



## BREAKOUT SESSIONS I

### Tuesday, August 4 — 3:05-4:00 pm



**The Power of Feedback on Operating as One** While we may acknowledge and believe that feedback is an important and essential part of the teaching and learning process, we are confronted with challenges in the giving and receiving of feedback in our own classrooms – too little time. **Dr. John Almarode's** session will take an up-close look at feedback in our schools and classrooms. **Grand Ballroom**

**Meet Your New Teaching Assistant: AI in the Classroom (6th - 12th)** explores how middle and high school teachers can use AI without replacing instruction or critical thinking. The breakout reviews proper AI use and demonstrates how chatbots can strengthen foundational learning on Bloom's Taxonomy. **Dr. Jacelin Cadet**, Associate Professor of Computer Science at Southwestern Adventist University, brings extensive experience in K–12 education and technology leadership. He holds an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration and has served as a technology teacher, math and science teacher, IT Director, and Vice Principal. His expertise in technology integration and curriculum development drives his passion for enhancing teaching and learning through technology. **Frisco 1**



**Shaping Exceptional School Culture and Climate** A thriving school culture drives student success. **Dr. Mario Acosta** equips school leaders and educators with tools to assess, strengthen, and leverage culture to boost collaboration, staff morale, and a sense of belonging for students and families. Participants will audit their current school or district culture and develop actionable next steps to create supportive, high-performing environments for all students and staff. **Frisco 2**

**A Better Tool Built for You! AE-Connect: The New Gradebook and SIS Built for Adventist Schools, by Adventist Educators!** AE-Connect has served more than 200 schools over the past three academic years as a student information system built specifically for Adventist schools. Developed by Adventist educators alongside professional programmers and designers, it was created to meet the unique needs of Adventist education and avoid the limitations often found in systems designed for public-school environments. Learn how AE-Connect can support your school and enhance your effectiveness as an Adventist educator. **Fawn Fahrer** is the Project Manager for AE-Connect, with over three years of experience helping schools successfully implement and use the platform. Drawing on her background with Adventist schools and seven years in the Oregon Conference Education Department, she is passionate about supporting educators and improving school systems. Fawn looks forward to sharing AE-Connect and connecting with colleagues at the SWUC Teacher Convention. With a guest appearance by Martha Ban. **Frisco 3**



**Bring Reading to Life with CPR: Convert Struggling Readers into Confident Learners!** Discover how the Controlled Phonetic Reading Program equips teachers with a proven, step-by-step phonetic intervention to help struggling readers, ESL, and dyslexic students succeed. This engaging seminar walks you through eight components that build fluency, comprehension, and confidence using structured, research-based strategies that include meaningful reading after learning just three letter sounds. Gain practical, classroom-ready techniques you can implement to see growth in your students. **Melissa Hanson** is a language therapist



and reading specialist who helps students with dyslexia. She holds a master's degree in Curriculum and Reading Instruction and has more than 30 years of teaching experience. As a published author and homeschooling mother of three dyslexic children, she is passionate about helping children become confident readers. **Ruth Davis** is a principal and kindergarten teacher in Virginia. With 30 years of teaching experience, including 12 years at Manassas Adventist Preparatory School, she has taught students from kindergarten through junior high. She has a master's degree from Southern Adventist University and enjoys fostering learning, exploring nature, and helping students grow in their walk with God. **Frisco 4**



**Introduction to UFLI — a Foundational Reading Curriculum** This breakout session introduces UFLI as a research- and evidence-based foundational reading curriculum that delivers explicit, systematic instruction in the essential skills students need for reading success. Participants will explore how its carefully designed scope and sequence supports both core instruction and targeted intervention, helping students build automaticity and confidence in foundational literacy skills. Presenter **Carisa Carr** serves as the director for education in the Mid-America Union Conference. She is a certified academic language therapist and is passionate about teaching reading. She is a wife, mother, lifelong learner, and believes in the transformational opportunities of the Adventist classroom to meet Jesus every day. **Frisco 5**

**Drawing Them Closer: Building a Christ-Centered Culture through Bible Journaling** This hands-on breakout equips teachers to intentionally build a Christ-centered classroom culture through Bible journaling. Experience simple, creative ways to help students connect personally with Scripture and deepen reflection. Walk away with ready-to-use prompts, practical strategies, and adaptable ideas you can implement immediately. **Rosy Arizaga** is Associate Superintendent for the Texico Conference, supporting schools across New Mexico and West Texas. With more than 28 years of experience as a teacher, principal, and educational leader, she is passionate about strengthening school culture, improving instruction, and using data-informed leadership to help teachers and students thrive. She specializes in culture-driven school improvement, standards-based learning, and building mission-focused teams that integrate spiritual growth into everyday learning. **Frisco 7**

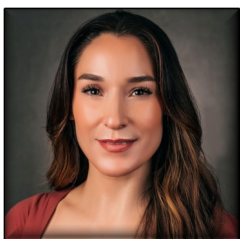


**School Boards** This breakout session will focus on the practical responsibilities of school boards and how effective governance supports the mission of the school. Attention will be given to areas such as policy, finance, personnel, and board relationships, with attention to how these decisions affect school leadership and daily school life. Special focus will be given to the role of the principal as executive secretary of the board, including documentation such as agenda preparation, timely distribution of materials, and the recording of clear and accurate minutes. **Dr. Tim Kripps** serves as Education Director for the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference and has devoted nearly 30 years to Adventist education. His experience includes teaching, school leadership, and conference level educational administration, with a continuing focus on strengthening school mission, governance, and educational quality. He values opportunities to support school leaders and boards in the shared work of advancing Adventist education. **Comanche**

**Protecting Your Classroom: Best Practices for Effective Risk Management**

This breakout session will emphasize the critical need for implementing comprehensive child protection practices in Adventist educational settings. We will explore various risk management approaches including volunteer screening, cybersecurity best practices, emergency planning, field trips, and additional related areas. **Rocio Roberts** is an Account Executive for Adventist Risk Management, serving various organizations in the South Pacific Division and the Southwestern Union. She has worked for the Adventist Church since 2006, with previous experience in various departments within conferences in the Southern Union. She holds several insurance and risk management designations. **Gallant Fox**





**Planning With Purpose: Building a Sustainable Framework for Learning That Engages, Differentiates, and Empowers** Using technology to create realistic and flexible lessons for real classrooms. Teachers will leave with practical tools for designing learning that motivates students, supports differentiation, and promotes ownership without adding to teacher overload. \*Recommended that teachers bring their laptops. **Eimeliz Garcia** is a passionate educator from

Killeen Adventist Jr. Academy with over 16 years of experience teaching all grade levels, from pre-K to 12th grade. She loves to create meaningful, student-centered learning experiences while integrating technology and new teaching methods. She also has a background in special education and uses differentiation within her lesson design. Eimeliz loves working and teaching outside the box and gets excited every time she gets to share her ideas with others. **Sea Biscuit**

**Classroom Management: Culturally Responsive Procedures** This classroom management session focuses on fostering an organized, respectful, and engaging spiritual environment that maximizes learning and minimizes disruptions. We will discuss establishing clear routines, building positive teacher-student relationships, managing classroom space, and consistently applying behavioral expectations. We will introduce creative ideas for an inclusive classroom that respects diverse backgrounds, communication styles, and special needs of students. **Tara Bailey** currently serves as the Superintendent of Education for the Oklahoma Conference. She comes with experience across all levels of Adventist education from one-room schools to single grade classrooms. Tara's love and passion for ministering to children leads her to mentor and guide educators to build a safe and supportive culture within every classroom.



**Traveller**



**Educator's Wealth** Learn how to align your personal finances and retirement strategy with your calling to ministry, so money becomes a tool for mission instead of a source of stress. This session will unpack practical steps for Adventist Educators to build long-term financial security while honoring biblical principles of stewardship. **Wirmin Alcantara** became the Associate Administrator/DC Plan Director for Adventist Retirement in May 2021 with over two decades of successful experience in Finance and Human Resources. He has served as Undertreasurer of Potomac Conference Corporation, Undertreasurer for Texas Conference, and as the first Human Resources Director for the Texas Conference. **Whirlaway**

**The Record Newsroom: Helping Students Find Their Voice Through Writing** See how the *Record Newsroom* can help teachers bring journalism into the classroom with practical assignments. Students can build their writing and reporting skills while sharing stories from their schools and communities. **Gerson Pancorbo** is the Communication Director for the Southwestern Union Conference and executive editor of the *Southwestern Union Record*. He is passionate about helping students and educators use media, writing, and storytelling to communicate clearly and creatively. **Ranger**

