

**DRAFT Program and list of breakout sessions
as of Tuesday November 26, 2025**

The program is subject to change

2025 Annual Conference



WERA



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

DRIVING EXCELLENT INSTRUCTION

LET THE DATA SPEAK

December 10 - 12, 2025
Marriott Tacoma Downtown

Wednesday, December 10

Separate Pre-Registration Required

7:30-9:00:

Check-in and Continental Breakfast

9:00-12:00: Pre-Conference Morning Sessions

1. What's Possible ~ Opportunities for System Transformation with the New HSBP Platform.

Location: Point Defiance (3rd Floor)

Presenters: Kim Reykdal, Graduation & Pathways Preparation Director; Abby Anaya Bedell, HSBP Program Supervisor; Jen Appleyard, Director of Data Governance; and Alicia Buxton, SchoolLinks

This half-day pre-conference session will empower participants to systematize the use of HSBP platform information to facilitate partnerships and connections that create opportunities for students, and streamline existing workflows to increase efficiency and improve postsecondary outcomes. Additionally, all participants will build understanding about and confidence in how Washington's K-12 public education students, staff and families and related educational, college and industry partners will benefit from the transition to the new universal HSBP tool, SchoolLinks.

2. Prompt Alchemy: Designing AI Assistants & Agents on the Fly.

Location: Tacoma Room (2nd Floor)

Presenters: Kris Hagel, Chief Information Officer, and James Cantonwine, Director of Research & Assessment, Peninsula School District

Turn a single prompt into a full-service helper. In this fast-paced, hands-on session we'll demystify prompt chaining—the art of linking prompts so an AI can carry out multi-step tasks like cleansing MTSS data, drafting reports, or sending smart reminders. You'll watch us build an assistant from scratch, explore free and low-cost platforms, and leave with plug-and-play templates plus a rubric for evaluating your own chains' accuracy, ethics, and impact.

3. Supercharging Tier 1 Instruction: Strategies to get more growth from all students, in all subjects, at all levels.

Location: Proctor I (2nd Floor)

Presenter: Gene Kerns, Chief Academic Officer, Renaissance Learning

You've probably heard the saying, "You can't intervene your way out of a Tier 1 problem." This is certainly true given that strong core instruction is the foundation of an effective MTSS implementation. Yet, few schools meet the age-old rule-of-thumb of 80 percent of students progressing appropriately solely with Tier 1 services. This session will focus on research-based ways to supercharge daily instruction that can be implemented at any grade level and in any content area and how administrators can support their implementation. Topics of focus will include the following

- The potential of formative assessment to increase student performance
- Specific instructional strategies that can be easily and immediately implemented
- The over-looked connection between formative assessment and student motivation
- Special considerations for those in leadership roles about how to support implementation

4. Before Data Speaks, It Needs a Script: How to Successfully Gather Data, From Request to Results.

Location: Union (3rd Floor)

Presenters: Kaitlin Throgmorton, Senior Data Governance & Operations Specialist, Matt Borda, Research Scientist, Dani Fumia, Senior Research Scientist, Natasha Rosenblatt, Senior Data Governance and Operations Specialist at ERDC/OFM

Come learn the theory and practice of successful data gathering, including sampling, cohort-building, and data minimization. Led by the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC), we'll use our expertise in facilitating data requests to show you how to construct a better research dataset. This interactive session includes short talks, activities with practice datasets, and small-group discussion. By the end, you'll know how to select an optimal population and timeline for your project, minimize data to privacy/security standards, make a data request, and explain your choices in your results.

5. Best Practices for English Language Proficiency Assessment Implementation.

Location: Stadium (2nd Floor)

Presenters: Sharon Coward, English Language Proficiency Assessment Coordinator, OSPI; Virginia Morales, Assistant Director, Multilingual Education, OSPI; Derek Tucci, Assistant Director of Assessment, Northshore School District; Quiana Hennigan, Student Assessment Coordinator, Everett School District

An interactive exploration of best practices in managing English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessments, this session will provide district assessment coordinators and program staff with an opportunity to engage in collaborative conversations around celebrating successes and overcoming barriers with ELP test administration, as well as sharing strategies and resources to increase effectiveness in managing ELP assessments.

6. WERA Education Journal Deep Dive.

Location: Commencement II (2nd Floor)

Presenters: Anthony Smith, Associate Professor, School of Educational Studies, UW Bothell; John Steach, the Center for Educational Effectiveness; Wendie Lappin Castillo, Central Washington University; Andy Boyd, North Central ESD 171; Chad Gotch, Washington State University; David M. Besterce, Riverside School District; Naomi Jeffery Petersen, Central Washington University

Meet and hear from the authors from the 2025 WERA Education Journal. Each author will present a summary of their article followed by time for facilitated questions and discussions. The topics include SEL through universal design, how a syllabus can foster a supportive campus environment, collaborative science education, school funding impact on the superintendency, and advancing literacy education. There is something for everyone in this session.

7. Your Data is Secondary to your Data Culture: Developing and Sustaining a Scalable, Positive Team Data Culture.

Location: Proctor II (2nd Floor)

Presenter: RJ Monton, Lead Consultant, Monton Consulting

Join this presentation to engage in collaborative learning with colleagues. You will investigate strategies to develop a positive team data culture that is not only spreadable, but scalable. This will be an interactive session where we will be introduced to multiple tools and strategies, then work with other session participants to develop plans to adapt for unique local contexts. From this all participants will be able to leave with tools and general action plans to begin to develop, sustain, spread, or scale a positive data culture at the local level.

12:00-1:00

Lunch

1:00-4:00

Pre-Conference Afternoon Sessions

8. Designing Dashboards That Drive Equity and MTSS.

Location: Point Defiance (3rd Floor)

Presenter: Josh Zarling, Director of District Data Services, Carmen Carrillo and Rex Cory, Tacoma Public Schools

In this hands-on session, you will create your own Power BI student report using real data and guided support. Ideal for educators, leaders, and data teams, whether you are new to Power BI, experienced, or looking to strengthen your current tools, you will leave with a custom report and new ideas. Learn how Tacoma's live WSIF reports support MTSS and help uncover inequities using Street Data principles to drive equity-focused, real-time decision making. Please bring a laptop with Power BI Desktop installed. Support will be available for anyone who needs help with installation.

9. Centering Racial Equity Across the Data Life Cycle: AISP's Updated Toolkit.

Location: Proctor II (2nd Floor)

Amy Hawn Nelson, Director of Training & Technical Assistance, University of Pennsylvania

Join us for an interactive session introducing the newly updated Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration (2025). This essential resource offers practical guidance for anyone working with data, with positive and problematic practices through each stage of the data life cycle. We'll also explore the companion Workbook, designed to help you put equity principles into practice, and examples of participatory governance. Whether you're a data professional or a community leader, you'll leave with actionable strategies to center racial equity at every stage of your data work.

10. Creating Surveys that Deliver Insight and Action.

Location: Commencement II (2nd Floor)

Presenter: Hilary Loeb, Independent Consultant, Hilary Loeb Consulting

Survey design is a multistage process that requires attention to many details and choices. In this interactive training, participants will learn how to develop questions that accurately measure experiences, behaviors and beliefs. The workshop will address strategies to create a meaningful sample, increase response rates and report survey findings to a wide range of audiences. The facilitator will share a range of free resources to support further learning, including survey questions, data visualization guides and data coaching activities.

11. Anatomy of a Mixed Methods Study.

Location: Proctor I (2nd Floor)

Presenter: John Steach, CEO, The Center for Educational Effectiveness

This session was developed as part of a Western Washington University Quantitative Research class to immerse participants in the frameworks behind designing and executing a mixed methods research study. The Center for Educational Effectiveness Outlier Study from 2020 is used to guide the discussion and exploration of each element from the overall plan to regression analysis, Z scores, residuals, and focus groups.

12. Creating a Foundation for Data-Driven Growth.

Location: Union (3rd Floor)

Presenter: Amy Jefferis, Senior Director, Assessment Implementation, Curriculum Associates

Empower educators and leaders to drive student success through data-driven improvement. This session covers foundational elements of a program-agnostic, district- or school-wide data literacy process. Participants will learn to evaluate data sources critically, analyze data effectively, and collaboratively set instructional priorities. Emphasis is placed on engaging diverse stakeholders in transparent, trust-building data conversations. Through practical strategies and modeling, attendees will develop action steps to improve instruction and sustain long-term data literacy efforts.

13. Navigating the Shifting Landscape: Immigration Reform and its Impact on Education.

Location: Stadium (2nd Floor)

Presenters: Maeghan Bowman, Director- Multilingual Education, Auburn School District; Jennifer Paterson McLaughlin, Senior Program Manager, Youth & Education, International Rescue Committee

Recent shifts in immigration policies and enforcement have created a complex environment for educational institutions and community partners. This session will explore the multifaceted impacts of these reforms, examining ways in which we can understand and address the resulting challenges. We will delve into the effects of uncertainty on students, families, and staff; the implications of suspended financial support; the impact on school enrollment; and the critical role of trauma-informed practices in supporting those affected.

4:30-7:00

Happy Hour

Hosted by Renaissance Learning

Zeek's Pizza (Upstairs)

1702 Pacific Ave,

Tacoma, WA 98402

Renaissance

See Every Student.

Please RSVP

WERA is excited to share the following **draft** program. While largely complete, it is still under development. Sessions may be removed or added in advance of the conference.

Thursday, December 11

7:00-8:30 Check-in and Continental Breakfast

(7:30-8:15 - DAC Welcome in the Point Defiance room, 3rd floor)

8:30-10:30

Opening Session

Keynote Address

Dr. Amy Hawn Nelson, Director Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy
at the University of Pennsylvania

Considering Data Sharing Risks and Benefits in Complicated Times

10:30-10:45:

Transition time

10:45-12:00:

Breakout Session #1

1.1 Keynote Follow-Up Session.

Location: Point Defiance (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Dr. Amy Hawn Nelson, Research Faculty, University of Pennsylvania

Description: This session will give participants the opportunity to discuss ideas presented at the keynote presentation as well as raise questions and make comments.

1.2 How and Why Student Self and School Perceptions Have Changed Over the Past 6-Years and What to Do About It.

Location: Union (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: John Steach, CEO, The Center for Educational Effectiveness

Description: CEE supports nearly 1/3 of WA districts in collecting student perceptions around both Culture & Climate and 21st Century Skills. From the macro level, learn how student's feeling towards school and themselves have shifted from pre-pandemic to today. As a group we will explore possible root causes of these trends and what your district and/or school can do to address urgent needs and get back on the track to success.

1.3 Research in Practice: Four Studies from the College of Education at the University of Washington Presented in a Facilitated Poster Presentation.

Location: Chambers Bay I (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenters: Jessica Rigby, Associate Professor, University of Washington and Sylvia Bagley, Assistant Teaching Professor of Equitable Instructional Leadership at UW

Co-Presenters: Gaelle Mounioloux, PhD student at UW; Beth Thompson, EdD student at UW; Kris Hill, EdD student at UW; Sarah Suarez, Hazel Valley Elementary School parent and Math Club Lead; Ammi Spencer, Instructional Specialist, Highline Public Schools; Stacie Kang Ricard, Instructional Specialist, Highline Public Schools; Gwenyth Masch, master's student, at UW, Stephanie Forman, UW; Nichole Lau, EdD student, UW

Description: In this facilitated poster presentation, four groups of practitioners and researchers will describe their research and how it matters for what happens in schools and classrooms. Each group will present their research for approximately ten minutes, and then participants will have the opportunity to go talk to the presenters and read more about the projects on the posters. Topics include:

- Empowering teachers' professional autonomy through using meaningful data
- Engaging with families' funds of mathematical knowledge in classrooms
- Designing and using a tool to measure students' ways of communicating as mathematicians
- Learning about principals' learning opportunities (and how they feel about them) across the state

1.4 From Data to Design: How a Regional Partnership Used Student-Level Data to Redefine Advising, Instruction, and Postsecondary Success for Black and Latinx Scholars.

Location: Tacoma Room (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Dr. Elizabeth Cook, Director of Postsecondary Operations, PSESD

Co-Presenters: Dr. Kristin McCowan, CCER and Nesley Bravo, CCER

Description: Leaders from Highline College, PSESD, and K–12 districts in South King County will share how they used student-level data to drive systemic change for Latinx student success. Highlights include a real-time FAFSA and enrollment dashboard, aligned advising structures, and Juntos—a culturally grounded learning community. Grounded in targeted universalism, the session offers practical insights on building cross-sector, data-informed partnerships that improve postsecondary readiness and outcomes across the high school-to-college continuum.

1.5 Death to Proficiency! Long Live Proficiency.

Location: Stadium (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Damian Betebenner, Senior Associate, National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment

Description: Educational accountability is broken. Proposed solutions often overlook why past efforts failed. In Death to Proficiency! Long Live Proficiency!, we draw on sports performance management to reconceptualize accountability as ongoing performance management. Using growth and achievement indicators currently derived by states we'll show how existing data can fuel continuous instructional improvement and avoid the pitfalls that have plagued accountability system design for the past two decades.

1.6 Beyond Compliance: Letting Funding Data Drive Innovation, Not Fear.

Location: Proctor I (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Nick Bontrager, DataXS & Eddi

Description: Many leaders treat federal and state funding as rigid or unpredictable, but most barriers are rooted in misunderstanding. This session from DataXS reframes programmatic funding (Title I–IV, LAP, TBIP, etc.) as a source of strategic insight, not fear. Learn how to spot low-impact spending, unlock flexibility, and align dollars with instructional goals. Stop waiting for perfect conditions—start maximizing what you already have.

1.7 Elevating Student Voice Through Virtual Mentorship: Insights from the Virtual Role Model Program.

Location: Proctor II (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Mark Cheney, Program Manager, Educational Service District 105

Co-Presenters: Hugo Moreno, Ricardo Valdez, CEO of RTI Corporation

Description: This session highlights the EIR-funded Virtual STEM Role Model Project, which connects rural, low-income, farmworker students with diverse STEM professionals and near-peer mentors. Presenters will share findings from student surveys comparing implementation and control groups. Key themes include mentorship impact, career uncertainty, STEM confidence, and support systems. Participants will gain strategies to center student voice and design equity-driven career readiness programs.

1.8 From summer slide to summer stride: Promising results from the Open Doors Summer Pilot.

Location: Commencement I (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Julie Petrokubi, Managing Researcher, Education Northwest

Co-Presenters: Mandy Paradise, Associate Director of Reengagement, OSPI, and Mary Padden, Senior Researcher, Education Northwest

Description: Funded by the legislature, the Open Doors Youth Reengagement Summer Pilot addresses the gap in summer learning for reengaging students age 16-21. Grants supported ten partnerships to expand summer learning, reengage youth who experienced detention or incarceration, and reduce barriers to school or work. An Education Northwest evaluation finds powerful outcomes for students and programs related to career-connected learning and basic needs. Let's discuss how innovative instruction, integrated student support, and community collaboration can keep students connected and thriving over the summer!

1.9 Answering the Questions That Count: Making Data work for Educators.

Location: Commencement II (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Jeremy O'Neil, Regional Vice President, Renaissance Learning

Co-Presenters: District Partners, to be identified

Description: In today's data-rich educational landscape, the challenge isn't collecting information—it's knowing which questions to ask and how to use data to answer them. This session empowers educational leaders to move beyond surface-level metrics and dig into the insights that drive meaningful change. Join us as we explore how to:

- Identify the most impactful questions around student learning, equity, and engagement.
- Align data systems to support strategic decision-making.
- Use whole child analytics to uncover trends and needs that traditional metrics may miss.
- Foster a culture of inquiry and continuous improvement across your district.

Whether you're navigating assessment results, climate surveys, or intervention data, this session will help you turn numbers into narratives—and insights into action.

12:00-1:00: Lunch

12:00-1:00: *Homeroom Connection User Meeting in Point Defiance, 3rd Floor*

Take your lunch to Point Defiance and learn how to take advantage of your new Early Warning application, as well as new cohort data for your peer benchmarking.

1:00-1:15:

Transition time

1:15-2:30:
Breakout Session #2

2.1 Postsecondary SIG Networking and Learning.

Location: Point Defiance (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: SIG Leadership Team

Description: Join us for a set of small group conversations on a variety of topics of interest to WERA members. Additional details forthcoming.

2.2 Aligning Identification and Services in Highly Capable Programs: Let the Data Speak!

Location: Union (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Nancy Hertzog, Professor, University of Washington

Co-Presenter: Dr. Jann Leppien, Professor Emerita, Graduate Studies in Gifted Education, Whitworth University

Description: Too often the focus on designing highly capable programs revolves around identifying students for the program. When identification processes are disconnected from service delivery models, the result can be a mismatch between student potential and the educational experiences provided. This session will examine how to interpret and utilize data more effectively to guide decisions about service design, curricular pathways, and instructional strategies. This presentation highlights the theme of the conference.

2.3 Using data-based decision making to maximize impacts of school-wide positive behavior supports.

Location: Chambers Bay I (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Carol Davis, Professor, University of Washington

Co-Presenters: Selena Killen, PhD Candidate, University of Washington; Steven Hakansson, PhD Candidate, University of Washington; Fernanda Ibarra, PhD Candidate, University of Washington

Description: Effective use of data can transform educational experiences for students and teachers alike, and foster more equitable learning environments. In this presentation, participants will learn about the critical role that both student and implementation data play in Tier 1 positive behavior supports, strategies for improving data collection consistency and quality, and guidelines for effective decision making and action planning.

2.4 Rethinking "Key-Chain Swap" and Other Decontextualized Algorithm Teaching Practices for Rational Number Learners.

Location: Tacoma Room (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Connor Desai, Middle School Math Teacher, Our Lady of Fatima Parish School

Description: An NCTM-funded study of 357 SPS sixth graders found that students at School A who demonstrated conceptual understanding of fraction division significantly outperformed their peers using decontextualized procedures like "keep-change-flip" ($p = 5.70e-13$, $d = 0.79$). The results suggest that conceptual understanding is a stronger long-term predictor of success than procedural fluency, and that targeted teacher PD can measurably improve rational number achievement.

2.5 Use Data to Tell Your Story.

Location: Stadium (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Tara Richerson, Director of Assessment and Data Management, Shelton School District

Description: How can educators use the data they collect to create visuals that communicate information and improve student outcomes? There are powerful stories inside every data set, yet most meaning is never extracted from the basic numbers. In this session, you will learn to apply best practices of data visualization, as well as basic principles of visual literacy, to create charts and other displays which communicate effectively with your audience. We will also consider the rise of feminist data visualization and representations of intersectionality within current conversations in this area.

2.6 AI as a Thought Partner: Automating District Systems and Data Dashboards Without a Coding Background

Location: Proctor I (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Sara Dessert, MTSS Specialist, Ferndale School District

Co-Presenter: Bobby Olsen, District Assessment Coordinator, Ferndale School District

Description: Learn how tools—such as ChatGPT, Looker Studio, and Google Apps Script—can transform MTSS systems and district operations by streamlining and automating processes once dependent on advanced programming expertise. This session highlights real district examples, including automated reporting, dynamic data dashboards, scalable class placement workflows, and student resource systems. Participants will leave with practical strategies to reduce time spent on manual tasks, improve data accuracy, and expand capacity for innovation across teaching, learning, and tiered support.

2.7 Increase Your Attendance Rates: Best Practices From the Field.

Location: Proctor II (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Phillip Smith, Senior Account Executive, SchoolData.net

Co-Presenters: Deb Knox, Assistant Director of Teaching & Learning and State & Federal Programs, Ephrata School District

Description: One of the most successful ways to enhance student outcomes is to maximize attendance. Good attendance is linked to higher student achievement and better post high school outcomes. Attendance rates for many districts in the state have not fully recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic. For districts struggling to find new methods to impact attendance, we will highlight innovative techniques and tools that have been shown to increase attendance rates.

2.8 Smartphone restrictions in school: perceptions of students, families and school staff.

Location: Commencement I (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Lucía Magis-Weinberg, Assistant Professor, University of Washington

Co-Presenter: Carly Gray, Postdoctoral scholar, University of Washington

Description: This session shares findings from research with Washington state schools on stricter smartphone bans. We present how students, staff, and parents perceive these policies, along with lessons learned and future recommendations. As more districts adopt smartphone restriction policies, timely research is critical. Our work supports evidence-based decision-making to ensure school practices reflect community experiences and promote effective, equitable learning environments.

2.9 Examining the Predictive Utility of Two Commonly Used Universal Screeners of Reading.

Location: Commencement II (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Patrick Gipson, Graduate Research Assistant, University of Washington

Co-Presenter: James Cantonwine, Director of Research and Assessment

Description: This session will describe the results of a research project that used multilevel modeling to compare the predictive utility of two universal screeners of reading as they relate to performance on the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA). Additionally, the predictive utility of previous years' SBA scores was examined to compare the classification accuracy of prior state test results to that of stand-alone universal screening measures.

2:30-2:45:

Snack break with transition time

2:45-4:00: Breakout Session #3

3.0 Assessment Directors Network Meeting.

Location: Chambers Bay 2//3rd Floor Ballroom

Lead Presenter: DAC Network Leadership

Co-Presenters: Dr. Derek Tucci, Assistant Director of Assessment, Northshore School District

Dr. Heather Stroh, Assessment Coordinator, Shoreline Public Schools

Brian Rick, Director, Research & Assessment, Bellingham Public Schools

Brian Loffer, Director of Assessment & Highly Capable Programs, Bethel School District

Description: This is the annual assessment directors networking meeting. Test coordinators and district assessment directors throughout the state are encouraged to attend to learn and network as we all continue to navigate the complexities of district and state assessment and reporting out to our various stakeholders.

3.1 Update for K-12 Learning Standards for ELA and Math.

Location: Point Defiance (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Angela Allen, Associate Director of Learning Standards, OSPI

Description: This session will focus on an update for the Washington State K-12 Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics.

3.2 Coaching Meets AI: Using Chat GPT to Deepen Reflective Practice in TPEP.

Location: Union (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Michelle Lewis, Executive Director of Learning and Innovation, Sumner-Bonney Lake School District

Description: Discover how a custom version of ChatGPT is being used in the Sumner-Bonney Lake School District to support principals and teachers in learning-focused conversations aligned to Washington's instructional and student growth frameworks. Grounded in the principles of transformational coaching, this session will demonstrate how AI can elevate the quality of reflection, promote growth, and strengthen instructional leadership in the TPEP process. Participants will explore practical applications of this innovative tool to deepen professional dialogue and elevate practice.

3.3 Learning Across the Gaps: Using Data to Strengthen Regional Collaboration and Capacity in Uncertain Times.

Location: Chambers Bay I (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Paul Miller and Ciara Knight, Sankofa Consulting

Co-Presenters: Amy Ly, Kareen Borders, Mollee Shultz, Dr. Liz Cook, Jake Ptacek, John Steach, Richard Ashford, Nesley Bravo, and Dr. Kristin McCowan

Description: Across Washington, regional partnerships are building new ways to understand and strengthen how systems collaborate—not just what programs deliver. This session highlights how the Horizons Regional Partnerships are using self-assessment tools to evaluate regional capacity across advising, backbone leadership, partnership effectiveness, and data use. Local Measurement, Learning, and Evaluation (LMLE) partners and backbone leaders will share early insights into what's working, what remains challenging, and how cross-sector teams are navigating the political, technical, and relational complexities of this work. Participants will explore both the strengths and limitations of using data to assess partnerships—considering how such tools can foster trust, sharpen priorities, and strengthen the conditions for student success.

3.4 Teacher Support Experiences & Challenges for Mid Career Teachers of Color.

Location: Tacoma Room (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Robin Henrikson, Associate Professor; Director of Assessment, Seattle Pacific University

Co-Presenters: Stephanie Thomas, Assistant Director of Licensure, Accreditation & Assessment, OSU; Connor Desai, Middle School Math Teacher, Our Lady of Fatima Parish School

Description: This session unpacks a program evaluation aimed at understanding the needs of teachers of color within Washington State during their pre-service, early, and mid careers. Interpersonal relationships and conflict amongst colleagues regarding race and equity-based tensions, alongside a lack of mentorship and a lack of opportunities for leadership development, were among the challenges identified. Additionally, resources to support students with significant learning and social emotional needs were a point of concern. The session will explore evaluation-based findings and recommendations.

3.5 Implementation Science and Results of Five Year MTSS Grant in Washington State.

Location: Stadium (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Sandy Gessner-Crabtree, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, OESD114

Co-Presenter: Andrea Bowman, MTSS Implementation Coach, OESD 114

Description: Funded by a SPDG Grant, OSPI and the Nine ESDs engaged district teams across the state in installing a MTSS Framework. Learn how the results of this work was measured and the results in districts. The project used Implementation Science and the District Capacity Assessment to track the work of each district team. Come learn what conditions need to be present to make any initiative successful, but especially the MTSS Framework.

3.6 The State of Bilingual Education and Its Future: Exploring Local School, Program, and District Case Studies for Sustainable Multilingual Success.

Location: Proctor I (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Dr. Jamie Lee, Executive Director Federal Programs and Student Success, Puyallup School District

Co-Presenters: Dr. Jenai Choi, Principal, Federal Way Public Schools, Cecilia Tamayo, Assistant Director of Multilingual Education, Puyallup School District

Description: This session highlights emerging language programs, innovations in dual language instruction, and district strategies for equity and sustainability. Through real-world case studies, participants will explore how biliteracy data and language development trajectories are used to evaluate student progress and program impact.

3.7 Students speak: Youth-engaged methods in a large-scale statewide evaluation.

Location: Proctor II (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Julie Petrokubi, Managing Researcher, Education Northwest

Co-Presenters: Mandy Paradise, Associate Director of Reengagement, OSPI, and Mary Padden, Senior Researcher, Education Northwest

Description: Statewide evaluations to guide policy and practice often rely on traditional methods that may obscure the voices of participants. Learn how the Open Doors Youth Reengagement Summer Pilot evaluation brought together traditional methods with interactive approaches such as photovoice to invite students to tell their story about what matters most in summer programs. Education Northwest and OSPI will share lessons learned and resources for mixed methods work that engages the lived experience of students in the story of statewide impact. Participants will exchange tools and examples from their work

3.8 From Compliance to Collaboration: Organizing Schools for Shared Learning and Growth.

Location: Commencement I (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Elham Kazemi, Professor, University of Washington

Co-Presenters: Jessica Calabrese, Independent Consultant and Becca Lewis, Teaching Associate, University of Washington

Description: Realizing the ambitious and equitable goals we have for student learning takes deep and serious learning by school leaders and teachers. If we are going to accomplish our ambitious goals to recruit, support, and retain a diversified, energized, committed teaching faculty, then we have to organize schools for teachers to develop their craft collectively. We share the principles and strategies guiding a network of elementary schools to develop authentic collaboration among principals, coaches, and teachers in trusting and intentional ways to create schools where both adults and children thrive.

3.9 From Philosophy to Practice: One Washington District's Roadmap to Support Literacy Progress Monitoring.

Location: Commencement II (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Kristen Sadler, Senior Assessment Content Manager, Curriculum Associates

Co-Presenters: Laurie LaVassar, Literacy Teaching and Learning Specialist, Issaquah School District & Josh Sain, State Assessment Policy Director, Curriculum Associates

Description: As districts prepare for Washington's 2028 MTSS requirements, this session explores how Issaquah School District uses i-Ready Diagnostic and Literacy Tasks to support literacy screening, goal setting, and progress monitoring. Learn to use assessment data to drive intervention decisions, evaluate student response and rate of improvement, and ensure equity across all tiers. Participants will leave with practical strategies and examples to strengthen MTSS frameworks and build coherent, student-centered systems of support.

4:15-5:15: Client Appreciation Reception, 2nd Floor

Hosted by [SchoolData.net](https://www.schooldata.net)

4:30-6:30

Networking Reception

Hosted by Curriculum Associates

Miró Tapas

1502 Pacific Ave

Tacoma, WA 98402

 i-Ready

WERA NETWORKING EVENT

hosted in partnership with Curriculum Associates

Miró Tapas



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 4:30 – 6:30PM

1502 Pacific Ave, Tacoma, WA

Please come by for a drink, a light bite,
and a chance to connect!

Friday, December 12

7:00-8:30

Check-in and Continental Breakfast

8:30-10:30 Opening Session

Keynote Address

Dr. Dylan Wiliam, Emeritus Professor
at University College, London

10:30-10:45: Transition time

10:45-12:00: Breakout Session #4

4.1 Keynote Follow-Up Session.

Location: Point Defiance (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Dr. Dylan Wiliam, Emeritus Professor, University College, London

Description: This session will give participants the opportunity to discuss ideas presented at the keynote presentation as well as raise questions and make comments.

4.2 From Data to Direction: Leading Attendance Improvement.

Location: Union (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Sarah Frazelle, Senior Researcher, AIR

Description: Ideal for school and district staff seeking proactive attendance solutions, participants will learn how to uncover the root causes of student absenteeism and disengagement through data analysis, collaborative inquiry, and resource mapping. This interactive session will help participants identify attendance patterns, avoid common pitfalls in their analysis, and align student needs with available supports. It concludes with a hands-on activity using sample data and a case study to create a practical attendance support action plan that participants can take back to their school or district.

4.3 Digital Transcripts: Overcoming Barriers to Success.

Location: Chambers Bay I (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Travis Rush- Director of Educational Technology for AESD

Description: Discover how Washington is reimagining the transition from high school to college through a Gates Foundation-funded digital transcript project. This session explores current data-sharing challenges, the disconnect between K-12 and higher education, and the innovative solution that will streamline access, reduce administrative burden, and improve post-secondary outcomes for students.

4.4 Managing Working Memory with Effective Modeling.

Location: Tacoma Room (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Dr. Zach Groshell, Director of Steplab North America

Description: In this session, the presenter will explore key research and classroom-tested strategies for making complex ideas understandable to all learners. Drawing from the science of learning, participants will examine the worked example effect, principles of multimedia learning—including the strategic use of visuals—and the importance of interactivity and guidance fading during modeling. Through practical insights and evidence-based techniques, attendees will learn how to “break it down” in ways that support cognitive processing and foster deep understanding.

4.5 Designing core subject area pathways to improve postsecondary credential completion by incorporating local data, research-identified factors, and a novel “corequisite” running start model.

Location: Stadium (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Dan Gallagher, Director of Secondary Academic Programs & CTE, Shoreline School District

Co-Presenter: Ronak Patel, Executive Director of Research and Evaluation, The BERC Group

Description: Learn how one school district used publicly available postsecondary data and research-identified factors to redesign core subject area pathways and create additional student supports for postsecondary credential completion. A novel “corequisite” dual credit model in which students participate in a Running Start class while enrolled in a related high school support class will be presented, including preliminary outcomes based on regression analysis with a propensity score matched comparison group in a quasi-experimental design.

4.6 Developing Leader Capacity to Tell a Great Story with Data. Cancelled

Lead Presenter: Michelle Smith, Pasco School District

4.7 Student Voice Driven Instruction- Use Case from the Field.

Location: Proctor II (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Susan Rose, Assistant Principal, Quincy School District

Description: What would happen if we used student voice data as a key driver for instruction and systems level work? In this session, learn how Quincy High School leadership embedded student feedback as a foundational component of its TPEP, School Improvement Plan, and accreditation processes. You will discover how the school utilized the Student Story platform to streamline qualitative analysis, allowing a greater focus on actionable problem-solving.

4.8 Storytelling to Create Humanizing Mathematics Classrooms.

Location: Commencement I (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Puja Patel, PhD Student, University of Washington

Co-Presenter: Elham Kazemi, Professor of Mathematics Education at the University of Washington

Description: As our elementary classrooms become increasingly more diverse (racially, ethnically, culturally, linguistically, etc.), how can teachers open up spaces for students to have culturally and linguistically affirming experiences and how can this contribute to building positive mathematical identities? We will share a practice called storytelling to show how teachers can use the practice within mathematics teaching to make connections with their students and develop children's cultural, linguistic, and mathematical identities.

4.9 Data-Based Equity in Secondary Discipline Practices.

Location: Commencement II (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Dr. Deanna Bush, Middle School Teacher, South Kitsap School District

Description: Drawing on nearly 3,700 office discipline referrals and interviews with middle school students with disabilities about school discipline, this doctoral research presentation examines how systems for coding behavior data contribute to disproportionate discipline rates for marginalized students. Attendees will examine practical changes—both small and systemic—that MTSS teams can implement to improve support for students with disabilities and create more equitable, responsive discipline systems grounded in student-centered approaches.

12:00-1:00: Lunch

Door Prizes for Completed Sponsor Passports

1:00-1:15: Transition time

1:15-2:30: Breakout Session #5

5.1 From High School to Postsecondary: How Districts Can Leverage National Student Clearinghouse Data to Understand Postsecondary Outcomes.

Location: Point Defiance (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Katie Weaver Randall, Director, ERDC

Co-Presenters: Natasha Rosenblatt, Senior Data Governance and Operations Specialist, ERDC; Rhett Nelson, Director of Student Information, OSPI and Sarah Arslanian, Business Development Executive, National Student Clearinghouse

Description: In this session, you'll learn about different ways school districts can access and use the National Student Clearinghouse postsecondary enrollment and outcomes data available in Washington state. Each presenter will share details about their data products/visualizations, which may include cohort and measure definitions, timing of data extractions and product releases. An NSC representative will also provide background information on the National Student Clearinghouse including their national postsecondary coverage. This session will also engage the audience around general best practices in using data to understand student transitions and outcomes. By the end, you'll know how to access NSC data in Washington, what the similarities and differences are across the sources, and have examples of use cases and best practices.

5.2 AI as a Cognitive Partner: Leading Instruction that Deepens Thinking and Expands Possibility.

Location: Union (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Dr. Jann Leppien, Professor Emerita, Graduate Studies in Gifted Education, Whitworth University

Co-Presenter: Dr. Nancy Hertzog, Professor of Learning Sciences and Human Development, University of Washington

Description: Once data speaks revealing student needs, strengths, and misconceptions what comes next? This session explores how educators can harness AI as a cognitive partner to generate alternative instructional strategies and learning activities tailored to deepen student thinking and provide student advancement. Participants will examine how AI tools can be used to support rigorous, responsive instruction that encourages inquiry, creativity, and higher-order thinking. Join us to explore how AI can empower educators to lead with greater instructional alignment and flexibility in today's classrooms.

5.3 Data Viz SIG Gallery: Visualizing Changes.

Location: Chambers Bay I (3rd Floor)

Lead Presenter: David Ogden, Assessment Facilitator, Renton School District

Co-Presenters: Co-presenters will be selected from volunteers that want to share their visualizations

Description: Districts or service providers from across Washington sign up to share their data visualizations that align with the symposium theme: "Driving Excellent Instruction: Letting the Data Speak." Volunteers will have 5-7 minutes to share their data visualizations with 3-5 minutes of questions and feedback.

5.4 Improving Attendance Rates for Students Experiencing Homelessness.

Location: Tacoma Room (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Kayla Blau, Strategic Advisor, Housing and Education, Building Changes

Co-Presenter: Bétyna Berice, MPH, Senior Research Associate at Building Changes

Description: Since COVID-19, attendance rates continue to drop, especially for students experiencing homelessness. This session will utilize data from Building Changes' K-12 Report, which is an annual report about statewide education data regarding students experiencing homelessness, and qualitative data from listening sessions with youth experiencing homelessness to inform best practices for building more welcoming and inclusive school environments. Come learn about proven strategies to address chronic absenteeism and truancy for youth experiencing homelessness!

5.5 Student, Family, and Educator Voice for College and Career Systems Change.

Location: Stadium (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Alexis Sullivan, Senior Education Strategist, Scholar Fund

Co-Presenters: Amrita Heer, Senior Education Strategist at Scholar Fund; Brian Chu, Director of Systems Integration at Scholar Fund; Alejandra Perez, Director of Education Strategy at Scholar Fund

Description: Student, family, and educator voices must be at the center of all systems change. 15 schools across 3 regions in WA through the Horizon's initiative, implemented student, family, and educator surveys to drive their continuous improvement efforts to have more equitable college and career supports for students of color, rural, low-income, and first generation students. Scholar Fund will dive into the history, data collation, analysis, and facilitation of the results. We will share how regions are using this to create infrastructures and inform continuous improvement cycles in their practices.

5.6 Partnering through pandemic recovery: Examining the implementation and impacts of tutoring and summer school academic recovery initiatives.

Location: Proctor I (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Emily Morton, Lead Research Scientist, NWEA

Description: Despite recovery efforts, student achievement remains below pre-pandemic levels, especially in math and for historically marginalized students. Our study of 400,000 students across eight districts finds that summer school had modest, consistent positive effects on math, whereas high-dosage tutoring had more limited impact at scale. A deep dive into Guilford County Schools reveals that the more centralized design and implementation of summer school may have supported its success relative to tutoring.

5.7 Beyond Fidelity: Understanding Implementation of High-Quality Math Curriculum Through Multi-Stakeholder Data.

Location: Proctor II (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Drew Nucci, Research Associate, WestEd

Description: Explore findings from a multi-state study on how teachers, students, and leaders implement high-quality math curricula. This interactive session uses real survey data and district case examples to unpack implementation fidelity, student experience, and equity in access to rigorous math learning. Participants will engage in data dives and discussion to consider how to use similar tools to guide instructional leadership, teacher learning, and system coherence in their own contexts.

5.8 Building Systems for Success: Using Data to Drive Differentiated Reading Instruction in K-4 Classrooms.

Location: Commencement I (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: David Besteri, Instructional Coach/Interventionist, Riverside School District

Description: When 90% of second graders read below grade level post-pandemic, one elementary school transformed outcomes through systematic data use and collaborative inquiry. This session presents a mixed-methods study demonstrating how enhanced teacher ratios, strategic resource allocation, and continuous assessment created effect sizes up to 0.59. Participants will explore practical frameworks for implementing differentiated instruction and learn data-driven strategies for sustainable reading improvement.

5.9 Turning the Page: How Data-Driven Systems Transformed Literacy Outcomes.

Location: Commencement II (2nd Floor)

Lead Presenter: Beth Bourque, Assistant Director of Student Services, North Kitsap

Co-Presenters: Kelly Krantz, Literacy Coach; Gwen Lyon, Assistant Superintendent

Description: This session shares how our district strategically scaled MTSS to drive strong literacy gains. Over 5–7 years, we've blended high-quality core adoption, instructional coaching, and data-driven continuous improvement using PDSA cycles in PLCs. These efforts shifted us from isolated success to system-wide growth. Leave with a clear picture of how leadership, collaboration, and consistent data use build a culture of instructional excellence.

2:30-4:00: Team Time

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