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# Making Middle School Matter Symposium

March 3 - 5, 2019 | Hilton Austin Airport

Presented by the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals

## Keynote Speakers:



**Jack Berckemeyer** - A nationally-recognized presenter, author, and humorist, Jack, began his career as a middle school teacher in Denver, Colorado. After two years of teaching he was named as an outstanding educator at his school, and shortly thereafter he was identified as one of the outstanding educators in the district. In 2003, he received the Outstanding Alumni Award from the Falcon School District. Jack brings his energy, humor, and expertise to all staff development as he helps teachers and administrators remember why this job makes a difference. Jack was also the Assistant Executive Director for the National Middle School Association for 13 years and is the author of *Managing the Madness - A Practical Guide to Middle Grades Classrooms*. He is also the co-author of *H.E.L.P. for Teachers*. His most recent publications are *Taming of the Team - How Great Teams Work Together* and *Deliberate Optimism - Reclaiming the Joy in Education*. Jack is currently the Owner and Director of NUTS and BOLTS – Ready to Lead, Teach, and Learn Conference.



**Marlena Gross-Taylor** is the founder of EduGladiators and a nationally recognized edleader with a proven track record of improving educational and operational performance through vision, strategic planning, leadership, and team building. A Nashville transplant originally from southern Louisiana, Marlena's educational experience spans several states allowing her to have served K-12 students in both rural and urban districts. She has been recognized as a middle school master teacher and innovative administrator at the elementary, middle, high school and district levels. As a proud Louisiana State University alumni, she is committed to excellence and believes all students can achieve. Visit: [www.marlenataylor.com](http://www.marlenataylor.com).



**Dr. Adam Saenz** - Dr. Adam Sáenz earned his Ph.D. in School Psychology from Texas A&M University as a United States Department of Education doctoral fellow. He completed his predoctoral clinical training under a fellowship appointment to Harvard Medical School, and he has a postdoctorate in clinical psychology from the Alpert Medical School of Brown University. Dr. Sáenz also earned a Doctorate of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling from Graduate Theological Foundation with residency at Christ Church college of Oxford University. Dr. Sáenz is the author of the best selling book, *The Power of a Teacher*, and his most recent release is *Relationships That Work*. He currently serves as the clinical director of the Oakwood Collaborative, the counseling and assessment clinic he founded in 2003, and he consults with school districts across the United States.



**Justin Richardson** - Bringing years of district leadership experience, Justin Richardson, M.Ed., is passionate about engaging, challenging, and supporting educators to create something new and amazing! He believes our purpose as educators is to bring out the greatness in others. As the Chief Learning Officer for lead4ward, Justin provides direction on learning initiatives with a creative and innovative approach. Prior to joining lead4ward, Justin served as Executive Director of Curriculum and Professional Development for Canyon ISD. In this role, he developed and led the implementation of Professional Learning Communities, curriculum alignment, assessment and data analysis processes, and intervention systems. He led Canyon ISD in the implementation of digital learning, Google Apps for Education, and development of an award-winning induction program for new teachers and mentors. In addition, Justin has served on the TEA state assessment item review committee, SBOE mathematics review committee, and many more.

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# Tentative Schedule

Sunday, March 3, 2019



Registration Hours: 10:00a – 4:30p

Conference Begins: 1:00p

1:00p – 2:15p ..... **Opening General Session**

**Jack Berckemeyer: Optimism and Opportunity**

Inspiring, humorous and applicable to all in attendance. Choosing optimism—even in the face of tough challenges—helps restore the healthy interactions and positive relationships necessary for enacting real school change. Hear how teachers and school leaders can rekindle their individual and collective enthusiasm for a profession that has been progressively inundated with negativity. Be prepared to learn, to laugh, and to leave with a renewed sense of purpose. Join these teachers for a fact-based, positive approach to “taking back our profession.” Research-based strategies, practical examples, and thought-provoking scenarios will be included.

2:30p – 3:45p ..... **Breakout Sessions: Set 1 (See descriptions below)**

4:00p – 5:15p..... **Breakout Sessions: Set 2 (Set 1 repeats - except where noted)**

• **Jack Berckemeyer: (Set 1 only) Teaching Strategies that Motivate Young Adolescents**

Looking for fun and motivating ideas for your middle level classroom? This is a hands-on session that provides real, quality strategies in the areas of reading, writing, spelling, grammar, listening, and speaking skills. No philosophy here, just creative ideas to motivate the middle level learner. This is a great session for new teachers and experienced teachers. Be ready to dance, laugh, and move!

• **Lisa Gilbert: Don't Just See Students. See Student Leaders Who Help Build a School Where Students & Staff Want to Be**

A thriving, positive school culture makes all the difference, and your student leadership program is key in creating that. Learn how you can support and equip your student leadership advisors to prepare this emerging generation to step up and lead by empowering students to speak up, plan meaningful projects and learn real-life leadership skills in a way that resonates. Build SEL's as well as a sense of service and commitment to community while enhancing academic and personal success. Partner with your student council to generate authentic learning experiences that positive impact your students, your school, and your community. Walk away from this session with concrete ideas you can put into action tomorrow. Whether you have a student council now or want to build one, this session is for you.

• **Michael Curl: Student Engagement Coaches: Mind the Gap**

After gathering data on achievement gaps in academic performance between student groups, we found that many were missing non-instructional resources needed to maximize their potential. This session sheds light on how we found human and financial resources to assist students in creating a future story and building relationships with caring and resourced adults. After just one year, we saw achievement gaps decrease and minds open. As we continue to learn by doing, we have refined the process, lost and gained personnel and gathered data to move forward. Join the conversation to hear from the principal who started it, and to move the conversation forward for student success in your setting and beyond.

• **Katie Braden & Joey Belgard: Science Processes: Developing Thinkers and Communicators**

Process standards in science connect to all content areas and deepen students' ability to think critically about the world around them. High quality science instruction engages students to ensure they develop literacy and thinking skills for life. Explore how process standards drive science instruction at all levels and how developing teacher understanding will improve instructional opportunities for students.

• **Veronica Miller & Dr. David Barrett: Getting Vocabulary to "Stick": Using Essential Words to Build Content Knowledge**

Teaching vocabulary is important in all content areas, so how can you make sure new words “stick” for students? In this session, researchers from the Middle School Matters Institute at the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (and in partnership with the George W. Bush Institute) will show participants how to use Essential Words Routine to provide effective, research-based vocabulary instruction. Participants will receive materials to begin using the strategy right away.

Monday, March 4, 2019

Registration and Exhibit Hours: 8:30a – 4:00p

9:00a – 10:15a ..... **General Session**

**Justin Richardson: Learn It, Apply It, Connect It: the Role of the PLC in Planning Instruction**

PLCs are challenged to maximize limited time to plan instruction that is relevant, engaging, and rigorous. It all starts with asking the right questions. Learn how PLCs can use the lead4ward Planning Guide to focus and improve conversations during collaborative planning. [Re]discover the purpose of a PLC as we [re]think the way students apply their learning.

10:30a – 11:45a ..... **Breakout Session: Set 3 (See descriptions below)**

1:30p – 2:45p ..... **Breakout Session: Set 4 (Set 3 repeats - except where noted)**

• **Marlena Gross-Taylor: BOOST Towards Success - RTI2 Intervention (Set 3)**

Leverage Response to Intervention (RTI2) best practices to provide specific support to students addressing their individual learning gaps, thus promoting positive academic growth and ultimately achieving gap closures.

• **Marlena Gross-Taylor: Branding Like a Start-Up (Set 4)**

The start-up model thrives on high energy, innovative ideas and intentional marketing. This session will guide you as a leader in branding your school with a start-up mentality to create excitement, celebrate the creativity of students and promote family and community involvement. Principals are the lead story tellers of their schools and must become adept in leveraging digital resources to share the amazing accomplishments of their school.

• **Sarah Powell: Math - Essential Components of Mathematics Intervention**

In this session, we highlight five essential components of mathematics intervention. We discuss the use of explicit instruction, concise language, and multiple representations. We also emphasize the necessity for building fact and computational fluency as well as providing effective problem-solving instruction.

• **Brea Ratliff: Reframing Success in Mathematics**

Making mathematics relevant and accessible to all learners is essential for their success. In this session, learn how to help learners overcome math anxiety, make meaning of mathematics and experience success through authentic tasks. We will also explore research-based strategies which support a growth mindset and meet the needs of every mathematics learner.

• **Justin Richardson: Principal as Process Champion**

There are more student expectations in the curriculum than most of us can wrap our heads around; and, as a principal, it's almost impossible to be an expert in all content areas. What if we committed to becoming champions of the process standards? The process standards are consistent across grade levels, highly correlate with overall performance on assessments, and help teachers differentiate for learners.

• **Celena Hoglund: Using Self-Generated Questions to Build Reading Comprehension**

Teaching students to generate questions while reading is one way of getting them to stop at regular intervals to think about what is being communicated, how the information relates across paragraphs, and make connections to real world contexts. Studies have shown that this practice can increase comprehension of content area text for students of different ability levels

• **Dr. Adam Saenz (Set 4 only) Social and Emotional Learning: How to Live It and Why It Matters**

Acts of aggression are increasing in schools: mass shootings, bullying and cyberbullying. How can we intervene, particularly when many educators report that they do not feel equipped with the necessary skills to make a difference? Research is clear: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is as empirically-validated as any academic or behavioral intervention currently available to us. Students who have participated in SEL interventions show decreased emotional distress, decreased aggression, improved attitudes about self/others/school, increased prosocial behavior and increased academic performance. We'll explore the basic components of effective SEL programs and how to implement each component for middle school setting.

Monday schedule continues...

Monday, March 4, 2019 - Continued

3:00p – 4:30p..... General Session

School to Watch Designation Award Ceremony

**Marlena Gross-Taylor: Leading in the Digital Revolution**

As instructional leaders, how does increased engagement of Generation Z affect administrative walk-throughs, observations, and professional development? Learn how to leverage digital resources and organizational structures, including 1:1 framework, to increase student engagement in classrooms, develop global perspective in students and personalize teacher professional development.

Tuesday, March 5, 2019

8:15a – 9:00a..... School to Watch Demonstration: Set 1 (See descriptions below)

9:15a – 10:00a..... School to Watch Demonstration: Set 2 (Set 1 repeats)

• **Chapa MS – Lisa Walls, Principal:** Chapa Middle School is a Title 1 campus with 65% of students on free/reduced lunch. CMS has created a highly invested community of parents, teachers and students through a variety of family events. Discover ways to revitalize the life of your campus and community culture by hosting events such as Guy’s and Girl’s Night out, Coffee with the Counselors, #DADSQUAD, Coffee House, Talent Show and our Chapa 5k Challenge. CMS has also created positive behavior intervention and supports for our campus so that our students are successful. We have ideas such as Student of the Month, Rockstars, and Cougar Cash. Come hear our journey and learn some tools on how to implement these ideas.

• **Lone Oak MS – Shannon Wilhite, Principal:** How do you reach middle school students? As a “School to Watch” since 2011, we are constantly evolving with our students! We strive to reach every kid academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally. Having high expectations is crucial in our small community and campus of 225 students in grades 6-8. In this session, we will showcase some of our unique structures and programs including: student shout-outs, PowerHour, Jumpstart, Tribes, student Voice, positive behavior supports, and a variety of elective options.

• **Hillwood MS – Kathleen Eckert, Principal:** “How to engage your students the last week of school!” Have you ever had a student say to you, “I cannot wait until the last week of school?” We hear this regularly from our students. Come see how we engage the students the last week of school and embark on community service projects with 1180 7th and 8th grade students.

• **Cockrill MS – Dr. Amber Epperson, Principal:** In this session we plan to showcase the unique and innovative ways we have improved professional development and engaged our staff in taking control of their professional learning. We will share examples from the beginning planning stages to implementation, along with the effects it had on staff learning, including personal reviews and reflections from teachers. We will also discuss how implementing these ideas impacted teachers’ T-TESS goals and outcomes. Some of the ideas we share will be simple, easy to implement, and low-tech, while others will include the implementation of technology to create online professional learning opportunities like gamified PD, online book studies, and flipped professional learning. We will also share our badging system, how we encourage participation, and what we have learned about the long term positive effects these changes have had on our staff and school culture.

• **Hudson Bend MS – Tom Payne, Principal:** Change happens! These organizational structures have kept our student achievement soaring! What makes a school a “Texas School to Watch”? More importantly, how does a school receive such an honor, rotate out 100% of its administrative staff, and then continue to best serve the ever-changing population of students at the school? In this session we will focus on organizational structures and processes that have driven our school’s high achievement, as well as the developmental responsiveness and school culture that have become our trademark through the peaks and valleys of serving our community’s highly diverse middle school students.

School to Watch demos continue...

## Tuesday, March 5, 2019 - Continued

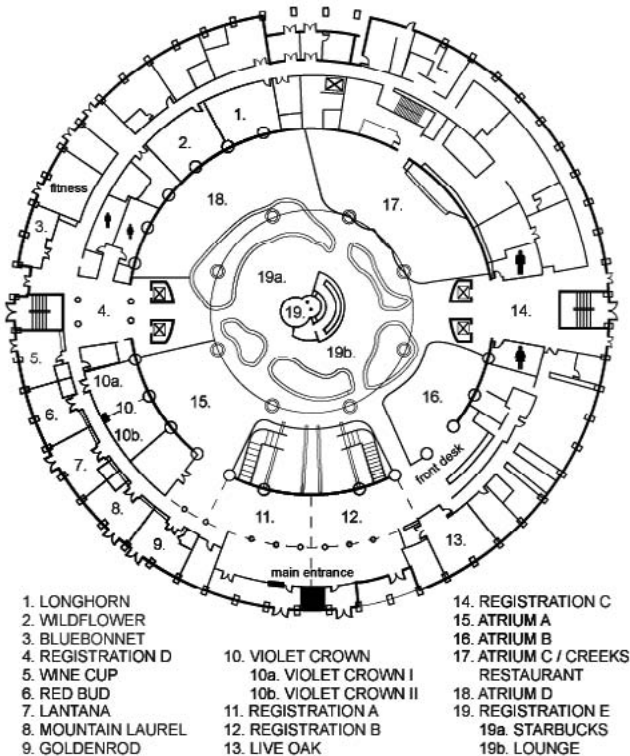
- Beverly Hills IS – Stacey Barber, Principal:** Effective School Structure: Systems Designed for Student Success. A positive climate and culture that boosts a shared responsibility by all is bolstered by positive behavior supports. The organizational structure sets the tone for a school to function successfully as a system. Utilization of school incentives, a tardy sweep system, having structured procedures, and enforcing a management plan that is both consistent and systemic will enhance opportunities for success for the middle school student.
- TEA Special Projects ‘Beyond Grad Team’ Statewide Initiative - Learning Discussion Protocol – Elia Simons:** This session is led by TEA’s Elia Simons and is limited to a maximum of 25 participants. The learning discussion goals of each session include: To connect with middle school practitioners across all settings to learn about the varied communities, best practices, unique challenges, and big wins across the Texas school landscape through a practitioner’s lens. To learn more about the ways in which campus-based school administration’s, counselors’, and educators’ leadership and implementation of college and career readiness programs is integrated with their other core responsibilities and priorities. To explore ways in which the state may empower school practitioners to implement college and career readiness programs to maximum effect by providing additional resources. To share updates about Beyond Grad initiatives and hear practitioner feedback to guide our work.

### 10:15a – 11:30a ..... Closing General Session

#### Dr. Adam Saenz: The Power of a Teacher

Remember? You went into education to make a difference! But is it really possible to build the kinds of life-impacting relationships with students in educational systems that have the potential to leave you physically and emotionally drained? Licensed psychologist Dr. Adam L. Saenz answers with a resounding, “Yes! Dr. Saenz presents two case studies that will encourage you by reminding you that what you do in your role as an educator doesn’t just matter—it matters deeply. We in education are uniquely postured to make life-changing impacts in the students with whom we interact every day.

HILTON AUSTIN AIRPORT - MAIN LEVEL



HILTON AUSTIN AIRPORT - LOWER LEVEL

