

2024 Lutheran School Administrators Conference

Program Information

(See changes in red)

Sunday, March 10, 2024

Keynote (during lunch session 11:30am-1:00pm): Jim Sanft - “Leading by Faith, Not by Sight”

Leadership is a journey and with any journey there are numerous opportunities to learn and to grow along the way. In 15 years as CEO and nearly 25 years of executive experience, Jim Sanft has had his share of learning and growth. Jim will share key leadership learnings that apply to Christian leaders and emerging leaders.

Keynote (2:15-3:30 pm): Ryan Dunlap – “Delivering an Ideal Message in Less Than Ideal Circumstances”

In this keynote speech, we unlock the secrets to effective communication when the stakes are high and opinions diverge. Drawing from the world of crisis negotiation, we reveal practical strategies and techniques that enable us to connect with others and drive outcomes, even in the most challenging circumstances.

Attendees will learn the art of maintaining composure and building rapport when facing pressure, conflict, and disagreement. Audiences will delve into the mindset and tactics used by crisis negotiators to establish trust and open lines of communication to bridge divides, find common ground, and foster collaboration for positive outcomes.

Sectional A (4:00-5:00pm)

A-1 “The Best and Worst of EC/Elementary Teacher Leaders” by Jim Pingel (EC, EL, HS)

These are the best of teacher leaders and the worst of teacher leaders....A Supreme Court justice once defined obscenity by saying, “I know it when I see it.” Could the same be true for EC/Elementary teacher leaders—we know it when we see it? Come along for an exploratory journey as we examine definitive dispositions, habits, and practices of exemplary teacher leaders and ones who are not.

A-2 “Kingdom Worker Recruitment: Answers to Ponder” by Tom Wrege (EC, EL)

Our schools and other areas of ministry are perhaps different today than they were a generation ago. One of the most critical challenges may be moving the trends we see from fewer church workers from the LCMS to one of innovative recruitment. Find ways to creatively nudge and encourage those you serve, to prayerfully consider the blessings of how God can effectively use His people in ministry.

A-3 “Do We Plan for Faith Formation in Our Early Childhood Classrooms?” by Cheryl Haun (EC)

We will consider and expand on five critical questions that impact our faith experiences in the classroom. We provide the context for a child’s faith to grow, but only God

provides the power for it to grow. Participants will have an opportunity to “think-pair-share” throughout the training session. This module is an introduction to the five training videos, available through LEA’s project regarding “Spiritual Nurture in the Lutheran Early Childhood Classroom”.

A-4 “Understanding the Next Generation of Teachers” by Hannah Meineke (EC, EL)
Concordia Texas Professor of Education Dr. Hannah Meineke discusses ways in which teacher recruitment and retention has changed and will continue to change. She addresses the latest trends in hiring and certification. Current Concordia Texas Pre-Service teachers speak on their educational beliefs, values, and aspirations. This session will serve as a platform for discussion around obtaining teachers, recognizing assets, and increasing support of young future teachers.

A-5 ALSS Business Meeting (HS)

Monday, March 11, 2024

Keynote (during breakfast session 8:00-10:00am): Kurt Senske – “Creating A Governance Model That Becomes a Missional Advantage”

The role of a Lutheran school educator and board member has become increasingly complex. Best in class leaders are increasingly realizing that their school’s governance is intertwined with virtually every strategic decision. Based on research detailed in his critically acclaimed book, *The CEO and the Board: The Art of Nonprofit Governance as a Competitive Advantage*, Dr. Senske will demonstrate how effective governance is a key predictor of the success of your school. He will demonstrate how you can tailor your unique governance model so that it adds real, measurable value to your mission.

Sectional B (10:30-11:30am)

B-1 “Redefining Success” by Leslie Smith (EC, EL, HS)

What is the single greatest predictor of success after graduation? What qualities are valued most by employers and make a great leader? The answer is Emotional Intelligence. Discover why Emotional Intelligence is a more accurate predictor of success than IQ, academic achievement, and standardized tests. This session will challenge educators to assess success metrics and to develop new definitions through the exploration of Emotional Intelligence and its role in fostering a healthy school culture and an engaging learning environment."

B-2 “Don’t be Puzzled by the Idea of Expanding Your Facility; Putting the Pieces Together” by Dan Brown, Tom Campbell, Tim Kurth (EC, EL, HS)

Looking at all the pieces necessary to expand ministry and facilities can overwhelm. We will review the necessary steps, optimal timeline, feasibility and potential pitfalls to consider. The team at LCEF details every piece you need to complete the picture of ministry success. From campus planning, funding, capital campaigns, strategy, and so much more, you’ll realize all the pieces you must consider for success.

B-3 “Building a Culture of Professional Development” by Jim Pingel (EC, EL, HS)

A lot of schools and individuals talk about professional development and lifelong learning. But are they really invested and committed to it? In this sectional, we will unpack specific ways you can build and enhance your school’s focus on continuous improvement and professional growth. Whether you are a teacher or administrator, you will walk away from this interactive presentation with concrete ideas and concepts you can implement immediately in your personal and professional vocations.

B-4 “Magnetic Pull - How to Use the Attraction of Retirement Benefits to Recruit and Retain Workers” by Brian Page (EC, EL, HS)

Workers are attracted to retirement benefits and capitalizing on this attraction can enhance your recruitment and retention efforts. In this interactive and engaging session, we’ll uncover best practices for integrating the CRP Pension and CRSP 403(b) plans into your comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy. Additionally, you’ll get a closer look at the CPS retirement plans and gain insights into confidently talking about these plans. You will laugh, learn, and leave excited about using retirement benefits for retaining and recruiting talent.

B-5 “Early Childhood Finance - Margin for the Mission!” by Aimee Knoepfel (EC)

Do you find yourself navigating the financial maze of early childhood centers with a furrowed brow and calculator in hand? Managing budgets may not be every early childhood educator’s favorite activity, but fear not! This session will provide you with a budget forecasting template spreadsheet, specifically created for early childhood centers, along with practical tips and tricks to make budgeting an enjoyable and less stressful experience. Don't forget to bring your laptop to this session so you can download the spreadsheet, allowing us to work together during the presentation. Leave with increased confidence in your budgeting abilities and knowledge that you are truly managing the resources entrusted to you, just as good stewards would.

B-6 “Let's Talk about the Big I” moved to D-8 (Tuesday 10:00-11:00am)

B-7 “Why Do People Support Your School Financially? Knowing the Answer Can Change Your World” by Cole Braun (EC, EL, HS)

Do people give to your school because of a compelling mission, values alignment, spirituality, their experience at your school, community involvement, family tradition, or are there other reasons? Christian Education cannot exist without the support and financial contributions of its invested donors and families. If we knew “why” people give to our school, we can maximize the giving relationship. This session will dig into who is donating, when they are donating, and why they are donating: or why they are not donating! This session is based on my doctoral research and is focused on K-12 Christian Education.

B-8 “Creating a School Culture of Excellence and Growth” by Mike Waugh and Sam Seefeld (EL, HS)

How do churches and schools strategically build a culture of excellence and growth? Are these ideas mutually exclusive or inextricably connected? This sectional is designed to build a leader’s capacity by delivering intentional and actionable steps to take home. The LHSAGM serves over 2000 students; Trinity has experienced 200% growth over the past 5 years. Mike and Sam share experiences from across the country in a variety of academic settings.

B-9 “Understanding Endowments” by Andy Locke (EC, EL, HS)

I think all leaders of a Lutheran School know they should have an endowment. But where do you start and how? And, if you have an endowment but it has been sitting there with a paltry balance, you know you should grow it. But how? The session will tackle these two questions, while fielding other questions from those that attend.

Mega-sectional C (1:15-2:15pm)

C-1 “Creating A Governance Model That Becomes a Missional Advantage – Follow-up” by Kurt Senske (EC, EL, HS)

Following up on his Keynote Address, Dr. Kurt Senske will lead an interactive session that will include a more in-depth dialogue and actual case studies on specific aspects of board governance that can be implemented into your unique governance system. Topics will include strategic planning in a rapidly changing external environment, creating an effective board agenda, best practices in establishing a healthy relationship between the executive director and the board, the art of necessary endings, and, how the new normal is impacting your governance model and practices.

C-2 “AI: It Can Destroy Us or We Can Use It as a Tool” by Dave Black (EC, EL, HS)

Artificial intelligence (AI) has captured the attention of society and education over the past twelve months. But what is it, how does it work, and what are the opportunities and challenges for schools and educators with AI? Join us as we examine AI in both the school setting and for personal use.

C-3 “Creating Financial Sustainability” by Paul Campey (EC, EL, HS)

Is your school merely surviving financially or thriving? Do you know where you are going? This session will explore financial benchmarking (including practical key performance indicators), developing plans for the future, as well as tools that can assist your school as it seeks to fulfill its purpose and steward its resources well.

Keynote (2:45-3:45pm): Lynn Swaner – “Flourishing Together in Our Schools: Insights from Research”

The groundbreaking Flourishing School Culture Model (FSCM) is based in ongoing research with over 140,000 Christian school educators, students, and families in North

America and beyond. This keynote will unpack key findings of the research and consider implications for our shared purpose, relationships, learning, resources, and well-being in our schools.

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Keynote (during breakfast session 8:00-9:45am): Craig Muehler - “Are you Ready?”

Being prepared is always on the minds of our men and women serving so faithfully in our armed forces. There is not a day that goes by when they are not ready or training to be more ready. They must be ready at a moment’s notice to answer the call. Once the alarm sounds, they don’t have time to “get ready” ...they need to “be ready”. And to “be ready” they train, train, and train some more. They train as if they would fight.

Preparation and being ready are critical in any planning, but especially in planning a defense. The same must be for you as Christian Leaders!

Are you ready as Lutheran Christian Educators to face the challenges that will come your way?

It is important to be reminded that we truly are living in the Church Militant. We are present in a world where we are in a war with the devil, the world, and our sinful nature. Are you ready for the battles and sufferings that you will face? What is your plan to sustain you on the battlefield of life as a church worker? How will you endure? What is your hope and confidence as you go into battle and suffering?

Sectional D (10:00-11:00am)

D-1 “Teaching for Transformation: Grabbing a Cat by the Tail“ by Darryl DeBoer (EC, EL, HS)

Mark Twain once said: “A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way.” In this session, participants will explore K-12 learning stories in which students were empowered to participate in ‘real work that meets a real need for real people.’ By engaging God’s world, these students ‘grabbed a cat by the tail’ and their learning experiences both form them and shaped the world in a Kingdom of God way of being.

D-2 “Driving Enrollment Through Brand Awareness & Marketing” by Chris Steinmann and Charlene Coughlan (EC, EL, HS)

It is often said of our Lutheran schools that we are the “best kept secret in town”. In this session, Twist Creative and the Cleveland Lutheran High School Association will show how they focused on marketing to drive brand awareness of Lutheran East & Lutheran West - and how that has helped to drive enrollment. Attendees will walk away with concrete steps they can take to build the brand of their schools and successfully communicate that brand to their communities.

D-3 “Turning Alumni into Donors” by Andy Locke (EC, EL, HS)

This session will cover several simple fundraising strategies for engaging alumni and moving them into a donor relationship. Each strategy will include a case study. In addition to “how” we should engage alumni, we will also look at ways to determine “who” to engage and “when.” If you need to raise more money and you’re not sure where to start or what to do, this session is for you.

D-4 “Guiding Your Staff on the Road to Retirement” by Amy Klein (EC, EL, HS)

You may know all about the Concordia Plans retirement programs (pension, 403(b)) but do your teachers? In this “train the trainer” session, we will discuss talking points and strategies that you can use to educate your faculty and staff about their retirement benefits and the tools and resources available to help them improve or maintain their financial health. You will receive a variety of materials that can assist you in educating workers, in addition to suggestions for creating an action plan to ensure that your faculty and staff are well-informed about the value of their retirement benefits. This session will also include a round-table discussion for you to share best practices and discuss other ways that Concordia Plans can assist you in educating your staff and setting them up for a successful retirement.

D-5 “Three Pillars of Success” by Drew Gerdes (EC)

This session will highlight the importance of supporting children’s growth in self-regulation, executive functions, and social-emotional learning in the early childhood and primary years. Administrators play a key role in how teachers understand and promote these aspects of child development. Research continues to show that children who have strong self-regulatory skills in their young years do better in later schooling – as well as into adulthood.

D-6 (Repeated Topic) “AI: It Can Destroy Us or We Can Use It as a Tool” by Dave Black (EC, EL, HS)

Artificial intelligence (AI) has captured the attention of society and education over the past twelve months. But what is it, how does it work, and what are the opportunities and challenges for schools and educators with AI? Join us as we examine AI in both the school setting and for personal use.

D-7 “Creating a School Culture of Excellence and Growth” moved to B-8 (Monday 10:30-11:30 am)

D-8 “Let’s Talk about the Big I” by Beth Jones (EC, EL, HS)

Inflation, that is. How has inflation impacted worker pay across the country? Workers may be frustrated with rising inflation and ministries may be struggling with its impact, too. What is a “normal” pay increase during “abnormal times” such as these? How do you know if the offer you have for a new worker is still competitive and relevant in today’s market? Come hear what compensation trends are occurring across the country for ministry positions and learn how you can access complimentary information on compensation data that is customized to your geographic location, roles, and unique worker details so you can make well-informed compensation decisions for your ministry.