

elevate

AUSTIN, TX 2025

FEAT.
MR.
GREG,
JERE
CHANG



JONATHON
HINES,
GERRY
BROOKS



JACK
HARTMANN!



FAIRMONT
AUSTIN

JULY 7-9

WHO WE ARE

ELEVATE! is the premiere professional development for primary Pre-K - 2nd grade educators. Our selection of highly accomplished national speakers are either current teachers, administrators, specialists, coaches or consultants working in schools.



**Founded in
Research**

All ELEVATE conference sessions are based on research and/or evidence-based content and practices, and guaranteed to be presented in a way that engages attendees in hands-on activities and models instructional best-practices.



**Next Day
Implementation**

Every session you attend will provide you with lesson ideas and activity resources that you can take back to your classroom and use immediately!



**Vetted
Speakers**

At ELEVATE, we set the bar high! All presenters are required to support their presentation content with current research, model best-practice instructional methods, incorporate active-engagement strategies within their sessions, and provide complementary lesson plans/activities for attendees to take back and use immediately in their classrooms.

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Topics Covered at ELEVATE! Austin



**Science of
Reading**



**Data Driven
Instruction**



**School
Culture**



**English
Language Arts**



Fine Motor



**School
Leadership**



Math



**Classroom
Management**



**Play Based
Learning**



The Arts



STEAM



Writing



Science



**Social
Emotional
Learning**



**Diversity,
Equity,
Inclusivity,
and
Accessibility**



ESL

Featuring...



Keynote by
**Mr.
Greg**



Keynote by
**Gerry
Brooks**



Performance by
**Jack
Hartmann**

Featuring...

Keynote by

**Johnathon
Hines**



**Special Session
by**

**Jere
Chang**



JOIN US IN AUSTIN, TX!



LOCATION & HOTEL

Fairmont Austin
101 Red River St
Austin, TX 78701

[REGISTER HERE](#)

**We have discounted room rates!
Limited rooms available so be
sure to book your room as soon
as possible.**

[BOOK HOTEL](#)

Ticket		Price
Early Bird General Admission	Tickets available until Nov. 15th or when we sell out - whichever comes first.	\$325
Discounted General Admission	Limited Tickets Available	\$400
General Admission	Until Sold Out	\$500

Available Now!

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PURCHASE
ORDERS!**



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IMPORTANT INFO

- Complete THIS online form in it's entirety. (To be completed by 1 person for the entire PO)
- Upload your actual PO using the link provided on the form. If you do not have your PO yet, STOP and get it completed.
- After you have submitted your PO using our form. We'll email an invoice to you within 72 hours. Payment is due within 30 days. (no exceptions to this due date)

SUBMITTING THIS REQUEST FOR REGISTRATION IS NOT GUARANTEE OF REGISTRATION. REGISTRATION IS ONLY CONFIRMED UPON ACTUAL PAYMENT OF THE INVOICE.

QUESTIONS, EMAIL US AT
CONTACT@ELEVATEYOURCLASSROOM.COM

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AUSTIN 2025
 Featuring...

July 7th - 9th, 2025
 Fairmont Austin
 101 Red River St
 Austin, TX 78701



SCHEDULE

JULY 7TH, 2025

4pm - 6pm	Registration
6pm - 7pm	Dance Party with Jack Hartmann

JULY 8TH, 2025

8am	Announcements
8:15am - 9:15am	Keynote - Jonathon Hines
9:45am - 10:45am	Breakout Sessions
11:00am - 12:00pm	Breakout Sessions
12:00pm - 1:30pm	Lunch (On your own)
1:30pm - 2:30pm	Breakout Sessions
2:45pm - 3:45pm	Breakout Sessions
4:00pm - 5:00pm	Breakout Sessions
7:30pm - 8:30pm	Evening Session by Jere Chang

JULY 9TH, 2025

8am	Announcements
8:15am - 9:15am	Keynote - Gerry Brooks
9:45am - 10:45am	Breakout Sessions
11:00am - 12:00pm	Breakout Sessions
12:00pm - 1:30pm	Lunch (On your own)
1:30pm - 2:30pm	Breakout Sessions
2:45pm - 3:45pm	Closing Keynote - Mr. Greg

*Schedule is subject to change with or without notice.

WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND ELEVATE

- Join a growing community of over 100k primary educators who follow Elevate Your Classroom and co-founder Mr. Greg Smedley-Warren.
- Learn from award-winning and nationally recognized classroom educators and educational leaders who remain practitioners in schools across the country.
- Participate in conference sessions founded in research and created with the teacher in mind.
- Enjoy keynotes and inspiration from nationally renowned educators like Mr. Greg, Gerry Brooks, and Jack Hartmann.
- Specific administrator sessions so school and district leaders can support the work you are doing.
- Network and stay connected with fellow primary educators and leaders as you experience a world-class conference that will provide immediate takeaways for your classroom.



WHAT YOU GET AT ELEVATE!



Over two days of lively and enriching sessions across content areas



Certificate for 12 Contact Hours of Professional Development.



An Elevate Your Classroom t-shirt



Swag bags that include a clipfolio, a beautiful teacher tote bag, and freebies from our sponsors



A giant vendor hall for you to learn about the latest products and services for your classroom and personal well-being



Time to meet and chat with presenters and Discounts for future in-person and virtual Elevate! events



Nashville 202



Phoenix 2024



Nashville 2024



d



ille 2023



Nashville 2024

ON THE MAIN STAGE

#HappyClassrooms



By **Greg Smedley-Warren** | **Keynote**

An inspirational message about the lessons our students teach us each day in the classroom. In this uplifting message, Mr. Greg will share stories from his classroom and the lessons he has learned and how they can be implemented in other classrooms. The #happyclassrooms is a way for teachers around the world to share positive experiences from their own classrooms. Mr. Greg will describe in detail the mission of this hashtag and how it relates to your teacher's attitudes toward education and their classroom.

About Greg

Meet Greg Smedley-Warren, affectionately known as "Mr. Greg," an experienced, current kindergarten educator and the creative mind behind The Kindergarten Smorgasboard. With an impressive 19-year teaching journey, Greg's expertise spans various grade levels, including a brief stint in fifth grade and two years in second grade. However, it was a reluctant transition to kindergarten that unveiled his true passion and calling.

Never wanting to teach kindergarteners, Greg's journey took a turn when he discovered an instant connection on the very first day of kindergarten. From that moment on, he knew kindergarten was his calling. Beyond the classroom, Greg is a family man, cherishing moments with his loved ones in Nashville, Tennessee. Alongside his husband Jason, fondly referred to as "The Mister," Greg shares his home with their daughter, Adelynn, and their dog, Dolly.

Recognized as the 2014 Teacher of the Year, Greg's influence extends far beyond his classroom walls, as an international speaker, presenter, and co-founder of the ELEVATE! conference for teachers. A passionate curriculum developer, Greg's dedication to educational excellence shines through in all his endeavors, driven by his unwavering commitment to empowering both students and fellow educators alike.

Personal Climate and Culture. The Choice is Yours.



By Gerry Brooks | **Keynote**

Gerry will inspire you and make you laugh, as he shares advice and practical ideas that will help you focus on personal and school climate and culture. He will challenge you to be the best you can be in all aspects of your personal and professional life, and how that will allow you to support your students, their parents, and your coworkers in the best way possible.

About Gerry

Gerry Brooks is a veteran educator in Lexington, Kentucky. His educational experience includes six years in the classroom, two years as an intervention specialist, and 12 years as an administrator.

He is a passionate public speaker whose focus is on encouraging and helping teachers improve their instructional abilities. He also has a desire to help administrators successfully lead their staff.

An encouraging speaker, he has spoken to educational groups all around the nation. His focus is on encouraging teachers to improve their instruction through personal climate and culture strategies. He desires to help administrators focus on how to lead all staff in a positive and constructive manner.



About Johnathon Hines

Johnathon Hines is a Pre-K educator and father from Atlanta, Georgia. He attended Albany State University on a full athletic scholarship in basketball. After graduating with his Bachelor of Arts degree in Health and Physical Education, he went on to play professionally in South America (Peru). When he returned, he decided to go into the field of education because he was passionate about mentoring and working with children. After earning his Master's Degree in Elementary Education from Grand Canyon University, he began his career teaching pre-kindergarten students. Mr. Hines understands that a first impression is a lasting impression for children, so he provides an exciting learning experience for his students each day. Additionally, he understands that in our community there is a shortage of exposure to positive Black males and wants to show children that African American men can be heroes in an every-day role, like teaching. In 2020, Mr. Hines made history as the first Black male to be named the Public School Pre-K Teacher of the Year for the entire State of Georgia. In his spare time, Mr. Hines enjoys spending time with his daughter, watching basketball and spending quality time with friends and family.

Dance Party w/ Jack Hartmann



With Jack Hartmann | Entertainment

Let Music Make Learning Fun! Jack sings live and demonstrates fun and creative movements to a wide variety of early childhood topics including: language development and phonological awareness skills, basic math with counting and number skills, spatial awareness, patterning and more. And, fun skill-building songs on social and behavioral management are also included. This presentation is very uplifting and interactive and offers a great variety of Jack's best songs.

About Jack

Jack Hartmann's Super Fun Learning Songs are all about making learning even more fun with the very best in children's educational music. Jack's music is research-based and teacher approved to focus on helping children learn important state, national and early childhood standards. All of Jack's songs and videos engage children with not only great educational content, but with cool beats kids love and fun movements.

Jack Hartmann received his BA in Child Psychology from the University of Florida in Gainesville, FL and his MA degree in Clinical Psychology from Assumption College in Worcester, MA.

Jack began his career of working with autistic children at Shands Teaching Hospital in Gainesville, Florida and then he worked as a social worker with delinquent youth in St. Petersburg, Florida and in psychiatry at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia.

Jack has presented his wonderful children's music at teacher workshops and conferences in almost every state in the United States. He has been a keynote and workshop leader at the annual NAEYC and the National Head Start conferences, S.D.E. conferences all across the country and many local and state pre-school, kindergarten and 1st Grade conferences.

About Jere Chang



Jere Chang, an Atlanta area classroom teacher for over 25 years, is an award winning TikTok star with over 2 million followers and is a dynamic and highly engaging speaker. Spending time with “Ms. Chang,” isn’t just viewing a reel or a TikTok trend. Her motivational talks about gifted education, inclusion, and creative thinking are visits in radical kindness, inspiration, and laughter.

Chang invites audiences into her classroom, family vacations with her wife and two young sons, even her lunch box to look deeply into something familiar with innovation and curiosity. Unlike most social media stars, Chang is honest. She doesn’t cover up her teaching goofs, her aging face, or her misunderstood classroom décor but points them out with a great sense of reflexivity and humor. Her goal: to have audiences walk away feeling refreshed, safe, cared for and valued. From the moment she starts to talk, it’s time to get real.

Invited twice to the Whitehouse with 30 other influencers on LGBTQ+ issues, Ms. Chang is an international speaker who draws standing room only crowds. With 10 years in gifted education and three Master’s degrees in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), college administration, and applied linguistics, she speaks on a variety of topics focused on creativity and inclusion.



Phoenix 2024



Nashville 2024



Phoenix 2024

IN OUR BREAKOUT ROOMS



Dallas 2024



England 2023



Nashville 2024

Austin Presenters



Vera Ahiyya

Vera Ahiyya is a dedicated early childhood educator with nearly two decades of experience in the classroom. Known as "The Tutu Teacher" on social media, Vera has a passion for fostering a love of reading in young learners through innovative, picture book-centered teaching strategies. She has collaborated with numerous schools and educational organizations, bringing her expertise in literacy and student engagement to thousands of educators across the country. She is excited to guide you in creating an interactive, effective, and joyful learning environment for your students.

Vera's sessions:

Session 1 - There's a Book for That!

Session 2 - Magical Math Centers

Session 3 - How Will You Start the Day?



MaríaMercedes Champion

¡Hola! My name is MaríaMercedes Champion, an early childhood teacher and consultant educated in Colombia, Spain and the USA, with over 18 years in the Pre-k classroom. I love creating songs, activities, and a playful rich language environment for my students. I am passionate about sharing what I have learned and created with other educators, to learn and PLAY together.

MaríaMercedes's sessions:

Session 1 - Playing and LEARNING Together

Session 2 - Building Parent Partnerships

Session 3 - From Scribbles to Letters: Writing, a Complex Process



Shannon Cunningham

Shannon Cunningham is an award-winning literacy educator in North Texas. Over her education career, Shannon has spent time in classrooms in Arizona, Nebraska, and the great state of Texas. Shannon has her Masters in Education in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Education Technology. Shannon is certified to teach preschool - 6th grade and English as a Second Language. With a passion for teaching both students and teachers, Shannon's goal is for all classrooms to be a place where students can grow and thrive academically and emotionally. You will find that Shannon's sessions are packed with research and strategies to help you teach with joy and confidence!

Shannon's sessions:

Session 1 - Tinker, Create, and Explore with STEAM

Session 2 - Boosting Learning and Language Through Play

Austin Presenters



Jake Daggett

Jake is an Ohio native who began his teaching career in Milwaukee, WI in 2015. Having specialized in literacy instruction, Jake built a following on social media for his engaging and rhythmic phonics lessons and evidence-based structured literacy lessons, even landing him on The Kelly Clarkson Show in January 2024. Throughout his career, Jake has taught PreK, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades, and has recently stepped into the role of Foundational Literacy Director for a choice school in Milwaukee, WI. In addition, Jake co-teaches an online Science of Reading Course for Elevate Your Classroom. In his spare time, Jake presents nationally for conferences such as Unlocking SOR, IL ASCD, and Plain Talk. He is thrilled to be returning for year 3 of Elevate!

Jake's sessions:

Session 1 - Dictation: Reimagining Spelling Instruction

Session 2 - Differentiating a Phonics Block for Below, Above, and Multilingual Learners

Session 3 - Management Moves: Multi-Sensory Strategies for 100% Engagement



Christina DeCarbo

Christina (Miss DeCarbo) is a PreK-5 literacy coach, teacher, national presenter, and curriculum author from Northeast Ohio. She is certified at the Associate Level with the Orton Gillingham Academy. Her research-based sessions are packed with engaging lessons and creative tools to help students succeed as readers, writers, and problem-solvers. Christina loves collaborating with educators on Instagram [@missdecarbo](https://www.instagram.com/missdecarbo). As a mom of two little ones, she enjoys spending time with family and drinking coffee. You can learn more about Christina on her website at www.missdecarbo.com.

Christina's sessions:

Session 1 - Turn Tricky Into Sticky! Brain Based Activities to Connect Letters to Sounds

Session 2 - Lights, Camera, Read! Fluency Strategies that Steal the Show

Session 3 - Sentence Success! Explicit Instruction for Little Learners



Edward DeShazer

Edward has been in education for 18 years. He is currently the Executive Director of Greater Holy Temple Christian Academy (GHTCA.) GHTCA is a private K-8 school in Milwaukee, WI. Under his leadership, GHTCA went from a one-star school ranking to a four-star school in six years. In 2021, he was nominated by BizTimes as the Notable Minority Executive in Wisconsin. In 2023, he was nominated as a Notable BIPOC Executive in Wisconsin.

Edward's sessions:

Session 1 - Building Bridges

Session 2 - From Compliance to Community: 5 Keys to a Thriving School Culture

Austin Presenters



Dr. Adam Dovico

Adam Dovico is an accomplished teacher, curriculum facilitator, principal, professor, speaker, and author. For the past two decades, he has taught students of all ages through his engaging and rigorous teaching style. He has also provided professional development for educators from around the world through his keynotes, workshops, and books. You can often find Adam standing on a table or chair dressed in one of his signature outrageous and amusing suits. He has been recognized by organizations such as the Japan Fulbright Memorial Fund, Learning for Justice, and the Atlanta Falcons for his leadership and teaching, and he continues to work for greater equity in schools through his antiracist and culturally responsive pedagogy. You can learn more about Adam's teaching and leadership online at adamdovico.com, on social media @adamdovico, or in his books: *Inside the Trenches*, *The Limitless School*, and *When Kids Lead*.

Adam's sessions:

Session 1 - Conflict, Crucial Conversations, and Creative Solutions



Holly Ehle

Holly is a full-time educator who has over 20 years of experience teaching kindergarten and serving as an early literacy specialist. She currently has the very unique opportunity of teaching both beginning readers AND pre-service teachers in her new position as a Professor of Reading Science, teaching both in the college classroom and in the university's science of reading pre-k - 4th grade model school program. Holly is passionate about student engagement, differentiated instruction, early literacy, and educational neuroscience. She is currently wrapping up her Ph.D. in Reading, Language, & Literacy with a specialization in Educational Neuroscience and loves helping teachers better understand exactly how the brain learns when beginning to read and write. Professionally, her mission is to teach EVERY child to be a proficient reader and writer, including those with dyslexia and/or other learning challenges. Outside of the classroom, her mission is to help teachers bridge the gap between research and practice in fun and engaging ways. Holly is also dedicated to giving back to educators who work so hard in the classroom, and it was this shared passion that forged her connection with the Kindergarten Smorgasboard/ELEVATE team.

Holly's sessions:

Session 1 - Reading Block Revolution

Session 2 - Write From the Start: Guiding our Littlest Learners Through the Writing Process (in a developmentally appropriate AND science-aligned way!)

Austin Presenters



Kim Jordano

Kimberly Jordano brings over 35 years of teaching experience to her kindergarten classroom in the Los Alamitos School District in California. As a master teacher and language arts mentor, she holds a master's degree in English as a Second Language (ESL). In addition to her full-time role as a kindergarten teacher, Kimberly is a national presenter and content creator, sharing her insights and ideas daily on Instagram and her Facebook page, Kinderbykim. Her goal is to keep the JOY in kindergarten experience while teaching the standards in a meaningful, child-centered way. You can find all of her creative teacher resource materials at [teacherspayteachers.com/kinderbykim](https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/kinderbykim) and on Hey, Teach! at [schoolgirlstyle.com](https://www.schoolgirlstyle.com)

Kim's sessions:

Session 1 - Let's Streamline Your Literacy Centers!

Session 2 - Retelling Strategies that Stick!

Session 3 - Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Fun with a Dollar Store Twist!



Katie Knight

Katie Knight teaches 1st grade and loves to share her hacks, plans and ideas! Katie welcomes you in, gets real, has you laughing, and helps you feeling energized and equipped to take action! Katie speaks nationally at conferences, and you can find her on social media, Teachers Pay Teachers and her blog, under Teacher To The Core!

Katie's sessions:

Session 1 - Katie Knight and the 7 tips to 🎵 Wiggle While You Work! 🎵

Session 2 - Recess Referee

Session 3 - Data Bros



Carlanda Miller

Carlanda Miller, also known as The Magical Teacher, is a distinguished educator with 13 years of experience across various grade levels and leadership roles. She leads nationwide Professional Development and delivers inspiring keynotes to students and educators. Carlanda's innovative teaching methods have earned her recognition, including being named FUSD's Elementary Teacher of the Year for the 2017-18 school year, California's 2018 Celebrity Educator of the Year, finalist for FUSD's Excellence in Education for 2021-22, and honored as one of Walt Disney World's 50 Most Innovative Educators. Carlanda is also a children's book author and a LEGO Education Ambassador, championing learning through play and inspiring creativity and critical thinking in students.

Carlanda's sessions:

Session 1 - Building a Strong Foundation: Classroom Management with Routines & Procedures

Session 2 - Adventure on the Story Mat: A Problem-Solving Journey!

Session 3 - Learning Through Play: From Observation to Instructional Impact

Austin Presenters



Ashley Moore

Ashley Moore is a Principal of an Elementary / Middle School in Maryland. Her leadership journey began with her teaching career in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, covering grades 3 through 12 serving as a General and Special Education teacher. After serving as a teacher, Moore entered the administrative realm as an Assistant Principal. Her experiences include general, special education, and specialized programming. As an administrator, she has implemented school-wide programs such as Accelerated Learning, Gifted and Talented, Arts Integration, and STEM. Moore's diverse experiences have also led to her national certification as a Principal mentor. Committed to her personal mission of "doing what's best for kids" and the belief that "all students can learn and achieve," she looks forward to utilizing her skills to assist others with their leadership journey.

Ashley's sessions:

Session 1 - Taking a "Coach Approach" to School Leadership

Session 2 - The Retention Revolution: How to Keep Your Team Vibing & Thriving



Crystal Oswald

Crystal Oswald is a district service coach in the North Shore of Chicago. She works with a variety of schools as an instructional coach with an emphasis on Social Emotional Learning and literacy. Prior to this position, she was an SEL Curriculum and Instruction Specialist for 3 years and an elementary school teacher (grades 1-5) for 14 years. In her spare time, you can find her hanging out with family and friends, reading, golfing, or doing home improvements.

Crystal's sessions:

Session 1 - Paving the Way with SEL: Creating a Systemic Approach

Session 2 - The SEL Blueprint: Cultivating a Supportive Culture for Teachers and Students



Alexia Pendleton

Alexia Pendleton is a Kindergarten teacher in Atlantic City, NJ, where she was named teacher of the year for the 2020-2021 school year. She is a wife, mother, hip hop choreographer, and fitness instructor. Known as the @dancerteacher on social media, she loves empowering educators with her high energy sessions. She loves to encourage, motivate, and uplift students, teachers, and administrators for absolute excellence in education!

Alexia's sessions:

Session 1 - Healing Hearts: Creating Trauma-Informed Classrooms with Joy

Session 2 - Stronger Together: Building Families and Communities

Session 3 - Developing Feeling Vocabulary in a Community Meeting

Austin Presenters



Whitney Ramirez

Whitney Ramirez is a first and second grade teacher in San Diego, CA. Currently in her twelfth year of teaching, Whitney has taught five different grade levels, experienced a variety of school cultures, and worked with many unique teaching personalities. She loves public speaking, and even had a moment where she made it to the third audition round at American Idol (way back in 2010!). She also has two Master's degrees, and was a DI collegiate athlete, playing lacrosse at St. Mary's College of CA. There are things that she learned on the field that have made her a better leader and teacher.

Whitney's sessions:

Session 1 - Math Outside the Curriculum

Session 2 - A Writing Piece in a Week

Session 3 - Seamless & Simple STEAM



Mr. Greg Smedley-Warren

Meet Greg Smedley-Warren, also known as "Mr. Greg," a seasoned kindergarten teacher and creator of The Kindergarten Smorgasboard. With 19 years of teaching experience across various grades, Greg discovered his true passion in kindergarten. Outside the classroom, Greg lives in Nashville with his husband, Jason, their daughter, Adelynn, and their dog, Dolly. A former Teacher of the Year, Greg is also an international speaker, curriculum developer, and co-founder of the ELEVATE! conference, dedicated to empowering educators everywhere.

Mr. Greg's sessions:

Session 1 - Explore, Excite, Discover

Session 2 - Data Bros.

Session 3 - Social Studies & Science Made Easy

Austin Presenters



Debrice Smith-Hill

My name is Debrice Smith-Hill, and I hail from the beautiful island of the Bahamas, currently residing in Florida. With 20 years of experience as an educator, I have taught first, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. For the past eight years, I have been a first-grade teacher, and I can confidently say that first grade is indeed the best grade ever. Presently, I work as an instructional coach for students in kindergarten through sixth grade, and I absolutely adore this position because I have the best of both worlds teaching teachers and students. Additionally, I have had the honor of being a keynote speaker and presenter at various conferences. My passion for reading and phonics runs deep, as I believe it is the essential key to unlocking a successful education. I am committed to fostering an inclusive and dynamic learning environment where every student feels valued and empowered to reach their full potential. My journey as an educator has been incredibly rewarding, and I look forward to continuing to make a positive impact in the lives of my students and fellow educator.

Debrice's sessions:

Session 1 - From Letters to Words

Session 2 - Unlocking Math Lessons



Hilary Statum

Hilary Statum is an ESL teacher and Reading Instructor in Middle Tennessee with over 15 years of experience at the school she attended. She has experience teaching kindergarten, first, transitional-first, second, fourth, and fifth graders! She is the published author of two books, *Solar System for Kids* and *Kindergarten Activity Book: Unicorns and the face behind Pencils to Pigtails*, a blog for parents and teachers. She holds a Master's Degree in Instructional Leadership and enjoys coordinating and teaching her school district's free parent English class. Her favorite days are spent with her two young girls and baby boy, husband, parents, siblings, and the rest of her very large extended family. You can connect with Hilary on all social media platforms using the handle @pencilstopigtails.

Hilary's sessions:

Session 1 - Playful Numbers: Engaging and Effective Math Games

Session 2 - Hilary's Literacy Lab

Austin Presenters



Jeremy Sturdivant

My name is Jeremy Sturdivant Sr. (Mr. Jay). I am a proud father. I'm originally from York Alabama. Mr. Jay is a Lead Prek Teacher. I've been teaching and living in Georgia for 8 years now. I am very passionate about teaching our youth new ideas and strategies. I enjoy being the person in a child's life who listens to their thoughts and feelings. Being able to watch children grow and learn is amazing. Teaching in ECE is special to me because I help with setting the educational foundation in their journey of becoming respectful, intelligent, and well rounded individuals. I have a Bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education and I'm currently in Grad school getting my Master Degree in Secondary Education of Mathematics with an emphasis in STEM. Although academics is important, Mr. Jay focuses on daily interactions that encourage social, emotional, and physical development.

Jeremy's sessions:

Session 1 - Kid-versations: Connecting Through Creative Communication

Session 2 - Can I Have Your Attention?

Austin Sessions

At Elevate you get to create your own schedule. The following pages contain all of the breakout sessions available for you to choose from.



SCIENCE OF READING

Turn Tricky Into Sticky! Brain Based Activities to Connect Letters to Sounds

By Christina DeCarbo | [Science of Reading](#)

Did you know that the latest research shows that phonemic awareness instruction is more effective when letters are presented along with sounds? In this engaging, hands-on session, Christina shares tons of games, activities, lessons, and ideas that will help students form strong phoneme-grapheme connections throughout the day. You'll leave with quick but effective practices that you can use at the carpet, during morning meetings, small-groups, transition times, whole-group lessons, and more! Get ready to move, groove, write, and play with letters and sounds in this jam-packed session!

Lights, Camera, Read! Fluency Strategies that Steal the Show

By Christina DeCarbo | [Science of Reading](#)

Fluency is the bridge between decoding and comprehension, but how do we build fluency skills within the classroom? In this interactive session, Christina shares ready-to-go routines and research-based strategies that you can implement within your classroom. Learn how to model and practice accuracy, phrasing, rate, and prosody with your students while having fun and boosting confidence!

Austin Sessions



Dictation: Reimagining Spelling Instruction

By Jake Daggett | [Science of Reading](#)

Are we still doing spelling tests? How does dictation work, and how often should I be doing it? What is the research behind it? Join Jake as he answers all these questions and more about the shift from memory-based spelling tests to daily dictation practice. Explore the importance of a speech to print approach, and get hands-on practice with key sound to spelling strategies for K-2 readers.



Differentiating a Phonics Block for Below, Above, and Multilingual Learners

By Jake Daggett | [Science of Reading](#)

We've done a great job getting the word out about having a strong, interactive Tier 1 phonics block. But what about below and above level learners? What about multilingual learners? How do we analyze spelling data to make choices? Join Jake as he unpacks research from Wiley Blevins and Linnea Ehri and models differentiation in action during your daily phonics instruction.

Austin Sessions



ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
ARTS

Reading Block Revolution

By Holly Ehle | [ELA](#)

Unleash the full potential of your reading instruction with "Reading Block Revolution"! This dynamic professional development session is designed for educators who are well-versed in science-of-reading aligned practices but are ready to break free from the constraints of scripted and routine programs. Discover how to revolutionize your reading block with engaging activities, innovative tech tools, games, and hands-on experiences that will captivate your students and make learning to read an adventure. In this session, you'll learn how to maintain the integrity of evidence-based reading instruction while infusing your lessons with creativity and excitement. Whether you're looking to energize your daily routines, introduce new digital resources, or incorporate interactive, multisensory activities, "Reading Block Revolution" will equip you with practical strategies to transform your classroom into a vibrant hub of literacy learning. Join us and take your reading instruction to the next level, where every student is motivated, engaged, and eager to read!



Austin Sessions



Let's Streamline Your Literacy Centers

By Kim Jordano | ELA

Do you sometimes feel overwhelmed trying to keep your Kindergarteners engaged without constantly running to their assistance? Kimberly will show you how she sets up her classroom for her literacy centers. Everything from organizational tips, and easy to prep hands on activities that promote confidence and independence with your little learners. Kimberly will share lots of easy to implement activities for letters, sounds and sight words that will reinforce the skills you have taught. All these activities are child tested to be engaging and standards based! Most importantly they will enable you to pull children for small group instruction!



Retelling Strategies that Stick!

By Kim Jordano | ELA

Did you know re-telling is a great comprehension strategy? During this session you will learn some creative ways to implement in your classroom. Kim introduces strategies to get your kindergartners sequencing and re-telling and presenting popular fairy tales, old-time favorite books, and new popular stories. Engage your children through hands-on techniques that are creative, inspiring, and lots of fun too!



Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Fun with a Dollar Store Twist!

By Kim Jordano | ELA

Kim will show you tried and true activities for phonemic awareness, phonics and sight words that are easy to implement and highly motivating for little learners. You will learn how to take your dollar store finds and turn them into hands on engaging activities that will keep your children captivated while learning in a hands on child centered way.

Austin Sessions

There's a Book for That!

By Vera Ahiyya | ELA

Join Vera in an engaging and interactive professional development session for Kindergarten teachers, where we will dive into the world of picture books and their role in enhancing comprehension skills. Explore a variety of captivating picture books across different content areas while creating and discussing high-order thinking questions. We will collaboratively design fun and accessible activities that cater to the needs of all learners, ensuring an enriching experience for both educator and student.



Austin Sessions



WRITING

Write From the Start: Guiding our Littlest Learners Through the Writing Process (in a developmentally appropriate AND science-aligned way!)



By Holly Ehle | Writing

This session will transform your approach to writing instruction for primary students by replacing the traditional Writer's Workshop with a research-based method that aligns with children's cognitive and physical development. You'll explore an innovative approach that focuses on short, engaging bursts of instruction, eliminating the need for long daily writing periods. By using techniques like collaborative writing and teacher-led pen control, students can focus on key writing skills without cognitive overload. The process is broken into four steps—THINK-PLAN-WRITE-REVISE—taught in short, structured sessions across a week. Join us to learn how to implement this "Science of Writing" approach and make writing easier and more enjoyable for young learners.

Sentence Success! Explicit Instruction for Little Learners



By Christina DeCarbo | Writing

Imagine a writing world that is developmentally appropriate, purposeful, and effective! Christina shares explicit, sentence-level writing instruction that will build students' skills, confidence, and reading comprehension! You'll walk away with a deep understanding of why writing needs to be taught in connection to meaningful content, and what that looks like in the classroom. Come ready to participate in tons of engaging, sentence-building activities that will turn your students into sentence superstars!

Austin Sessions



Dictation: Reimagining Spelling Instruction

By **Jake Daggett** | **Writing**

Are we still doing spelling tests? How does dictation work, and how often should I be doing it? What is the research behind it? Join Jake as he answers all these questions and more about the shift from memory-based spelling tests to daily dictation practice. Explore the importance of a speech to print approach, and get hands-on practice with key sound to spelling strategies for K-2 readers.



From Letters to Words

By **Debrice Smith-Hill** | **Writing**

Join Debrice as she explores how to ignite the creativity and imagination of young writers in your classroom. This engaging workshop will provide hands-on strategies and activities that foster a love for storytelling and writing in preschool students. Learn how to create a supportive environment that builds confidence, encourages self-expression, and empowers students to discover their unique voices. Walk away with practical tools to nurture a lifelong passion for writing, helping the next generation of authors blossom into confident and expressive storytellers.



A Writing Piece in a Week

By **Whitney Ramirez** | **Writing**

Teaching writing in the primary grades can feel overwhelming, and at times can be daunting. But the writing process does not have to be scary! In this session, you will get tips for how to run your writing block in a way that you and your students are able to complete a writing piece in a week! You will also learn strategies on how to manage writing conferences with your students. You will leave this session feeling confident and ready to write with your class!

Austin Sessions



MATH

Magical Math Centers

By Vera Ahiyya | Math

You've heard all about literacy centers, but what about math centers? This professional development session is designed to empower early elementary teachers with practical strategies for creating and effectively managing math centers in alignment with Common Core Math Standards. Math centers provide a dynamic and engaging approach to help students build a strong foundation in mathematics. Participants will explore hands-on activities, align math center activities with the Common Core Math Standards, and learn best practices for implementing math centers that support the development of mathematical skills and critical thinking.

Math Outside the Curriculum

By Whitney Ramirez | Math

Do you dread teaching math? Are you looking to spice up your math block? Whether you're a new teacher just starting out or a veteran teacher looking for new ideas, in this session you will learn how to take math off the page and create hands on, engaging, and standards based math lessons and centers. You will also learn tips and strategies to help you plan and organize your math block like a pro!

Austin Sessions



Playful Numbers: Engaging and Effective Math Games

By Hilary Statum | Math

In this interactive session, you will learn why game-based learning helps make abstract concepts tangible and fun for early learners. Get YOUR game on with hands-on activities and demonstrations of various math games covering essential skills. You'll head back to the classroom with a checklist of game ideas, templates, and materials to implement these games immediately!



Adventure on the Story Mat: A Problem-Solving Journey!

By Carlanda Miller | Math

Adventure awaits in the world of story mats, where learning is transformed into a thrilling quest of hands-on learning and collaboration. Don't miss out on this chance to make data collection and problem solving a fun and memorable experience for your students with Carlanda Miller. We'll explore the power of using story mats to transform ordinary data collection into an epic quest. Learn how to use these vibrant, interactive mats to engage students in real-world scenarios that promotes productive talk and the use of problem-solving skills. By the end of the session, teachers will be well-prepared to use story mats as a powerful tool to engage their students in problem-solving, and active learning, ultimately enhancing the overall educational experience and fostering a love for critical thinking and exploration while collecting data.



Unlocking Math Lessons

By Debrice Smith-Hill | Math

Unlock the potential of your math lessons with this dynamic session designed to help you create a supportive and engaging learning environment. You'll discover how to make math meaningful through real-life examples, hands-on activities, and technology integration. Learn how to differentiate instruction to meet the diverse needs of your students, use visual aids and diagrams to enhance understanding, and practice problem-solving in ways that boost confidence.

Austin Sessions



CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Katie Knight and the 7 tips to 🎵 Wiggle While You Work! 🎵



By Katie Knight | Classroom Management

Move aside Snow White, come and spend time with Katie Knight and learn 7 tips for helping your students successfully Wiggle While They Work! Since our students are between 60–80 months old, we need ideas to inspire and engage while learning how to avoid the poison apples of a classroom gone wild!

Recess Referee



By Katie Knight | Classroom Management

Student-on-Student conflicts happen both in and out of the classroom. Sometimes students come back from recess or specials, so mad at each other, that figuring out what happened feels like a full-contact sport! Helping kids resolve those conflicts and bounce back can make you feel like less like a teacher and more a Recess Referee! This session will give you tools to help kids calmly, and QUICKLY solve their conflicts, so you can get back to teaching and they can get back into a learning mindset!

Austin Sessions

Building a Strong Foundation: Classroom Management with Routines and Procedures



By Carlanda Miller | Classroom Management

Join Carlanda as your lead architect in this hands-on session on classroom management. Carlanda will share her blueprint—routines, procedures, and strategies—that have helped her construct a well-organized classroom environment, even through the most challenging projects, including the pandemic. These foundational tools will help shift the responsibility and accountability from you to your students!

This construction-themed session focuses on building and creating a strong foundation for classroom management, emphasizing the importance of planning and structure in creating a successful learning environment.

Can I Have Your Attention?



By Jeremy Sturdivant | Classroom Management

We all know that kids have a hard time with emotional regulation, or sometimes just being redirected while learning during Circle Time Activities. Join Mr. Jay as he gives a lot of fun, engaging and cool techniques to help you keep your students motivated and engaged during Circle Time. Mr. Jay gives a lot of great tips on how to use your body parts as a tool to help students develop a better sense of how to improve their engagement and focus.

Austin Sessions



ENGAGEMENT



Management Moves: Multi-Sensory Strategies for 100% Engagement

By Jake Daggett | **Engagement**

In this day and age, motivation, engagement, and executive functioning go hand in hand. If we want to get to academic achievement, it is crucial that we give students multiple ways to respond. In Jake's session, join the party and practice essential classroom engagement strategies for tier 1 that tap into all different modalities. Get ready to clap, stomp, repeat, and chant your way to 100% class participation during whole group lessons.

Austin Sessions



**DIVERSITY, EQUITY,
INCLUSIVITY, AND
ACCESSIBILITY**

Healing Hearts: Creating Trauma-Informed Classrooms with Joy

By Alexia Pendleton | [D.E.I.A.](#)

This session is designed to help educators support students who have experienced trauma. This session combines essential trauma-informed practices with joyful and engaging activities to create a safe and nurturing learning environment for all children. Understanding and addressing the impact of trauma is crucial for fostering resilience and emotional well-being in students. By incorporating trauma-informed approaches, educators can build classrooms where every child feels seen, heard, and supported.



Austin Sessions



S.T.E.A.M.

Tinker, Create, and Explore with STEAM

By Shannon Cunningham | STEAM

Dive into the world of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) for our littlest learners! This hands-on session will explore playful and practical ways to bring STEAM into your classroom with a mix of simple setups and exciting projects. Shannon will share ideas, resources, and tips that encourage problem-solving, creativity, and curiosity in your young students.

Explore, Excite, Discover

By Mr. Greg Smedley-Warren | STEAM

Embark on a journey of discovery in this session, where you'll uncover simple, classroom-proven ideas, activities, and games that captivate and motivate students. From sensory learning, to math and literacy activities, games, and inspiring art projects, you'll gain a wealth of ideas and inspiration to infuse energy into your classroom.

Austin Sessions

Seamless & Simple STEAM



By Whitney Ramirez | STEAM

Are you looking for more ways to weave STEAM into your day? In this session, you will learn tips on how to implement hands-on learning activities that allow students to plan, build and create meaningful connections to their learning. You will also learn strategies on how to connect STEAM to literacy, social studies, and math.



DATA DRIVEN
INSTRUCTION

Data Bros.



By Mr. Greg & Katie Knight | Data

This session will help teachers win at the game of data. Mr. Greg and Katie Knight will share classroom-tested and research-based ideas to help you get your data fast, understand reports to take instructional action, and celebrate learning growth. All ideas and resources shared will work no matter what program your school uses!

Austin Sessions



SCIENCE & SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies & Science Made Easy

By Mr. Greg Smedley-Warren | **S & SS**

In this session, we will focus on making science and social studies engaging and manageable. You'll learn how to integrate research projects to help students explore and investigate topics in fun and hands-on ways. You'll discover strategies to simplify lessons, promote curiosity, and foster critical thinking - all while meeting standards and creating a love for learning.

Hilary's Literacy Lab

By Hilary Statum | **S & SS**

Do you struggle to find time for science? You aren't alone! In this hands-on session, discover ways to incorporate science into your ELA instructional block. Hilary pairs each low-prep experiment with a fiction or nonfiction text. Find ways to weave in writing skills with exciting experiments. Return to the classroom with confidence in your ability to squeeze in science! (Note: We will complete SOME hands-on experiments during the session since they liked them so much this year but I'm making them as simple as possible!)

Austin Sessions



SCHOOL CULTURE

How Will You Start the Day?

By Vera Ahiyya | [School Culture](#)

Good morning! How you start your day, sets your day for success. Together we will explore morning meeting routines that engage, build community, and make sure your students start the day off right.

Stronger Together: Building Families and Communities

By Alexia Pendleton | [School Culture](#)

An interactive session dedicated to fostering strong connections between schools, families, and communities. This session provides educators with practical strategies to create an inclusive, supportive, and collaborative classroom environment where everyone feels valued and engaged. In the early childhood years, building strong family and community partnerships is essential for student success. This session will explore innovative approaches to involve families in the educational process and create a sense of community that extends beyond the classroom walls.

Austin Sessions

Building Parent Partnerships



By **María Mercedes Champion** | **School Culture**

Parents are their child's first and most important teacher". Learn ideas and activities to enhance your skills in building strong, collaborative partnerships with parents to empower the whole family to work together to support students' success.

Kid-versations: Connecting Through Creative Communication



By **Jeremy Sturdivant** | **School Culture**

Teachers will discover innovative ways to foster meaningful connections with their young charges. Through interactive demonstrations and practical tips, this session will explore storytelling, puppetry, and other engaging techniques to enhance communication skills and promote bonding in the classroom. Get ready to ignite laughter, curiosity, and deeper connections with your little learners!

Austin Sessions



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING



Paving the Way with SEL: Creating a Systemic Approach

By Crystal Oswald | SEL

Join Crystal as she guides you in paving the way for Social Emotional Learning (SEL): Creating a Systemic Approach. Discover how SEL can become more than just another item on your agenda—it can be the foundation of a cohesive educational environment. This session explores strategies to integrate SEL systematically across classrooms, schools, homes, and communities, ensuring that SEL principles are embedded in everyday practices and interactions. Participants will explore essential building blocks that foster SEL competencies, promoting a nurturing environment that supports the holistic development of every child.



Developing Feeling Vocabulary in a Community Meeting

By Alexia Pendleton | SEL

In this session, we will explore strategies to develop students' feeling vocabulary during community meetings, creating a foundation for social-emotional learning and healthy self-expression. Building a robust feeling vocabulary is essential for young children to articulate their emotions, understand their peers, and navigate social interactions. By incorporating feeling vocabulary into regular community meetings, educators can create a supportive environment where students feel heard and valued.

Austin Sessions



ELL / ESL

Explore, Excite, Discover



By Mr. Greg Smedley-Warren | ELL/ESL

Embark on a journey of discovery in this session, where you'll uncover simple, classroom-proven ideas, activities, and games that captivate and motivate students. From sensory learning, to math and literacy activities, games, and inspiring art projects, you'll gain a wealth of ideas and inspiration to infuse energy into your classroom.

Differentiating a Phonics Block for Below, Above, and Multilingual Learners

By Jake Daggett | ELL/ESL

We've done a great job getting the word out about having a strong, interactive Tier 1 phonics block. But what about below and above level learners? What about multilingual learners? How do we analyze spelling data to make choices? Join Jake as he unpacks research from Wiley Blevins and Linnea Ehri and models differentiation in action during your daily phonics instruction.

Austin Sessions



**PLAY BASED
LEARNING**

Boosting Learning and Language Through Play

By Shannon Cunningham | PBL

Join Shannon as you explore the power of play in the classroom! This session will provide you with creative ways to incorporate play across subjects like reading and math while fostering the development of students' oral language skills. Learn how playful learning can make academics more engaging and meaningful for young learners. Get ready for hands-on examples, practical tips, and fun ideas that will have your students playing their way to success!

Playing and LEARNING Together

By María Mercedes Champion | PBL

So many standards, so little time! This session will delve into the latest research on play-based learning and its benefits for student engagement, creativity and cognitive development. Join me to learn how to use play as a learning tool to plan and facilitate your student's interactive learning and to equip you with the knowledge and skills to harness the POWER of PLAY in your educational practice.

Austin Sessions

Learning Through Play: From Observation to Instructional Impact

By **Carlanda Miller** | **PBL**

Learning through play is a very important element in the classroom. It allows students to explore, make connects between the physical world and abstract concepts around them and demonstrate their learning. While students are learning through play teachers can collect powerful data that not only gives a snapshot of what students know but also what information needs to be taught whole class or in small groups. In this session, you will learn through play with Carlanda, practice collecting data and learn how to turn that data into teacher moves in the class.



FINE MOTOR

From Scribbles to Letters: Writing, a Complex Process

By **María Mercedes Champion** | **Fine Motor**

This will be an interactive presentation focused on enhancing fine/gross motor skills crucial for pre writing development in young children. We will explore various activities designed to strengthen hand muscles, improve hand-eye coordination and foster the dexterity needed for writing.

We are excited to introduce:



**Featuring CHOICE LEADERSHIP
With Adam Dovico**

As a school leader, you have thousands of choices you make each day. From personnel decisions (who's going to cover that teacherless classroom today?) to small things that matter a lot to people (how quickly can we get the copy machine fixed?), you must consider multiple perspectives and consequences with every choice you make. CHOICE Leadership is all about just that, making decisions around key leadership competencies such as culture, human resources, operations, instruction, coaching, and equity. Join fellow school leaders as we examine, discuss, and construct approaches to tackle real-life scenarios we face in school each day.





School, district, and aspiring leaders, come join Dr. Adam Dovico and other renowned school leaders for special leadership sessions at Elevate! Austin. Leaders will come together to work through real-life scenarios that you face each day. We will work collaboratively to find multiple solutions and perspectives that will strengthen your leadership and prepare you for new challenges ahead. You will realize that making informed and brave choices is what leadership is all about!

Austin Sessions



**SCHOOL
LEADERSHIP**

Conflict, Crucial Conversations, and Creative Solutions



By Adam Dovico | School Leadership

Get ready to dive into the art of conflict, where even the toughest conversations can turn into opportunities for growth! In this interactive session, you'll discover how to handle those tricky talks with staff, parents, and students like a pro—without losing your cool. We'll sprinkle in some creative solutions to help you solve problems before they become full-blown dramas. By the end, you'll be armed with the confidence and tools to tackle tough situations that come your way!

Building Bridges



By Edward DeShazer | School Leadership

"Building Bridges" is a transformative session dedicated to nurturing and strengthening the relationships within your school's staff. While the focus is often on how educators can connect with students, the bonds between teachers and school leadership are equally vital.

Austin Sessions



From Compliance to Community: 5 Keys to a Thriving School Culture

By **Edward DeShazer** | **School Leadership**

Discover how to transform your school from a rigid, factory-like environment to a vibrant community where everyone thrives. In this session, you'll learn five actionable strategies to create a culture of connection, support, and personalized growth for both staff and students.



Taking a “Coach Approach” to School Leadership

By **Ashley Moore** | **School Leadership**

As the Chief Instructional Leader in your school, teacher development is a key factor that directly impacts student achievement. In this session, we will explore the four types of feedback and the leadership behaviors necessary to provide impactful coaching and feedback to your team. This interactive workshop will show you how to give tailored feedback with confidence, turning everyday moments into powerful coaching opportunities! Join Principal Mo as we learn to give game-changing feedback and unlock the secrets to sparking a growth mindset in your teachers. You'll leave with a toolkit of impactful strategies to boost teacher performance, create a culture of excellence, and make coaching a fun, energizing part of your leadership style!

Austin Sessions



From Compliance to Community: The Retention Revolution: How to Keep Your Team Vibing & Thriving

By **Ashley Moore** | **School Leadership**

In the midst of a teacher shortage, how do you keep your school team intact? How do you get your team to STAY? Retaining staff is a key priority in maintaining the talent in your school to ultimately impact student achievement. Discover the secrets to keeping your top talent in this engaging session, "The Retention Revolution: How to Keep Your Team Vibing & Thriving." Join Principal Mo as we explore practical strategies to boost teacher satisfaction, prevent turnover, and create a culture that keeps your team motivated and committed. In this session, you'll learn how to spot retention risks and build strong connections within your team. Uncover the key drivers of employee loyalty and walk away with actionable tactics to improve retention immediately. Don't miss this chance to revolutionize how to keep your team vibing and thriving!



The SEL Blueprint: Cultivating a Supportive Culture for Teachers and Students

By **Crystal Oswald** | **School Leadership**

Want to elevate a school culture where emotions are as important as equations? Discover how to assess your current SEL framework and build a vision that prioritizes the well-being of both educators and students. You'll learn to assess your school's current SEL framework and envision a desired state that prioritizes the well-being of both educators and students, using CASEL's 10 Schoolwide SEL Indicators as a foundation. Through practical strategies and collaborative discussions, you'll dive into the 10 key indicators, which will guide you in creating a school culture that fosters meaningful connections, enhances engagement, and promotes well-being. Leave with a clear roadmap and actionable steps to transform your SEL practices, inspiring lasting, positive change for your entire community.

Research Citations

All ELEVATE conference sessions are based on research. It is one of our requirements to be a speaker for ELEVATE.

Below are some of the sources from research that our speakers are using within their classrooms for best instructional practices, and to build their Professional Development sessions for ELEVATE!

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