Dana has served schools, churches, and ministries across the country for 20 years in the roles of Strategic Growth Consultant, Vice President of Growth and Marketing, and, at the beginning of her career, as a teacher. In addition to consulting and leading Blueprint Schools, she avidly presents, writes, and shares on social media on the subjects of organizational development, marketing, and growth. Dana lives in Appleton, Wisconsin with her husband Ryan and their two children.

**Ryan Kirchoff** is a Lead Consultant of Student Learning at [Blueprint Schools](#). Ryan serves as Instructional Coordinator at Fox Valley Lutheran High School. In the past, he has served as Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the PreK-12th grade program at Divine Savior Academy in Doral, FL, and as Athletic Director at California Lutheran High School in Wildomar, CA. He is passionate about student learning, helping school ministries develop Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and using AI to equip and empower teachers ([check out his ChatGPT for Teachers course!](#)) Ryan holds a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction and a Bachelor's in Education.

**Sid Larson** has been preparing for this workshop for over fifty years! He began his teaching career as an eighth-grade humanities teacher and quickly saw deeper learning taking place when teachers treated their students as apprentice historians, artists, and authors. He has served as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, literacy coach, and as a dean of students. He has also served as a CESA literacy consultant specializing in supporting schools' efforts to initiate disciplinary literacy. Professor Larson has served at for CUW for over ten years, and can be reached at [Sid.Larson@cuw.edu](mailto:Sid.Larson@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Amy Lindgren** is an Associate Professor of Education and the Elementary/Early Childhood Department Chair at Concordia University Wisconsin. She received her B.A. in Elementary Education with an emphasis on science and her M.S. in Early Childhood Education from Concordia University Wisconsin. Prior to her call to higher education, Amy taught middle school, preschool, and kindergarten for fifteen years in Lutheran schools in both Ohio and Wisconsin. She completed a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership with an emphasis on Early Childhood Education from Concordia University Chicago. Her dissertation is entitled: The Development of Teacher Agency in Nature Preschools: Perceptions of Teachers and Directors. Amy has served at CUW since 2011 and teaches most of the upper division coursework in the Early Childhood Education Department including: Creativity in Early Childhood, DAP Curriculum and Methods of Early Childhood, Math Methods for Early Childhood, Science and Environment in Early Childhood, Health, Safety, and Wellness for Young Children, and Early Childhood Pre-Student Teaching. Additionally, Amy teaches Elementary methods coursework in Science and Social Studies. Dr. Lindgren can be reached at [Amy.Lindgren@cuw.edu](mailto:Amy.Lindgren@cuw.edu).

**Mike Loveless** has been teaching Social Studies at Martin Luther High School for thirty-three years. He is currently the head of the Social Studies department. For the past two years, Mike has also served as the Instructional Coach for the school's faculty. He holds a Master's Degree in Education from Cardinal Stritch University and a Master's Degree in History from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Mike has served as an adjunct professor at Concordia University Wisconsin in the School of Education.

**Sarah Mayer** has served in education for almost 25 years, spanning the ages of third graders to graduate students. She earned a bachelor's degree in education from Martin Luther College, a master's degree in music education from VanderCook College of Music, and a certificate in Mentoring and Coaching from Wichita State University. Sarah is currently working on her dissertation to complete her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Wichita State. Sarah's family (husband, 2 children, 3 dogs) resides in Menomonee Falls. Professor Mayer can be reached at [Sarah.Mayer@cuw.edu](mailto:Sarah.Mayer@cuw.edu).

**Tim Mueller** has been teaching K-8 physical education at Erin School since 1992. A national presenter, he was honored as the 2016 Wisconsin and 2017 SHAPE Midwest Middle School PE Teacher of the Year. As an adjunct professor at Concordia University Wisconsin, he teaches the Methods of Teaching Elementary and Secondary PE courses. Tim specializes in team building and helping educators create positive learning environments across all grade levels.

**Dr. Nicole Muth** has taught math and education courses at Concordia University Wisconsin for the last 19 years. She has a master's degree in Mathematics Education and a Ph.D. in Education Technology Management. In addition, she directs Concordia's Compassion Care Certificate and works with the School of Education Comfort Dog Runner. Nicole lives in Sheboygan with her husband Tim, a social studies teacher at Sheboygan Area Lutheran School, and has 3 grown children and a daughter-in-law. Dr. Muth can be reached at [Nicole.Muth@cuw.edu](mailto:Nicole.Muth@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Adam Paape** serves as Professor and Assistant Dean in the School of Education at Concordia University Wisconsin, where he provides dedicated support to teacher candidates across undergraduate, accelerated, and master's-level initial licensure programs. His leadership emphasizes effective mentoring and the development of practical teaching strategies that prepare candidates for success in their own classrooms. With extensive experience in mathematics education, Dr. Paape focuses on promoting deep, conceptual understanding through engaging instructional practices and meaningful mathematical tasks. He has contributed to mathematics teacher education at the state level, serving with the Wisconsin Mathematics Council and collaborating on statewide initiatives to set standards for mathematics teacher preparation. Dr. Paape can be reached at [Adam.Paape@cuw.edu](mailto:Adam.Paape@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Jim Pingel** is the School of Education Dean for Concordia University (Mequon and Ann Arbor). As an active member of ALSS (Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools), he also advises and does consulting work for Lutheran schools across the country. He has published books on Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Christian education, athletic coaching, and Christian leadership. Pingel previously served as Executive Director at Sheboygan Area Lutheran High School (Sheboygan, WI, 2004-2013) and as teacher, coach, Dean of Students, and Executive Director at Mayer Lutheran High School (Mayer, MN, 1994-2004). Pingel enjoys reading, rooting for the Green Bay Packers, traveling with his wife, Michelle, to visit their adult children, and consuming great pizza on Friday nights. Dr. Pingel can be reached at [James.Pingel@cuw.edu](mailto:James.Pingel@cuw.edu).

**Deborah Rehman, M.A.** is a dedicated literacy educator with extensive experience as a reading teacher, reading specialist, and literacy coach. She has served in various roles, including ELA coordinator, EL co-facilitator, and K-12 literacy consultant. Throughout her career, she has supported graduate literacy candidates and now serves as an adjunct professor at CUW. Passionate about evidence-based literacy practices, Deborah thrives on collaboration and lifelong learning alongside students, teachers, and fellow educators. Professor Rehman can be reached at [Deborah.Rehman@cuw.edu](mailto:Deborah.Rehman@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Jenna Roeske** just completed her 8th year at Trinity as principal and her 13th year in the teaching ministry. In addition to serving as principal, she taught 8th-grade English and writing. She is a two-time graduate of Concordia University, Wisconsin—once for her undergraduate and once for her Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Dr. Roeske (now a full-time mom!) and her husband Tom, a teacher at Sheboygan Lutheran High School, reside in Kohler with their three children: Everett, Clara, and Henry.

**Dr. Christine Scudella** is a faculty member at the School of Education at Concordia University and the Director of Education Administration. With 19 years of experience as a public school administrator across elementary, middle, and high school levels, she brings a wealth of practical expertise. Her research focuses on leadership, building culture and relationships, and educational supervision and evaluation. Dr. Scudella is dedicated to fostering collaborative environments that support educator and student growth. Through her work, she contributes to shaping the next generation of educational leaders. Dr. Scudella can be reached at [Christine.Scudella@cuw.edu](mailto:Christine.Scudella@cuw.edu).

**Rob Seder** grew up in Hubertus, WI and attended Germantown High School. He has earned a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish, a Bachelor of Business in Marketing and Finance (UW Oshkosh), and a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction (CUW). He has been teaching at Lake Country Lutheran since 2004. He has 2 kids, and loves outdoor activities like tennis and training.

**Dr. Angela L.E. Walmsley** is a Professor of Education at Concordia University Wisconsin as well as an Educational Consultant at Interactive College Prep. She has been working in the field of education for approximately twenty-five years with a focus on mathematics and statistics education. She has taught undergraduate education courses, doctoral education classes, mathematics education courses, statistics and advanced statistics, and research methods courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels -- directing multiple dissertations and theses. Dr. Walmsley has authored five books and approximately thirty articles -- the majority in the field of K-12 education. She can be reached at [Angela.Walmsley@cuw.edu](mailto:Angela.Walmsley@cuw.edu).

**Professor Kristy Wegner** has earned a B.S. in Education, and has received her instructional coaching and mentoring certificates from Cardinal Stritch University (2013), and earned a Master's degree in Education from Wisconsin Lutheran College (2018). She has taught early childhood, elementary school, and middle school students, as well as adult learners. She has served as a teacher, director, founding principal, and administrator. Kristy has always had a passion for supporting teachers and professionals in their roles and leading them to greater performance outcomes. For the last 10 years she has been on the administration team at St. Marcus Lutheran School, and is now an Assistant Professor at Wisconsin Lutheran College. She enjoys brewing kombucha, hiking, and spending time with her mother, husband, adult children, and new grandson.

**Dr. Seth Westfall** has worked in the field of education for almost 30 years. She has served as classroom teacher, literacy coach, instructional coach and building administrator in PreK – 8 before moving into higher education. Dr. Westfall has taught in teacher and administrator preparation and now serves as an instructional coach and instructional designer in higher education. She earned her doctorate in Education Leadership with a focus on Curriculum and Instruction. Dr. Westfall can be reached at [Seth.Westfall@cuw.edu](mailto:Seth.Westfall@cuw.edu).

**Dr. Steven Witt** a PhD scholar, researcher, and director of Graduate Literacy, specializing in best-practice educational theory and methods. A national and international presenter, he brings expertise in leadership and literacy practices, with a research focus on transformative leadership and coaching. Dr. Witt is the author of multiple works, including *Leadership Resilience: The Path to Possibilities* and a book on transformative research practices. His work empowers educators and leaders to foster resilience, innovation, and meaningful change in their fields. Dr. Witt can be reached at [Steven.Witt@cuw.edu](mailto:Steven.Witt@cuw.edu).