



## *Schools to Watch™ Virtual Conference*

**FEATURING  
Dr. Anthony Muhammad**

*June 22-24 & 29-30, 2021*

### **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23**

**10:30 am – 11:30 am**

***Being Purposeful on the Quest for Success***

**STW Domain: Organizational Structures and Processes**

*Michael Hejducek, Jennifer Williams, Susan Bakus, Fort Settlement Middle School, TX*

In this session we will share how focusing on three primary organizational practices (personnel, planning, and priorities) provides us with pillars of student success. These three campus pillars include Pillar 1: Purposefully hiring, placing, and adjusting personnel; Pillar 2: Planning and building a master schedule to maximize personnel and use time effectively for PLCs, team planning, PD, and meetings; and Pillar 3: Prioritizing initiatives and practices. The pillars yield highly qualified staff and quality instruction on our quest for student success. **Session #101**

***EVERY Student Belongs and Succeeds!***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*Shannon Wilhite, Lone Oak Middle School, TX*

Everyone knows time is a huge factor when it comes to trying something new. Yet time invested up front, such as in becoming a School to Watch, pays off. Being a School to Watch gives a school state and national recognition, opens doors to new opportunities, and challenges campuses to improve constantly. See how one school became a School to Watch in 2011, redesignated three times, and has maintained a growth mindset that has resulted in innovations that help ALL students succeed, including a house system, room transformations, power hour, archery, and more. **Session #102**

***This Class Goes By Too Quickly***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Billy Buckley, Jaimie Ely, St. James Middle, SC*

Discover how to tap district-provided resources to create fun games and experiences while also keeping students engaged and motivated. The session will include examples of escape rooms, games, a class economy, and motivational tools to make your students say, "Your class is the best!" You will leave with templates and ideas to make these activities your own in any content area. **Session #103**

**12:00 pm – 1:00 pm**

***Climate, Culture, Ethos: A Foundational Approach to the Lesson Study Cycle***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Gabriel Diaz, Shauna White, Diane Bonjour, Carla Hernandez, Jesse Romero, Golden Valley Middle School, CA*

Join this engaging session to discover how the climate and culture of a school community is foundational on a journey with the Lesson Study Cycle. You will leave with a visual representation of a Lesson Study Cycle, a graphic organizer with guiding questions, and examples of cycle variations that can be used during the evolution of your community and the lesson study process itself. **Session #201**

***Induction Teacher Support in a School to Watch***

**STW Domain: Organizational Structures and Processes**

*Megan Carrero, Melissa Baker, R. H. Fulmer Middle School, SC*

Discover grassroots strategies for recruiting and retaining teachers for suburban schools that serve a diverse student population. As the demand for teachers increases, so does support for teachers entering the profession. You will leave with ideas on how to support early-career teachers as they transition to teaching in your high-performing middle-grades school community. **Session #202**

***Tips for Achieving Excellence in a Pandemic***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*Dan Diehl, LaDonna Caroselli, Sycamore Springs Middle School, TX*

Sycamore Springs Middle School excelled through the pandemic. More than 80% of our students attended in person and our attendance rate was the highest of the seven schools in our district. Why? Culture. See how our culture of innovation and student-focused teams found ways to excel during these trying times. See some of the strategies that staff and students utilized to excel, including digital hall passes, Cassie the emotional support dog, tiered intervention, effective collaborative teams, kid talks, and innovative electives. **Session #203**



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***The Power Hour<sup>3</sup>: Reset, Repair, Recover***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Peggy Jo McGonigal, Donna Jacobs, St. James Middle School, SC*

See how one school forged a win for students struggling with grades, work completion, or overwhelm. We will share how we successfully created and implemented the Power Hour program at no cost, using the resources and support staff we had in place to accommodate all students in need of assistance. The program starts with a monitoring system that uses a Google Docs template to identify students who are struggling and communicate with them and their families. Students in the program are assisted with organization, planning, and time management, so they may focus on their path, improve their grades, and strengthen their executive functioning skills. You'll leave with access to the Google Doc template. **Session #301**

***Incorporating ALL Language Domains in Your Instruction***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Tracy Fuentes, Ashley Alanis, Margaret Smith, Stevenson Middle School, IL*

The pandemic has changed the way we accommodate and meet the needs of English Learners (ELs) and children with disabilities. Discover strategies, technologies, and engagement tools that meet the needs of ALL learners and have proven successful at a school in which 36% of students are ELs. Specifically, the school incorporates SIOP strategies into classes. You will walk away with new tools and strategies that you can use to engage your students while incorporating all four language domains. **Session #302**

***Culturally-Responsive Teaching in Action***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Carissa Marin, Ann Jiron, Sunnymead Middle School, CA*

Culturally-responsive teaching practices are essential for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students to feel like they are part of a class community and to experience rigorous teaching and learning. In this session, you will gain two practices: one that will identify what students value to build community and empathy, and one that will support students in processing information to become independent learners. **Session #303**

**3:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

***Lessons Learned on the Journey to School-wide Differentiation***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Jennifer Hall, Rogers-Herr Middle School, NC*

Our middle school is now in the fifth year of a journey to implement differentiation school-wide. How do we foster a community of sustained and systemic professional development? How has each year differed? What are our next steps? Come find out how we have done this and how you can begin to implement something like this at your site. **Session #401**

***Collaboration with Google Slides and Jamboard***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Megan Medina, Dr. Dixie Melillo Middle School, TX*

In this session, you will discover ways in which students, both in person and virtually, can collaborate using Google Jamboard and Google Slides. You will be provided with examples on how to set up a Jamboard and a Google Slide Deck in a structured manner to accommodate all learners during different activities. You will leave with the knowledge of how to use these two programs for academic collaboration and building class community. **Session #402**

***Digital Portfolios: Sharks Are Making Waves***

**STW Domain: Organizational Structures and Processes**

*Kelly Garrity, Olga Toggas, St. James Middle School, SC*

Digital portfolios are the wave of the future! Learn how SJMS Sharks turned the tide of learning by using digital portfolios as a one-stop-shop for streamlining expectations for authentic assessments and teachers' evaluations. Leadership team members will share organizational structures that balance developmental responsiveness and academic excellence. You will leave with the knowledge of how digital portfolios can enhance teaching and learning, as well as links and directions to create portfolios in your own school! **Session #403**



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### **THURSDAY, JUNE 24**

**10:30 am – 11:30 am**

***The Raven Way: AVID School-Wide***

**STW Domain: Organizational Structures and Processes**

*Dayna Anthony-Swain, Joshua Duty, Chelsea Young, Katharine Howry, Decker Middle School, TX*

Experience how we use systems to improve scholars' performance, build confidence, encourage goal setting, and enhance engagement with MOVEIt! strategies. You will leave with tools in your toolbox to encourage engagement through movement, foster goal setting and ownership in learning by hosting student-led conferences, and increase school culture ratings through systematic approaches to leadership and learning. **Session #502**

***Growing Resilient Leaders***

**STW Domain: Organizational Structures and Processes**

*Mary Leslie Anderson, Tasha Brockman, Erin Rigot, Dana Swartzel, League Academy of Communication Arts, SC*

In this session you will discover how to lead with resilience and rebound from setbacks and unknowns. You will leave with tools for leading during tumultuous times and for supporting employees in order to increase productivity and success in the workplace. **Session #503**

**12:00 pm – 1:00 pm**

***Developing a Strong HEART to Support a Strong MIND***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*Antonio Viramontes, Kimberly Moyer, Brittney Davis-Fox, Sequoia Middle School, CA*

Establishing a positive foundation of climate and culture will support student achievement. Explore replicable practices to support your school's climate and culture, and see how our staff collaboratively developed a positive, supportive climate and culture through the lens of meeting social-emotional supports and needs. Come receive replicable school programs and practices, because a strong HEART supports a strong MIND. **Session #601**

***Do Your Teachers Feel Appreciated?***

**STW Domain: Organizational Structures and Processes**

*Kathleen Eckert, Hillwood Middle School, TX*

From special education and 504 meetings to state assessments, staff meetings, professional development, parent interactions, and grading, teachers are constantly pulled in 20 different directions. Yet showing appreciation to teachers is often limited by budgets and financial guidelines. See how one school makes teachers feel valued. We utilize a variety of strategies to let our teachers know they are the best! You will leave with ideas you can quickly and easily implement for little or no cost. **Session #602**

***Revitalize Your Campus Community with Family Events***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*Lisa Walls, Christina Miranda, Leah Cochran, Armando Chapa Middle School, TX*

Chapa Middle School was designated a School to Watch in 2011 and has redesignated three times. A Title 1 campus with 65% of students on free/reduced lunch, we have created a highly-invested community of parents, teachers, and students through family events. Discover ways to revitalize the life of your campus and community by hosting events such as Guys' and Girls' Night Out, Coffee with the Counselors, #DADSQUAD, Coffee House, Talent Show and a 5K Challenge. Come hear about our journey and gain tools to implement these ideas. **Session #603**



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### **THURSDAY, JUNE 24**

**1:30 pm - 2:30 pm**

***Student Voice! It Matters***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*David Arencibia, Jessica Heaton, Bridgett Visser, Colleyville Middle School, TX*

See how one school leverages student voice to maximize achievement. Our students' voices are at the heart of everything we do and are seen in all aspects of school life. Students provide insight to teacher instruction, school culture, the campus excellence committee, interviewing future teachers, professional development, student clubs, community service projects, and more! You will leave with many ideas on how your students can help lead your school to engaging, fun, and high-achieving levels! **Session #701**

***Encore Programs to Support Student Voice***

**STW Domain: Social Equity**

*Rachel Szydlo, Stevenson Middle School, IL*

In this session, you will discover the benefits of a diverse encore (specials) program. See how to create an equitable program that provides students with options. You will hear from current and former students regarding how they have been positively impacted by the program. You'll leave with practical scheduling templates and forms, as well as step-by-step directions for implementation. **Session #702**

***Hands-On Learning with Touchcast***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*Kiran Sidhpura, Stevenson Middle School, IL*

Discover how Touchcast can be used in your class for communication, creating interactive videos to engage your students, and as a way for students to express ideas in a form they love (video creation). You will leave with the knowledge of a free, great tool that can extend beyond student projects to daily announcements and a club where students gather to create daily news. Students in the club learn skills such as writing speeches, anchoring the show, editing videos, collecting and reporting information, communication, team

**3:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

building, and collaboration by taking on a role that teaches them real-life skills. **Session #703**

***Welcome to "Inspiration Café"***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*Kenneth Piascik, Joseph Pizzo, Andrew White, Black River Middle School, NJ*

Inspire your students by creating an Inspiration Café in your school. Learn about this unique way to inspire your students to learn about the journeys and dreams that have influenced the lives of successful people. Repurpose your classroom as you invite motivational giants to interact with your students both in person and via video conferencing. Please note: This is not a substitute for career day. **Session #801**

***Comprehensive Elective Programs for the Middle-Level Learner***

**STW Domain: Organizational Structures and Processes**

*Karen Hudock, Nick Beykirch, Daria Pizzuto, William Annin Middle School, NJ*

Discover course options that can help your school create a comprehensive elective program to meet the needs of 21st-century learners. Fine and practical arts, technology education, engineering, game design, and world language exploration develop students' analytical and real-world application skills while meeting their diverse needs. **Session #802**

***Using Tiered Interventions for Students' Academic, Emotional, and Behavioral Success***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*Eryne Racino, Danielle Savastano, Brion Bell, Blue Ridge Middle School, VA*

Blue Ridge Middle School uses tiered interventions to address students' emotional, academic, and behavioral concerns. The tiered approach in general emphasizes a community that is both data driven and relational. Examples of specific strategies within each tier will be shared, with an emphasis on student mental health and wellness. Participants will receive our tiered pyramid and handouts to help apply these skills to their own school and community. **Session #803**



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***Social Equity Starts With You***

**STW Domain: Social Equity**

*Toni Perry, Albemarle Road Middle School IB Academy, NC*  
#Justice4All...#WeAreFamily... #UnitedWeStand... Do you need strategies to address social equity in your school as it relates to master scheduling, communication, professional development, and MTSS? How do you build a cohesive culture that enriches the learning environment for all students? This session will model for you how a 2020 National STW IB middle school in Charlotte, NC provides a venue for students and staff to learn, lead, and collaborate in an ever-evolving environment impacted by social justice and diverse needs of students.

**Session #901**

***Engaging Students through Nearpod***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Gabrielle Creagh, Dr. Dixie Melillo MS, TX*  
Learn how to embed Nearpod's interactive activities within Google Slides to create lessons in which students can interact with classroom content. You will leave having a Nearpod account linked to your Google Drive and the confidence to create engaging lessons using both platforms. **Session #902**

***Supporting Success in an Oasis of Opportunity***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*Stacy Smalling, Doug Walters, Jen Smith, Twentynine Palms Junior High, CA*  
Come learn about our collaborative journey from a traditional intervention approach to a whole-child success model. See how student voice and teacher input catalyzed a shift in mindset, language, and program implementation to replace our former deficit model of intervention courses with a success strand within the master schedule. Comprised of three classes, all students take one success-strand class each year. These classes are geared to teaching and supporting the whole child and encompass all necessary learner skills such as social/emotional skills, organizational skills, tutoring, collaboration, leadership, goal setting, and future planning. **Session #1001**

**12:00 pm – 1:00 pm**

***Developing the Memorial Community for Social Justice Committee***

**STW Domain: Social Equity**

*Bret Strauss, Nakeshia Smith, Taylor Connolly, Tracy Alesia, Garrhett Schneider, Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School, NY*

In this session, you will hear about our journey in supporting the needs of our diverse community by establishing a community-wide social justice committee. This committee of community stakeholders oversees all elements of the school to ensure that all voices are heard and that our remarkable diversity is celebrated in all we do. **Session #1002**

***Retail Therapy with Aristotle: Getting Students to Buy What You Are Selling***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*Thomas Switzer, St. James Middle School, SC*  
Discover how to apply the lenses of rhetoric (credibility, logic, and emotion) to design lessons and classroom environments that build on the WHY for all that we do. You will leave with strategies to build relationships with students, parents, and colleagues through applying different persuasive techniques that align with what educators already do. Further, this session will allow you to self-evaluate and learn how to diversify your communication to reach broader audiences. **Session #1003**



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***Creating Bridges throughout Curriculum with Visual Art***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Rebecca Wengel, St James Middle School, SC*

Art is a useful tool for helping visual learners form a connection with content. In this session, you will discover a variety of methods within visual art that connect throughout the academic curriculum. You will leave with a bundle of lessons that will help you collaborate with your school's art teacher to encourage more hands-on learning. **Session #1101**

***Standards-Based Grading in Canvas***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Amy Feldman, Sunset Ridge Middle School, UT*

What is standards-based grading and why would you want to use it? Learn from a 15-year School to Watch that is advancing in technology and classroom procedures how to build outcomes and rubrics in Canvas to grade based on strands and standards rather than percentages. Building a working Canvas platform for your classroom can be hard, but with the help of these tools you can grade more efficiently and effectively. Learning to master the art of grading is challenging but it is also very rewarding. **Session #1102**

**3:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

***Intentional Design***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Melanie Pondant, Tracey Fernandez, Mary Taylor, Judson*

*STEAM Academy, TX*

In the session, you will explore methods to maximize the instructional day. You will leave with innovative ways to use the master schedule to your advantage. This system will foster teacher buy-in and increase teacher retention. **Session #1202**

***Standards-Based Grading: What It Is, What It Isn't, and Why You Should Try It***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Michael Tapee, Sarah Wilson, Hellstern Middle School, AR*

Embracing standards-based grading practices enables students to achieve academic success. Explore what standards-based grading really is, as well as what it isn't. Discover what traditional grading is missing and how, by using the standards, we can revolutionize how students learn and how we teach. Dig into student work samples and leave with a clear grasp of what standards-based grading looks like day-to-day, as well as resources to help you kickstart standards-based grading in your school. **Session #1203**



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***Leveraging Learning Pathways: How Challenge-Based Opportunities Promote Engagement and Achievement***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Amy Trojanowski, Catherine Shanahan, Steve Benner, Jennifer Maichin, Mineola Middle School, NY*

Explore aspects of learning pathways. The structure of a learning pathway features concept courses, choice challenge activities, and the application of knowledge assessments where learners earn badges as they progress. Benefits include an appeal for diverse learning styles; interest-based activities; social, emotional, and personalized learning opportunities; civic engagement; and deliberate connections to the pillars of the district mission statement. Learning pathways can also fulfill staff development needs; see examples of how student learning translates to professional learning. Finally, brainstorm ways in which learning pathways can complement learning in your school community. **Session #1301**

***The Power of Pear Deck***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Cathleen Lacey, Angela Burns, William Estes, Crayton Middle School, SC*

Learn how to transform your direct instruction and create engaging, formative assessment opportunities. Participate in the session from the student's perspective to experience the multi-platform versatility of Pear Deck. In any learning environment, Pear Deck has the power to convert traditional instructional presentations into dynamic lessons embedded with formative assessments. You will leave with ready-to-use strategies for your classroom. **Session #1302**

***Organized Chaos: Student Dismissal Under COVID Guidelines***

**STW Domain: Organizational Structures and Processes**

*Mary Beth Bennett, St. James Middle School, SC*

In this session, you will discover how to create an efficient controlled-dismissal system that allows for social distancing. You will leave with the knowledge of the materials needed to implement a low-cost, high-tech student dismissal system using online tools. You will also have the opportunity to create the backbone of such a system for your school. **Session #1303**

**12:00 pm – 1:00 pm**

***Creating a School Culture of Resiliency through Restorative Discipline***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*Cynthia Maldonado, South Texas ISD Preparatory Academy, TX*  
Restorative discipline can be used to increase student success and engagement; it allows schools to create an inclusive, caring environment for students to take risks and become engaged learners. Participants will learn how to create a school culture based on resiliency and caring relationships. School and classroom implementation activities will be shared to help explain the process of developing a discipline model based on accountability rather than punishment. **Session #1401**

***Title I Literacy Culture: Hiding in Plain Sight***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Jarrett Henson, Longs Peak Middle School, CO*

In this session, you will discover how we developed a culture of reading during a pandemic and how Title I students need the right tools at the right time to show their literacy skills and reading interests. You will leave with a template to develop your own secondary literacy events, technology tips to help lessen the labor of supporting the events, and a how-to guide for getting information in the hands of teachers and leadership. **Session #1402**

***WINing with Mentors and Mentees***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*Courtney Laney, Nick Carr, Jennifer Telder, Mt. Morris Middle School, MI*

Explore how one school combines a teacher-mentor/student-mentee program with What I Need (WIN) time to meet the needs of all students within the school and build a stronger community with all stakeholders. We will tour what goes into the planning of an effective mentor/mentee program and how it pairs with WIN in a student's daily schedule. You will leave with student-centered practices to support the domains of academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, and social equity through the use of these initiatives.

**Session #1403**



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***Connections: An Advisory Program that Finally Works!***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*Mike Hall, Kaitlin Remensky, Avonworth Middle School, PA*

See how this school finally landed on Connections, an advisory program that meets goals and excites both teachers and students. You will leave understanding the struggles that were faced in prior years and the roadmap for overcoming those challenges. We will take you through the step-by-step process we went through to use student voice and generate teacher support for our program. We will share our resources and professional development template. You can use our program as a foundation to create a program to fit your school's needs.

**Session #1501**

***Strategies and Activities to Boost Positive School Climate***

**STW Domain: Developmental Responsiveness**

*Carrie Hodkinson, Christina Ballard, Lucianna Kapps, Vernon Verona Sherrill Middle School, NY*

Think about how the weather can have a positive or negative effect on your day; the same idea goes for school climate. Each school has its own personality that sets the tone for everything that happens at your site. Attitudes are infectious whether they are sour or sweet! In this presentation, we will share activities and strategies that you can use right away to positively impact your school climate. **Session #1502**

***Dual Language Immersion Can Change Lives***

**STW Domain: Academic Excellence**

*Marlene Peña, Rosario Mendez, Flor Hernandez Saavedra, Badger Springs Middle School, CA*

In this session, you will learn how the world of a child can be transformed through the culture and communication of a Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program. You will hear stories of how our students immerse themselves in project based learning and National History Day research to enrich their experiences, knowledge, and social development. Practical suggestions will be shared which will allow you to apply these principles of pedagogy to your DLI program. **Session #1503**