

**Statewide Council for the Coordination of the Regional Professional  
Development Programs  
2023-2024 Fiscal Year**

**Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA)  
Center for Educational Excellence VIII (CEEI)**

Presented by: Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA)  
Dr. Jeff Geihs, Executive Director, NASA  
Dr. Greta Peay, Deputy Executive Director, NASA

**Organization Overview**

The Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA) is a professional organization that represents school administrators throughout the State of Nevada. Its primary function is to:

1. Promote legislation that improves education within the state.
2. Provide leadership that facilitates communication among administrators, component groups, and other organizations within the state.
3. Provide for professional collaboration by sponsoring and/or facilitating relevant professional conferences, publications, institutes, and workshops.
4. Serve as a unifying voice for school administrators in matters affecting education.
5. Provide direction and service for its members.
6. Promote a positive image of education to the public.

**Mission**

The mission is to provide all educators in Nevada and beyond with high quality, timely, critical, and empowering professional development designed to impact student outcomes, support leadership and instructional improvement, and provide services to support their work.

**Vision**

NASA is a premier professional development organization serving all educators in Nevada and beyond to learn and lead.

## **Beliefs**

1. "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." John F. Kennedy.
2. Strong leaders provide teachers with pathways to success.
3. Leaders are teachers and teachers are leaders.
4. Learning is life's work.

## **NASA's Center for Educational Excellence Institute (CEEI) VIII**

With the approval of state funds, the Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA) developed an institute within the organization dedicated solely to high-quality leadership development. The Center for Educational Excellence Institute (CEEI) represents a focus on excellent professional development for all stakeholders. Previous CEEI sessions have included strategists, facilitators and teacher leaders, coordinators, directors, site-level administrators, and central office administrators. CEEI Presenters are individuals who are national experts, Nevada Department of Education experts, NASA board members, state, local and district leaders, and presenters who have relevant work experience.

With the approval of state funds, NASA will provide the CEEI in a virtual format. The CEEI will be available for any educator in any position, especially those aspiring to, or even just thinking about, new leadership roles and responsibilities. Any educator from a first-year teacher to a veteran superintendent will benefit from and will be able to attend the CEEI VIII Virtual Leadership Institute. The theme for CEEI VIII is ***Characteristics and Traits of Exemplary Education Leaders: From Good to Great.***

The CEEI is modeled after highly effective superintendent/leadership academies throughout the United States. The CEEI teaches the essentials of leadership necessary for optimal success in schools, districts, and organizations alike! Each time NASA offers professional learning sessions under the CEEI umbrella, current relevant and rigorous research based best practices, and information is provided.

To support the theme for CEEI VIII, ***Characteristics and Traits of Exemplary Education Leaders: From Good to Great***, the CEEI Virtual Leadership Institute will focus on key leadership qualities via research from The Center for Creative and Elevated Leadership:

- Communication
- Courage
- Delegation
- Empathy
- Gratitude
- Influence
- Integrity
- Learning Agility
- Respect
- Self-Awareness

In this virtual institute, participants will gain the knowledge and skills of essential leadership roles and responsibilities necessary for optimal success. Current relevant and rigorous leadership core competencies will be addressed giving participants the opportunity to reflect, disseminate research-based knowledge related to effective educational leadership behaviors and skills. Principles of Culturally Responsive Leadership behaviors with a focus on excellence for equity will be the driving focus for the institute. The CEEI VIII will also address Social Emotional Learning and Academic Competency-Based Education content with a focus on educational equity and the traits of highly effective school leaders.

In CEEI III, IV, V, VI, and VII, the Nevada Department of Education team provided Social and Emotional Learning professional learning, which provided valuable relevant information to address successful student outcomes. The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) will continue its focus on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD). During the CEEI, the State Department experts will continue to integrate SEAD through a Student-Centered Competency-Based Educational approach as a reminder of the need for equitable learning and decision-making to benefit every student. Such critical information forms the backdrop of all learning for CEEI VIII.

CEEI VIII will commence on **Saturday, October 21, 2023, and conclude on Wednesday, February 7, 2024**. Participants will receive a total of six (6) credits and 90 license renewal hours. All presentations will be provided virtually with sensitivity to accommodations required by participants. NASA will utilize closed captions for all CEEI VIII **virtual** sessions.

### **Scope of Work**

This section includes the presenters and the objectives to be met through virtual presentations.

NASA believes it is best practice to engage both school and district administrators as Session Leaders for participants. With the approval of grant requested funds, NASA expects to engage two (2) Session Leaders. Session Leaders will be responsible for one to four sessions based on the allocated time of the presenters.

Session Leaders are responsible for: collaborating with their designated presenter(s); attending their assigned session(s); monitoring reflective assignments provided to their designated cohort; providing quality mentoring to participants to ensure assignments are understood; and guiding participants towards successful outcomes for all intended learning outcome expectations.

To maintain consistency with Session Leaders and their cohorts, Dr. Greta Peay will provide a one-hour training session with Session Leaders prior to the beginning of the institute kick-off. Such training will provide an overview of expectations and successful learning outcomes for each participant, as follows:

## **Expected Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the CEEI VIII, participants will be able to:

- Assess their own practices related to the characteristics and traits of exemplary leadership.
- Incorporate key concepts and personal reflections from the CEEI VIII sessions.
- Connect the course work to their own work and life.
- Identify culturally competent behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes.
- Apply the lessons and course content to teaching and leadership practice.
- Identify behaviors and beliefs that serve as keys to excellence in equity.
- Model key essential leadership traits, specific behaviors, mindset, and practices that will enhance and elevate educational equity.

Presenters are responsible for providing agenda(s), materials, deliverable reflection assignments, and intended outcomes.

### **Presenters for the CEEI VIII Virtual Sessions:**

- |                       |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| ▪ AJ Adams            | ▪ Andrea Johnson           |
| ▪ Kaweeda Adams       | ▪ Adam Lane                |
| ▪ Leo Amador          | ▪ Robert Mars              |
| ▪ Dr. John Anzalone   | ▪ Kevin McPartlin          |
| ▪ Debbie Brockett     | ▪ Jillyn Pendelton         |
| ▪ Sean Buchanan       | ▪ Dr. Zachary Robbins      |
| ▪ Bill de la Cruz     | ▪ Dr. Samuel Scavella      |
| ▪ Traci Davis         | ▪ Colin Seale              |
| ▪ Jhone Ebert         | ▪ Dr. Summer Stephens      |
| ▪ Dr. Susan Enfield   | ▪ Heather Thaxton          |
| ▪ Tracy Fisher        | ▪ Michelle Trujillo        |
| ▪ Margaret Folkers    | ▪ Wayne Workman            |
| ▪ Dr. Peter Gorman    | ▪ Dr. Cynthia Glover-Woods |
| ▪ Dr. Cynthia Johnson | ▪ Tiffany Young            |

***\*In the event of unforeseen circumstances, we respectfully reserve the right to identify an alternate presenter.***

The CEEI VIII will have two participant cohorts. One will be for teacher leaders and the other for administrators. This decision was based on the feedback and comments from previous CEEI sessions.

The calendar is divided into **24** sessions which comprise **90** hours of virtual learning and **13** hours of reflective deliverables. Assignments include quality time with session leaders, along with ongoing activities, training and network opportunities remains the forefront of planning and implementation.

CEEI presenters will disseminate research-based knowledge related to effective educational leadership behaviors and skills. The Nevada Department of Education priorities will be integrated in various presentations.

1. **Anticipated Number of Participants:** 300
2. **Timeline:** Saturday, October 21, 2023 - Wednesday, February 7, 2024.
3. **Total Sessions:** Twenty-four **(24)** sessions for a total of ninety **(90)** hours, inclusive of six **(6)** one-hour sessions and eighteen **(18)** three-hour sessions.
4. **Credits:** Six **(6)** credits. Ninety **(90)** hours of virtual learning with presenters and thirteen **(13)** hours of deliverables, which include small group discussion/reflections and time with Session Leaders for support, questions, and networking with colleagues.
5. **Total Deliverables:** Thirteen **(13)** hours. Session Leaders will each have thirty **(30)** minutes of collaboration time with their teacher and/or administrative cohort. The thirty **(30)** minutes of time may be delivered by whole group and/or small group format, and/or two-way communication via text messages, Google/Zoom meetings, and/or emails.
6. **Success Measure Outcomes:** Participants will complete virtual sessions and deliverables in alignment with the Nevada Department of Education guidelines. Participants will submit a written group reflection in small groups during the final CEEI VIII **virtual** session. The purpose of the reflection is for participants to demonstrate understanding of the characteristics and traits of an exemplary education leader that impact change and equitable action to enhance student growth; both academically and socially.

**Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA)**  
**Center for Educational Excellence (CEEI) VIII**  
*Characteristics and Traits of Exemplary Education Leaders*  
**Saturday, October 21, 2023 - Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

**Saturday, October 21, 2023**

**9:00 AM - 3:30 PM**

**Introduction and CEEI VIII Expectations**

- Dr. Jeff Geihs, Executive Director, NASA
- Dr. Greta Peay, Deputy Executive Director, NASA

**Panel Discussion with School District and State Superintendents**

- Kaweeda Adams, Superintendent, City School District of Albany, New York
- Dr. John Anzalone, Superintendent, Camas School District, Washington
- Debbie Brockett, Superintendent, McMinnville School District, Oregon
- Jhone Ebert, Nevada State Superintendent, Nevada
- Dr. Susan Enfield, Superintendent, Washoe County School District, Nevada
- Dr. Zachary Robbins, Superintendent, Marysville School District, Washington
- Wayne Workman, Superintendent, Lyon County School District, Nevada

**CEEI VIII Session - Exemplary Leaders: Aligned Systems, Part I**

Dr. Peter Gorman, Former Superintendent, Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System, North Carolina

Student achievement, at scale, focused on offering equitable opportunities for all students. Sessions will utilize presentations, videos, large and small group discussions, readings, and activities. Dr. Gorman will lead participants through how the highest functioning teams have aligned their beliefs, vision, mission, theory of action, policies, strategic plan, budget, accountability system, and evaluation system in a climate of psychological safety and felt accountability to achieve results for all students in an equitable fashion.

**In-Class Group Reflection** facilitated by Dr. Greta Peay and the primary CEEI VIII Session Leader using guiding reflection questions.

**Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA)**  
**Center for Educational Excellence (CEEI) VIII**  
*Characteristics and Traits of Exemplary Education Leaders*  
**Saturday, October 21, 2023 - Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

**Tuesday, October 24, 2023, and Wednesday, October 25, 2023**  
**4:30 PM- 7:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session - Exemplary Leaders: Aligned Systems,” Part II and III**

Dr. Peter Gorman, Former Superintendent, Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System, North Carolina

Student achievement, at scale, focused on offering equitable opportunities for all students. Sessions will utilize presentations, videos, large and small group discussions, readings, and activities. Dr. Gorman will lead participants through how the highest functioning teams have aligned their beliefs, vision, mission, theory of action, policies, strategic plan, budget, accountability system, and evaluation system in a climate of psychological safety and felt accountability to achieve results for all students in an equitable fashion.

**Wednesday, November 1, 2023, and Wednesday, November 8, 2023**  
**4:30 PM- 7:30 PM**

**CEEI VII Session - Creating a Culture of Respect: Equity Mindset**

Traci Davis, Chief Executive Officer, Elevating Raising Awareness and Supporting Equity

Treating people with respect daily is one of the most important things a leader can do. It will ease tensions and conflict, create trust, and improve effectiveness. Creating a culture of respect with an equity mindset is about more than the absence of disrespect. Respectfulness can be shown in many different ways, but it often starts with simply being an engaged active listener who truly seeks to understand the perspectives of others. CEEI participants will explore the steps to enhance a culture of respect.

**In-Class Group Assignment**

Submit Assignment Reflection (One to two-page, double-spaced reflection).

*\*This assignment will be completed in class using the specific criteria discussed during the session.*

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**Center for Educational Excellence (CEEI) VIII**  
*Characteristics and Traits of Exemplary Education Leaders*  
**Saturday, October 21, 2023 - Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

**Tuesday, November 14, 2023**  
**4:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session - Understanding Quality School Funding**

Jillyn Pendelton, Cognia Organization and Former Associate Superintendent, Clark County School District, Nevada

Funding for schools has reached record-high levels, although the pandemic has exacerbated longstanding inequities in student outcomes. As policymakers grapple with questions around how much to fund schools and how that funding should be distributed, existing research can provide insights into where and how to use additional funds to improve outcomes. In this review of the research, several key takeaways on the effects of school funding and providing a discussion of findings will be the focus.

**In-Class Group Reflection** facilitated by Dr. Greta Peay and the Primary CEEI VIII Session Leader using guiding reflection questions.

**Wednesday, November 15, 2023**  
**4:30 PM- 7:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session - Exemplary Leaders: Courage, Empathy, Integrity, and Respect**

Robert Mars, President, and Founder, Robert Mars & Associate and Former Associate Superintendent, Clark County School District, Nevada

CEEI participants will engage in an interactive discussion which analyzes and synthesizes best practices and the importance of leaders having the characteristics and traits of courage, empathy, integrity, and respect. This session will also focus on the definition of courage, empathy, integrity, and respect. Examples of what education leaders do to demonstrate these characteristics and traits will also be discussed.



**Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA)  
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*Characteristics and Traits of Exemplary Education Leaders*  
Saturday, October 21, 2023 - Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

**Saturday, November 18, 2023  
9:00 AM - 3:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session - Leadership via Mentoring and Coaching, Part I**

AJ Adams, Principal, Clark County School District, Nevada

CEEI participants will explore theoretical foundations of adult development and learning as it pertains to the mentorship process. Participants will learn various practical techniques and strategies to use as an educator, aspiring leader, and leader.

**In-Class Group Reflection** facilitated by Dr. Greta Peay and the Primary CEEI VIII Session Leader using guiding reflection questions.

**Tuesday, November 28, 2023  
4:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

**CEEI VII - Creating a Culture of Respect and Psychological Safety: Essential Tips**

Tracy Fisher, Social-emotional Academic Development Specialist, Nevada Department of Education, Nevada

Psychological safety, a positive climate and culture is recognized as a key differentiator in successful team performance and a fundamental component for respect. Education leaders must understand psychological safety because it can help to create an environment where their staff and students feel safe to take risks and learn from their mistakes. When individuals have psychological safety, they feel included, valued, and respected. This session will dive into some of the ways to create a psychologically safe environment.

**Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA)**  
**Center for Educational Excellence (CEEI) VIII**  
*Characteristics and Traits of Exemplary Education Leaders*  
**Saturday, October 21, 2023 - Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

**Wednesday, November 29, 2023**

**4:30 PM- 6:00 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session I - Exemplary Leaders: Tips for Learning Agile**

Leo Amador, Principal, Clark County School District, Nevada

Learning agility is the ability to know what to do when you do not know what to do. It is important for education leaders to foster and increase learning agility through practice, experience, and effort. After all, great leaders learn from experience and succeed in times of change. This CEEI session will focus on the tangible steps to become more learning agile.

**6:00 PM- 7:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session II – Equity-Centered Instructional Leaders**

Colin Seale, Executive Officer, ThinkLaw

Equity-centered leadership is essential because, through a sharp equity lens, the process to diagnose and assess equity within the culture, policies, programs, practices and processes within a school-leaders model and set direction; they shape an environment where equity and excellence are the standard for everything; they develop people personally and professionally; and they make the organization “work” so that teachers and school-site staff can engage in effective teaching, learning and support. This CEEI session will address one essential question:

- *How do we build the capacity and expertise of principals to equip them to be equity-centered instructional leaders of schools that ensure equity so that every student experiences excellence in their learning and achieves at high levels?*

**Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA)  
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*Characteristics and Traits of Exemplary Education Leaders*  
Saturday, October 21, 2023 - Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

**Saturday, January 6, 2024  
9:00 AM - 3:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session - Leadership via Mentoring and Coaching, Part II**  
AJ Adams, Principal, Clark County School District, Nevada

CEEI participants will explore theoretical foundations of adult development and learning as it pertains to the mentorship process. Participants will learn various practical techniques and strategies to use as an educator, aspiring leader, and leader.

**In-Class Group Reflection** facilitated by Dr. Greta Peay and the Primary CEEI VIII Session Leader using guiding reflection questions.

**Tuesday, January 9, 2024, and Wednesday, January 10, 2024  
4:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session - Leading with Emotional Intelligence, Part I and II**  
Dr. Cynthia Glover-Woods, Educational Consultant and Former Chief Academic Officer, Riverside County Office of Education, California

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand and manage our own emotions, as well as those of others. Participants will explore the six core skills of emotional intelligence-Self-Awareness, Awareness of Others, Authenticity, Emotional Reasoning, Self- Management, and Positive Influence.

**In-Class Group Assignment**

Submit Assignment Reflection (One to two-page, double-spaced reflection).

*\*This assignment will be completed in class using the specific criteria discussed during the session.*

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*Characteristics and Traits of Exemplary Education Leaders*  
**Saturday, October 21, 2023 - Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

**Tuesday, January 16, 2024, and Wednesday, January 17, 2024**  
**4:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session - Exemplary Leadership: Culturally Responsive Mindset and Behavior, Part I and II**

Bill de la Cruz, Author, and Belonging Inclusion Facilitator

Culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) has become important to research on culturally responsive education, reform, and social justice education. This CEEI session will focus on comprehensive reviews that provide a framework for the expanding body of literature that seeks to make not only teaching, but rather the entire school environment, responsive to the schooling needs of marginalized and underserved students. Based on the literature, the discussion will be framed around critical self-awareness, CRSL and teacher preparation, CRSL and school environments, and CRSL and community advocacy.

**In-Class Group Reflection** facilitated by Dr. Greta Peay and the Primary CEEI VIII Session Leader using guiding reflection questions.

**Saturday, January 20, 2024**  
**9:00 AM - 3:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session - Exemplary Leaderships: Building a Positive Culture and Climate**

Adam Lane, Principal, Haines City School, Florida

This presentation will share the journey of building a positive school climate via the presenter's experience. The session will focus on continuous implementation, methods of executing a system of change, and data collected on discipline that impacted the school's culture.

Educators must work to become proactive interventionists, who build strong relationships with students and serve as de-escalators, communicators, and peacekeepers. Staff members and students must collaborate to build an environment to establish the school as a common ground, encouraging a connection between students, staff, and community members. CEEI participants will fully understand, not only the process to building a positive culture, climate, and community, but also the importance of utilizing decision making, relationship building, and positive behavior to create an unforgettable experience while improving staff effectiveness and raising student achievement.

**In-Class Group Reflection** facilitated by Dr. Greta Peay and the Primary CEEI VIII

Session Leader using guiding reflection questions.

**Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA)**  
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*Characteristics and Traits of Exemplary Education Leaders*  
**Saturday, October 21, 2023 - Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

**Tuesday, January 23, 2024**  
**4:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session - Exemplary Leadership: Crisis Response and Integrity**  
Kevin McPartlin, Assistant Superintendent, Clark County School District

At the conclusion of this session, participants will understand:

- the thought process a school leader must employ when challenges arise to bring about positive outcomes;
- the internal communication process (with staff and central office) and external communication process (with students, parents, and the community) a school leader must employ when challenges arise that may impact a school;
- the importance and methods to maintain a positive school climate while handling challenges;
- the resources and support available to school leaders while addressing challenges;
- the importance of truly knowing a school community makeup, history, pockets of leadership to move a school through challenges;
- the importance of documentation when challenges arise;
- how to handle the public relations concerns while handling unexpected high profile challenges;
- how to reflect on their own knowledge about their own school community;
- how to reflect on their own support systems and relationships with various central office personnel;
- to evaluate the level of equity-based decision making occurring at their own school site; and,
- to evaluate their own level of preparedness to handle high profile challenges while maintaining integrity.

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*Characteristics and Traits of Exemplary Education Leaders*  
**Saturday, October 21, 2023 - Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

**Wednesday, January 24, 2024**  
**4:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session - Exemplary Leadership: Navigating Courageous Conversations**  
Andrea Johnson, Courageous Conversation Equity Transformation Specialist

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to identify the tools to have courageous conversations in a manner that is intentional, compassionate, and generative. The Protocol will consist of components to locate, regulate, and navigate which are all characteristics and traits of exemplary leadership. In this initial engagement, participants are familiarized with the role and use of each component to promote an essential literacy and competence to engage, sustain and deepen intra- and interracial dialogues designed to meet individuals at whatever their level of experience.

**In-Class Group Reflection** facilitated by Dr. Greta Peay and the Primary CEEI VIII Session Leader using guiding reflection questions.

**Saturday, January 27, 2024**  
**9:00 AM - 3:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session - Exemplary Leadership: Building Your Leadership Pipeline**  
Adam Lane, Principal, Haines City School, Florida

This CEEI session will share how to elevate the process of recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining a talented workforce for all positions, including day to day substitutes, long term substitutes, administrative assistants, para-professional educators, and teachers. How to recognize everyone as an individual, ensure employees are valued, and build your leadership pipeline. There will also be a focus on the importance of utilizing internships, transfer fairs, current staff recruiting new prospects, and the importance of hiring alumni, to make sure all your campus positions are filled with amazing applicants. Participants will fully understand, not only the pipeline building process but also the importance of utilizing decision making, relationship building, and positive behavior to create an unforgettable experience while improving staff effectiveness and raising student achievement.

**In-Class Group Reflection** facilitated by Dr. Greta Peay and the Primary CEEI VIII

Session Leader using guiding reflection questions.

**Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA)**  
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*Characteristics and Traits of Exemplary Education Leaders*  
**Saturday, October 21, 2023 - Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

**Tuesday, January 30, 2024**  
**4:30 PM - 6:00 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session I - Enhancing School and Organizational Culture**  
Heather Thaxton, Principal, Washoe County School District, Nevada

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to identify the tools to influence others to embrace change. Exemplary leaders are able to convince people through the use of influencing tactics of logical, emotional, and cooperative appeals. The influencing tactics of logical, emotional, or cooperative appeals is an important trait of inspiring, effective leaders. Influence is quite different from manipulation, and it needs to be done authentically and transparently. It requires emotional intelligence and trust.

**6:00 PM - 7:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session II - Gratitude: Crucial for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders**  
Dr. Samuel Scavella, Assistant Superintendent, Clark County School District, Nevada

Being thankful can lead to higher self-esteem, reduced depression and anxiety, and better sleep. Gratitude can even make you a better leader. Yet, few people regularly say “thank you” in work settings, even though most people say they would be willing to work harder for an appreciative boss. The best and most effective leaders understand the importance of gratitude in the workplace. Now more than ever, education leaders must show authentic empathy in the teaching and learning environment. In contrast, displaying low levels of trust and skipping gratitude makes it difficult for leaders to create shared vision, motivate employees to collaborate successfully, and keep talented, engaged employees. A survey done by Glassdoor Organization found that 80% of employees say they would be willing to work harder for an appreciative supervisor. CEEI participants will explore ways to express more gratitude at work and further understand why gratitude is vital for exemplary leaders.

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**Saturday, October 21, 2023 - Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

**Wednesday, January 31, 2024**  
**4:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session - Exemplary Leaders: Enhancing Trust During Times of Disruption**

Dr. Cynthia Johnson, Executive Director, Inclusion, Engagement, and Belonging, Lawrence Public Schools, Kansas

The “Why” Leadership Trust is critical in times of change and disruption will be the focus of this CEEI session. The behaviors that build trust and the behaviors that manage change will also be discussed. Trust building helps the team step into ambiguity, stay committed to managing the unknown with confidence, and embrace change as an opportunity to learn, grow, and do great work together. Leadership trust creates the stable foundation for employees and their organizations to flex, adapt, and thrive in times of continuous change. Six paradoxes that build trust will be explored- Sense of Urgency, Coping with Transition, Realistic Patience, Optimism, Trusting Others, and Self-Reliance.

**Saturday, February 3, 2024**  
**9:00 AM - 3:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session I - Exemplary Leadership: Increasing your Self-Awareness.**

Sean Buchanan, School District Superintendent, Geary Public Schools, Oklahoma

This CEEI session will focus on the importance of understanding yourself as a leader, your triggers, strengths, and areas of improvement. The better you understand yourself and recognize your own strengths and weaknesses, the more effective you can be as a leader. This primary guided essential thought will be addressed during the session; Do you know how other people view you or how you show up at work? Participants will have an opportunity to complete a Self-Awareness survey. The session will also focus on the 4 aspects of self-awareness and how to strengthen each component.

**CEEI VIII Session II - Effective Communication: Transmitting and Inspiring**

Tiffany Young, Director, Department of Defense, High Sierra STARBASE PROGRAM and Former Equity and Diversity Director, Washoe County, Nevada

The best leaders are skilled communicators who are able to communicate in a variety of ways, from transmitting information to inspiring others to coaching direct reports. Participants will have the opportunity to explore 15 tips that will assist leaders with



communicating more effectively. The session will also address how to communicate information, thoughts, and ideas clearly in different media while keeping processes open and transparent.

**In-Class Group Reflection** facilitated by Dr. Greta Peay and the Primary CEEI VIII Session Leader using guiding reflection questions.

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**Saturday, October 21, 2023 - Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

**Tuesday, February 6, 2024**  
**4:30 PM- 7:30 PM**

**CEEI VIII Session - Social Emotional and Academic Development and Student-Centered Competency Based Learning- Mental Wellbeing: It Matters!**

Tracy Fisher, Margaret Folkers, and Michelle Trujillo, Nevada Department of Education, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment SEAD Team, Nevada

Participants will articulate the 5 Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Nevada (CASEL) competencies from the school leader perspective, explore the SEL impact on students and adults, school climate, safety, and workforce development. The session will emphasize 5 core competencies of SEL and how crucial it is to be cognitive of mental wellbeing for students and adults. ***The 21st century calls on us to develop the whole child: head, heart, and hands.*** Developing emotional literacy through the systematic process of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in our schools develops these critical 'heart-skills' and research has proven that it has a positive impact on academic learning and critical thinking.

**In-Class Group Assignment**

Submit Assignment Reflection (One to two-page, double-spaced reflection).

*\*This assignment will be completed in class using the specific criteria discussed during the session.*

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**Tuesday, February 6, 2024**  
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## Biographies - Session Leaders:



### **Rosanne Richards, Director College, Career, Equity, and School Choice Unit and President Elect, Nevada Central Office Association, Nevada**

I am Rosanne Richards and currently serve as the College, Career, Equity, and School Choice Unit Director. I have been with the Clark County School District since August 2003, and always put the needs of students at the forefront of my work. I began teaching at the elementary level and moved to middle school early in my career. I taught middle school English Language Arts and Publications for several years at Molasky Junior High School.

I worked for the Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program as an English Language Arts Secondary Literacy Trainer and then became a Dean of Students at the middle school level in August 2012. After serving as a Dean of Students, I joined the Instruction Unit as a Coordinator and then served as the Academic Unit Director. Additionally, working in central office and in the field, I know the importance of supporting schools at all levels with a first-rate balance of leadership.



### **Wanda Washington, Recruiting Projects Coordinator, Washoe County School District, Nevada**

Wanda V. Washington holds an M.Ed. with an emphasis in Administration and Supervision and possesses an endorsement in gifted and talented education. Previously served as the Program Coordinator for the Gifted and Talented Education Programs with the Washoe County School District (WCSD) in Reno, Nevada, Ms. Washington currently serves as a Central Office Administrator/Recruiting Projects Coordinator with the Human Resources – Talent Acquisition Division. Ms. Washington's leadership includes serving as a District Curriculum Specialist in Kentucky, Assistant Principal/Principal in Tennessee, High School Principal, and Principal on Special Assignment serving with the directors of CTE, SPED, GT, and Behavior.

Ms. Washington has served as the lead for the WCSD Gifted and Talented Advisory Panel (GTAP) sub-committees for curriculum development and policy and regulation development for gifted education, a member of the WCSD Equity and Diversity Task

Force providing a voice for gifted education with the intention of increasing the identification of gifted students from diverse cultural linguistic backgrounds, WCSD Jump Start Advisory Executive Committee for Early College, and co-chair of NAGC Leadership Development Committee. Ms. Washington has been a guest speaker and co-presenter at local, state, and national conferences. Ms. Washington actively advocates, partners, and collaborates with the legislature, national organization leaders, the school board, universities, community leaders, donors, fellow administrators, teachers, and students to provide funding and implementing the changes necessary for the success of gifted programming



**AJ Adams, Principal, Sunrise Mountain High School,  
Las Vegas, Nevada**

For nearly 25 years, AJ Adams has dedicated his life to serving the nation's 5<sup>th</sup> largest school district, the Clark County School District. Throughout his career, he has been afforded a multitude of opportunities including teaching special education, serving as a K-12 Principal, Associate Superintendent, and lobbying Legislators as an education advocate.

As the Past President of NASA, AJ has extensive experience working with the community, local government municipalities, and state legislators to develop meaningful partnerships in order to provide cutting edge leadership development integrated with his passion of coaching and mentoring leaders. AJ is a graduate of the Harvard Business School Public Education Leadership Program, an alumnus of the PEF Executive Leadership Academy, an alumni of NASA's CEEI, and most recently he obtained a Certificate in Educational Finance through Georgetown University and is a Certified Executive Mindpower Coach. Additionally, he is a Nationally Certified NAESP Principal Mentor and serves on the CCASAPE Board. Currently, he is the instructional leader of a large, urban high school in Las Vegas, and he has two children of his own who both attend schools in Clark County.



**Kaweeda G. Adams, Superintendent of Schools,  
Albany, New York**

Mrs. Kaweeda G. Adams is a native of Shreveport, Louisiana, and a proud resident of Albany, New York. She is a third-generation educator committed to providing diverse educational opportunities to meet the needs of all students, mentoring, and coaching instructional leaders, and building quality instructional delivery systems combined with systemic progress monitoring, job-embedded professional development, and effective value-added supervision. Mrs. Adams earned her BA in English Education from the University of New Orleans, Louisiana at New Orleans, LA. In 1989, Mrs. Adams and her husband moved to Las Vegas, NV. She earned her Master of Education degree in Education Administration and Higher Education from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in Las Vegas, NV.

Mrs. Adams served the City School District of Albany for six years (2017-2023). The City School District of Albany, Mrs. Adams was the primary leader and facilitator in developing the first Equity in Education Policy (Jan 2019) which serves as the foundational lens for restructuring instructional and operational best practices. This policy was the driving force behind the manifestation and implementation of the equitable middle school feeder alignment attendance zones for the three middle schools. Under Mrs. Adams' leadership, the City of School District of Albany is committed to enhancing the delivery of quality instruction through culturally responsive education and implementing equitable, research-based educational practices to eliminate the racial predictability of student success, implementing STEM and Hydroponic instruction K-12.

Mrs. Adams currently serves as the Deputy Executive Director of Research and Policy for the Conference of Big 5 School Districts in New York. This organization represents 46% of the student population in New York and advocates for equitable funding and learning conditions for the five largest urban school districts and three affiliates in New York.



**Leonardo Amador, Principal, Clark County School District, Las Vegas, Nevada**

Leonardo Amador is in his twenty-sixth year in education and in his seventh year as Principal at Von Tobel Middle School in Las Vegas, NV. Leonardo has served in multiple roles as support staff, licensed and administration during his career in the Clark County School District. His school serves approximately 1,000 sixth through eighth-grade students in a predominantly low socioeconomic neighborhood located in the northeast part of the Las Vegas valley. Leonardo received his B.A. in Special Education and M.A. in Educational Leadership from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. In 2019, Leonardo received recognition by Clark County Commissioners as an Outstanding Latino in Education. He has been married for twenty-three years to a fellow special education teacher and has three wonderful kids that all attend schools in Clark County.



**Dr. John Anzalone, Superintendent, Camas School District, Washington**

In that position, he develops, implements and maintains strategic planning processes for district functions, assures that the laws and regulations of the Office of Public Instruction for the State of Washington and the district are faithfully executed, assists the Board in the identification of student achievement goals and implements programs designed to achieve and evaluate progress toward meeting those goals, supervises the development of systems for budget development, participates in all board meetings by assisting the board in the development of the meeting agenda, by preparing background materials and analyses of issues brought to the board, and by preparing recommendation on all issues brought to the board for decisions. Dr. Anzalone holds an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. He also has a master's degree in administration, and a BA in Elementary Education. Dr. Anzalone has experiences as a classroom teacher, dean of students, expulsion due process officer, behavior school principal, ELL school principal, over 9 years as a comprehensive high school principal, and has served as an Assistant Superintendent. He has served on numerous committees, serves as a member of the School Justice Partnership and MBK, and most recently moderated a roundtable with staff and state political leaders re: race relations and its impact on reopening of schools.



**Dr. Debbie Brockett, Superintendent, McMinnville School District,  
McMinnville, Oregon**

Debbie Brockett was named superintendent of the McMinnville School District in March 2021. She comes to the district from Clark County School District in Nevada, where she most recently served as a Region Superintendent, overseeing 108 PK-12 schools, including two Career and Technical Academies, a virtual learning academy, and several magnet schools. She began her career in Clark County School District, where she was a special education teacher and coach. She then moved into administration and served as a dean of students, assistant principal, and principal. As the principal of Las Vegas High School, she improved the Advanced Placement course offerings, increased the career and technical pathways, and consistently increased the graduation rate for all student groups. In 2016, she was chosen to receive the Heart of Education Award for Innovation in Schools. Ms. Brockett has been active in improving student achievement at the school, district, and state level and served on various boards and associations. She also extends her passion for teaching to National University where she is an adjunct professor in the school leadership and special education departments.



**Sean Buchanan, Superintendent, Geary Public Schools, Oklahoma**

Sean Buchanan is an author, international speaker, consultant, and public-school superintendent. He has become a leading expert in forming connections with and motivating educators through leveraging the power of human connection. His student - first philosophies have been presented to, and implemented by, thousands of educators both nationally and internationally. Mr. Buchanan was born and raised in Oklahoma and has dedicated his life to inspiring educators and driving student achievement.





**Bill de la Cruz, Belonging and Inclusion Facilitator, Chair- McGraw Hill Publishing DEI Advisory Team, and Author**

Bill de la Cruz is an inspiring leader who has been guiding individuals and groups through the process of personal transformation as a mediator, presenter, keynote speaker and facilitator for 30 years. He delivers and facilitates leadership development, bias awareness, and bias deconstruction workshops across the country. Bill has developed his programs and workshops to help individuals, groups, and organizations to build self-awareness, enhance relationships and support to foster positive, sustainable personal and leadership growth. These steps lead to a more diverse, and inclusive organizational culture. Bill has been on his own personal growth journey for more than 40 years, which inspired him to develop specific practices designed to help create positive, lasting change.

Bill is a published author with 2 books. Bill's first book is titled "[Finding the Origination Point](#), Understanding Our Biases to Create a More Peaceful World."

Bill's book supports people in working through blame, shame, and judgment through an acceptance of our shared humanity. By using self-awareness to normalize bias conversation, we increase our understanding of the experiential and emotional origination point and narratives of personal bias. The origination point of our biases is the point of understanding and healing. Normalizing bias conversations allows us to talk about how our past experiences play a role in our personal interactions. Bill uses the processes in Finding the Origination Point conversations to talk about personal influence, the power of narratives and daily practices to disrupt life patterns that no longer serve us in our personal and professional lives.



**Traci Davis, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Elevating Raising Awareness and Supporting Equity**

Traci Davis has a distinguished career as an educator; she has worked in a variety of schools ranging from at-risk to affluent, high-achieving to in need of improvement, and has helped transform learning environments in elementary-, middle- and high schools. As the former superintendent of the Washoe County School District (WCSD) in Reno, NV, Traci Davis served more than 64,000 students, their families, and more than 8,000 employees. Her transformational and passionate educational leadership resulted in sweeping gains in student achievement and performance as the District worked toward its goal of “Every Child, By Name and Face, to Graduation.” Through her “deliberate and intentional” call to action Equity Initiative, the district’s graduation rates rose from 63% to 86% and significantly closed achievement gaps for ALL students.

As a native Nevadan, her passion for all students, especially those that have been historically excluded, is evidenced in her record of successful academic outcome everywhere she has served. After 28 years in education, she continues to lead the journey for equitable outcomes for all students. In 2020, she founded her consulting firm, ERASE (Elevating Raising Awareness and Supporting Equity).

Her motto is simple, “Achievement is not a place; it is a belief! We must have high expectations for every student. In order to address academic gaps, we must resolve the systemic opportunity gap.



**Jhone Ebert, Nevada State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada**

Anyone who has worked with her can attest that Jhone M. Ebert brings a heart for equity, a collaborative spirit, and transformative leadership to everything she does. She puts these qualities to work each day in her role as State Superintendent of Public Instruction for Nevada. Since taking the reins as the chief state school officer for Nevada in 2019, Ms. Ebert has worked tirelessly on behalf of Nevada’s nearly 500,000 students and its 750 schools. She was appointed in April 2019 by Governor Sisolak, who regards her as a change leader and “the best person to set Nevada students up for success.” An equity champion, Ms. Ebert has rooted her career in the belief that the work is unfinished until

every single child has a clear pathway to thrive in school and life. As State Superintendent of Public Instruction, her proudest accomplishment is Nevada's innovative and responsive COVID-19 recovery efforts, which enabled Nevada's districts to successfully adapt to deliver distance education and prepare for safe school re-openings. Under her direction, Nevada became the first state nationally to ensure every student participating in distance learning had internet connection and a learning-ready device.

During this time of upheaval, Ms. Ebert prioritized providing support and flexibility to districts and schools, while ensuring that all students received the services they need, including nutrition services, special education interventions, English learner supports, professional development for teachers, as well as social-emotional and mental health supports and resources for all community members. During her time leading Nevada's Department of Education, other notable accomplishments include the overhaul of Nevada's 54-year-old education funding formula, which has been replaced with a student-centered approach that allocates resources more equitably while ensuring flexibility for districts and schools. This work, as well as the pandemic crisis response, would not be possible without the knowledge gained and trusting relationships built during her 2019 Statewide Listening Tour, during which she visited with students, staff, families, and community members in all 17 school districts and the State Public Charter School

Authority. Ms. Ebert has a proven record of successfully working in large, diverse, and politically challenging school systems. From 2015 to 2019, as the Senior Deputy Commissioner for P-20 Education Policy for New York State, Ms. Ebert was the ranking policy advisor to the state commissioner and Board of Regents. She led policymaking and programs affecting teaching and learning from early childhood through postsecondary education. During her tenure in New York, overall academic performance improved statewide, achievement gaps narrowed, and graduation rates increased. Prior to her time in New York,

Ms. Ebert held various leadership positions in the Clark County School District (CCSD) for over 25 years, most recently in the roles of Chief Innovation and Productivity Officer and Chief Technology Officer. In her work at CCSD, the fifth largest school district in the nation, Ms. Ebert provided oversight of nationally recognized magnet school programs, as well as leadership, guidance, and support for magnet school principals. As a result of her work, student participation in technology-based instruction increased from 68 students in 1998 to well over 68,000 in 2015 and she inspired the adoption of the 1:1 computing program that currently serves Nevada's middle schools. Ms. Ebert is a life-long learner and has always been passionate about the power of public education to change lives. If not for the opportunities that school afforded her, her own journey would have been very different. From her start as a mathematics teacher in CCSD, Ms. Ebert has prioritized the power of integrating technology in the classroom and the belief that each student deserves the opportunity to thrive. As classrooms continue to grow more diverse, Ms. Ebert believes it is critically important that students have access to adults

who not only look like them, but whose personal histories exemplify the power of schools to change lives.



**Dr. Susan Enfield, Superintendent of Schools, Washoe County School District, Reno, Nevada**

A former high school English, journalism and ELL teacher, Susan spent ten years as Superintendent for Highline Public Schools in Burien, WA. Prior to coming to Highline she was the Chief Academic Officer and Interim Superintendent for Seattle Public Schools. She previously held leadership positions in Evergreen Public Schools (Vancouver, WA), Portland Public Schools and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Susan is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, and earned master's degrees from Stanford University and Harvard University. She also holds a doctoral degree in Administration, Planning and Social Policy from Harvard's Urban Superintendents Program. She was named the 2018 Superintendent of the Year by the National School Foundation Association and received the Women in School Leadership Award from the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) in 2020. Most recently she was named the 2022 Washington State Superintendent of the Year.



**Tracy Fisher, Social Emotional Academic Development Specialist, Nevada**

Tracy Fisher is an M.Ed. in special education, general education, and administration. She currently contracts as a Social Emotional Academic Development Specialist in the Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment at the Nevada Department of Education. Tracy is a native Nevadan who was born in Reno and raised in Gardnerville. She recently retired from a 30-year career in the Washoe County School District where she served children K-12th as a teacher, transition specialist, dean, assistant principal, and principal. Her greatest learning experiences have come from her students, and her two sons, Connor, and Brandon.

Tracy believes that there is nothing more rewarding than empowering our youth to be the best they can be.



**Margaret Folker, Social Emotional Academic Development Specialist, Nevada**

Maggie Folkers, M. Ed, NBCT (2017-2022), taught middle and high school English in the Washoe County School District for 27 years before serving as one of their Social Emotional Learning Specialists until her retirement in 2022.

A writing consultant from 2001 – 2007 for the Northern Nevada Writing Project and National Writing Project, Maggie facilitated professional learning experiences, Advanced Writing Invitationals, and spoke at state and national conventions. She contributed a chapter to *Writing for a Change: Boosting Literacy and Learning Through Social Action*, which won the Association of Educational Publishers Distinguished Achievement Award in 2007. This work has been pivotal for Maggie as a classroom teacher, an English Department Leader, a Professional Learning Cadre facilitator, and SEAD Specialist – it shaped her educational philosophy and she believes that influential educators are committed to *honoring* lives and *empowering* individuals by *modeling* how to create the conditions to nurture, engage and facilitate learning and self-discovery.

Maggie loves music, nature, journaling, and spending time with her husband Jeff and grown sons Joshua and Jacob. She lives in Reno and contracts part-time as a Social Emotional Academic Development Specialist for the Nevada Department of Education in the Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment.



**Dr. Peter Gorman, Former Superintendent, Charlotte- Mecklenburg School System and President and Chief Executive Officer of Peter Gorman Leadership Associates LLC, Charlotte, North Carolina**

Dr. Peter Gorman is Superintendent in residence with the District Administration Leadership Institute with more than 30 years of experience in education and business. He is also Chief in residence with Chiefs for Change guiding the Future Chiefs program working to build a pipeline of “Future Chiefs” for states and districts. He is the author of the book “Leading a School District Requires Clarity, Contact, and Candor. An Aligned System to Increase Student Achievement at Scale.”

Dr. Gorman’s career began as a second-grade teacher in Orlando, Florida. He worked as a teacher, principal, and district-level administrator in Orange, Seminole and Osceola

counties in Florida before becoming superintendent of schools in Tustin, California. In 2006, Dr. Gorman became superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina. Under his leadership, the district won the 2011 Broad Prize in Urban Education, which recognizes increases in student achievement and closing of achievement gaps. Twenty members of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Leadership Team during his tenure have been appointed as superintendents nationally.



**Andrea Johnson, Executive Director, Courageous Conversation Equity Transformation Specialist**

Andrea Haynes Johnson was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. Her parents met in college, and both worked for the Detroit School System; her mother was a teacher, and her father was a truant officer. She was educated in the Detroit Public School System and, like her parents, began her career there. She has a BFA in Dance Performance from Marygrove College, an MAT in English Education from Wayne State University and a Certificate of Advanced Study in Educational Leadership and Administration from National Louis University.

Andrea has spent her career working in high schools; teaching at Detroit's Renaissance High School and at New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois; and serving as the Department Chair for the Fine Art and Applied Program at Deerfield High School. She concluded her career in the public education school system and became the Director of Equity and Grants in Township High School, District 113 in Highland parks, Illinois. Andrea is passionate about curriculum and dance programs.



**Dr. Cynthia Johnson, Executive Director of Inclusion, Engagement and Belonging, Lawrence Public Schools, Kansas**

Dr. Cynthia "Mama J" Johnson is an educator, speaker, and author who is living proof that nothing is impossible if you try. Years ago, her future appeared bleak, but she kept the faith and turned what seemed insurmountable odds into unbelievable outcomes. Today, Mama J, a name given to her by students at the beginning of her career, is known

as a “Woman with a Message of Hope.” She has dedicated her life to connecting, transforming, empowering, providing access, dismantling systemic racism, and disrupting inequities among students and educators for the past 35+ years.

Dr. Johnson is recognized for her research and work on school connectedness, building relationships with students, social and emotional learning, poverty, diversity, equity, social justice, partnering with parents, and developing school-family-community partnerships. She has served as a classroom teacher, an elementary, middle, and high school principal, a district-level project leader, an executive director, and a district-wide professional development facilitator. Dr. Johnson partners with school districts, educators, parents, churches, and youth care providers throughout the United States. Her work also includes mentoring youth and facilitating youth empowerment assemblies/workshops for students. Dr. Johnson is a guest lecturer and adjunct professor in higher education. Additionally, she presents reenactments from the Civil Rights Movement and invites participants to take a journey back in time to learn how lessons from the past inform the present.

Due to the urgency and pleas for help in our nation’s schools and educational systems, Dr. Cynthia “Mama J” Johnson speaks from the heart and “TELLS IT LIKE IT IS.” She is TRANSFORMING and REVOLUTIONIZING the vision of what is possible in the lives of today’s youth, families, educators, and communities. Over the years, participants credit her for significantly influencing the attitudes, practices, and actions of those who hear her commanding “Messages of Hope!



**Adam Lane, Principal, Haines City Schools, Florida**

Adam Lane has worked in K-12 public education since 1995. Sixteen of these years at the high school level, eight years at the middle school level and one year at the elementary level. In that time, he has held various positions, including teacher, department head, athletic coach, athletic trainer, athletic director, assistant principal, International Baccalaureate coordinator and principal. He was selected as the 2022 National K-12 Dive Principal of the Year, 2022 Florida National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Principal of the Year, is the President for the Florida Association of Secondary School Principals (FASSP) and serves as an Educational Consultant & Presenter for Leading Lane.



Currently, as principal at Haines City High School and Haines City International Baccalaureate, he serves a school with 3,000 students, 245 staff members and 6 assistant principals. The school includes an International Baccalaureate Program, a Junior Reserve Officer Training Core, The Environmental Agriculture & Technology Academy, The Academy of Media Production, The Academy of Children's Educational Studies, The Visual Arts Pathway and The Performing Arts Pathway.

Over the last eight years, discipline referrals have decreased by 40% and the graduation rate has increased by 21%. He believes the key to success is in utilizing decision making, relationship building and positive behavior to create an unforgettable experience, while improving staff effectiveness and raising student achievement!



**President and Founder, Robert Mars & Associates, Nevada**

Robert Mars began his 30-year career in education serving as a middle school and high school math teacher in the Clark County School District. He then worked as a dean of students and assistant principal before being promoted to middle school principal and then a high school principal. After serving as a principal for ten years, Robert was promoted to an Associate Superintendent where he supervised 25+ schools, over 30,000 students, and a combined budget of over \$200 million. Robert spent the final two years of his career in CCSD, going back to his roots, as a high school principal.

As a building administrator, Robert consistently focused on the school climate, academic growth, and student achievement. Under his guidance, schools had a low staff turnover, consistently high student growth/achievement and increased graduation rates. Additionally, Robert was able to significantly grow career and technical education programs and increase student enrollment in advanced placement and dual credit classes.

Robert remains a lifelong learner and graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Studies and Managerial Economics as well as Mathematics from the State University of New York College at Buffalo, and a Master of Science Degree in Educational Administration from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He also completed the Harvard Business School Public Education Leadership Program, is an alumnus of the Public Education Foundation Executive Leadership Academy, a graduate of the Nevada Association of School Administrators Center for Educational Excellence Institute and received a Certificate in Educational Finance from Georgetown University.



Throughout his career, Robert has served on the boards of the Nevada Association of School Administrators, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional Employees, and Secondary School Principals Association of Nevada. He also served as the Nevada State Coordinator for the National Association of Secondary School Principals. He has remained actively involved in the legislative process and travels to Carson City as well as Washington DC on behalf of educators to speak with elected officials and advocate for increased educational funding. Most recently, Robert served on Nevada's State Superintendent of Instruction Blue Ribbon Commission and currently serves on the Nevada Competency Fellowship. Upon his retirement from CCSD, Robert founded and is the President of Robert Mars & Associates which provides consulting, training, and professional development to schools and works with businesses and non-profit organizations interested in expanding their footprint in education. He also works with Westar as an Assessment Coordinator for NAEP.



**Kevin McPartlin, Clark County School District Assistant Superintendent, Nevada**

Originally from Detroit (MI), Kevin McPartlin moved to Nevada in 1997 and began his career teaching all levels of math at Las Vegas High School in east Las Vegas. During his twenty-five years in education, he has had the privilege of working with students and communities in every corner of the Las Vegas valley. Now, in his sixteenth year as a principal, he is the longest serving high school principal in the 5<sup>th</sup> largest school district in the country.

In 2011, McPartlin was named principal at Arbor View High School in northwest Las Vegas. Kevin focuses on achievement gaps between subgroups and promoting initiatives related to inclusion and equity for all students. As part of these efforts, McPartlin implemented an Advisory Program to promote positive relationships, personal wellness, and life skills. He removed structures and processes that potentially hindered students from accessing higher level courses and programming. Throughout his tenure at Arbor View, achievement gaps have been drastically reduced and graduation rates have increased for all student subgroups. Arbor View was recognized in 2013, and again in 2016, as having the highest graduation rate of any comprehensive high school in Las Vegas. Having established himself as a proven educational leader, McPartlin has presented at numerous educational symposiums, including statewide and national conferences in Las Vegas, Reno, Lake Tahoe, San Diego, Vancouver (WA), and Washington D.C. His presentation topics have included Ninth Grade Academies, Advisory Periods, and Managing School Change.



**Jillyn Pendleton, Cognia Organization and Former Associate Superintendent, Clark County School District, Nevada**

Jillyn Pendleton retired in July of 2021 after an esteemed career in Nevada for twenty-five years. She enthusiastically served students, families, and leaders of the Clark County School District with passion, vision, and integrity throughout her tenure. During her career, she embraced various roles, including science teacher, Dean of Students, Assistant Principal, High School Principal, and School Associate Superintendent. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from Dixie College and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She was also recognized as the state principal of the year and the region magnet principal of the year. She eagerly joined the team at Cognia to continue her drive to support schools in the continuous cycle of school improvement. As a lead evaluator, she works closely with school administrators to ensure performance standards are aligned and result in on-going accreditation.



**Dr. Zachary Robbins, Superintendent, Marysville School District, Washington**

Dr. Zachary Scott Robbins is the Superintendent of the Marysville School District in Washington State and the author of [\*Restorative Justice Tribunal and Ways to Derail Jim Crow Discipline in Schools\*](#). He has “turned around” schools in Boston and Las Vegas and is honored to be the 2022 Nevada High School Principal of the Year. Dr. Robbins was the 2021 City of Las Vegas African-American Trailblazer in Education Award Recipient, and in 2021 he was the President-Elect of the Secondary School Principals Association of Nevada. He publishes [commentary and news articles for various media outlets](#) and makes frequent radio and television appearances to discuss politics and education.

Dr. Robbins and his team established the first restorative justice program in Nevada. His school was a training hub in restorative practices for Nevada educators. He coached state leaders in restorative practices on behalf of the Nevada Department of Education and informed education policy development. Dr. Robbins continues training teachers and school leaders in restorative practices through online courses he has developed and through occasional consulting engagements.

Dr. Robbins was educated at Howard University in Washington, DC, and he earned his Ph.D. in Education Administration at the Boston College Lynch School of Education. You can find Dr. Robbins on Twitter at [Dr ZacRobbins](#).

Articles by and about Robbins

- <https://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/News/Blog/Detail/2021-african-american-trailblazer-service-awards-winners>
- <https://www.k12dive.com/news/learning-policy-institute-outlines-strategies-to-improve-equity-through-res/609205/>
- <https://districtadministration.com/3-school-district-ideas-ease-covid-staff-teacher-shortages/>

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/leading-through-staffing-shortage>



**Dr Samuel Scavella, Assistant Superintendent, Clark County School District, Nevada**

Dr. Samuel P. Scavella is an experienced Educational Leader with a strong background in implementing effective organizational structures and processes within educational systems. With 30 years of school-based and district-level experience, Dr. Scavella has focused on promoting organizational effectiveness, high performance, equity, and accountability in schools. Throughout his career, Dr. Scavella has worked extensively in urban schools, dedicating himself to serving children and youth in these environments.

He started as a middle school teacher, teaching science, mathematics, and reading. Over the course of three decades, he progressed to the positions of assistant principal and high school principal and served in those roles for 20 years. His service and leadership have spanned across the nation's third, fifth, and sixth-largest school districts, reflecting a breadth of experience and exposure to diverse educational contexts.

Dr. Scavella's work has been recognized and featured in various publications. Additionally, he has contributed as a guest writer for educational books, sharing his insights and expertise with a broader audience. Currently, Dr. Scavella serves as Assistant Superintendent in the Equity and Diversity Education Department in the Clark County School District. He leads efforts to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion across the district. His focus remains on nurturing and challenging children and youth to unlock their potential and develop essential qualities such as kindness, honesty, productivity, and service. With his extensive experience, commitment to student success, and emphasis on equity and diversity, Dr. Sam Scavella plays a critical role in

driving positive change within the district and ensuring that every child has an opportunity to thrive and achieve in school environments that are conducive for learning.



**Colin Seale, Chief Executive Officer, and Founder, thinkLaw**

Colin Seale Founder and CEO of thinkLaw Tackling inequity hands-on has always been personal to Colin, because the amazing educational opportunities he received in gifted and talented courses and an exclusive specialized high school despite his underprivileged background growing up in Brooklyn, NY made him an exception to a painfully unjust rule. So whether Colin was teaching middle and high school math in Washington, D.C. and Las Vegas, NV, applying his computer science degree and Master's in Public Administration to fight for child safety at Nevada's largest child welfare agency, or practicing as a business attorney at one of Las Vegas' top law firms while representing children in foster care, Colin has always dreamed of a world where stories like his were no longer the exception, but instead, all students had an equal shot at being exceptional

Colin created thinkLaw to give all students access to the type of game-changing critical thinking education they need to not only fully understand the way the world is, but to question it and imagine the way the world ought to be. When he is not serving as the world's greatest critical thinking evangelist, Colin proudly serves as the world's greatest entertainer for his two little kiddos. His new book *Thinking Like a Lawyer: A Framework for Teaching Critical Thinking to All Students* is now available.



**Dr. Summer Stephens, Former Superintendent, Churchill County School District, Nevada**

Dr. Summer E. Stephens, former Superintendent for Churchill CSD & Past-President of the Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS); Serves on the Nevada State Board of Education; 2023 Nevada Superintendent of the Year

Summer engages staff, students, and the community in collaborative conversations and activities designed to promote excellence and innovation. With a passion for personalized learning, Summer has successfully implemented systems of blended and online learning, voice and choice, self-paced learning, project-based learning, and design thinking. A specific focus of her work has included bridging the gap between courses traditionally identified as core and CTE, working to ensure that systems have opportunities and pathways for all students to engage in future-ready work. She is a strong advocate for schools at the state and national level, working with legislators to ensure equitable funding and opportunities for learners. Her involvement at the city and county level creates a great connection between school, home, and community.



**Heather Thaxton, Principal, Washoe County School District, Nevada**

Heather DeVore Thaxton is a passionate Nevada educator of 28 years, who has spent her career growing all learners and supporting the larger goals of the educational profession and community. Heather currently serves as the Principal of Double Diamond Elementary School in Reno and holds degrees in Elementary Education and Social Science from the University of Northern Colorado and a master's in educational leadership from the University of Nevada, Reno.

She has taught all grades K-5 in public, private and charter schools, worked as an Assistant Principal at a Title I school, and coached teachers as an Implementation Specialist. Heather builds relationships and supports all school stakeholders with the goal of creating an outstanding teaching and learning environment.



**Michelle Trujillo, Author, and Social Emotional Academic Development Specialist, Nevada**

Michelle Trujillo is passionate about igniting hope in schools and the workplace! A lifelong educator, Michelle is Co-Founder of the Center for Learning and Well-Being, and is known to make a tangible, sustainable, and positive difference through her books, speaking engagements, and interactive workshops. Michelle shares enthusiasm, first-hand

experience, and practical strategies with her audience. Her sincerity, passion and relevant insight are contagious and substantial. Named Nevada's 2016 Innovative Educator of the Year, Michelle has appeared on television (including Oprah), podcasts and radio stations across the nation.

Michelle partners with school districts, professional educational associations, educational service agencies, and conference organizers to provide relevant answers to future facing challenges. Michelle's books include: "Social Emotional Well-Being for Educators" (Corwin, 2022), "Thriving through Adversity: Powerful Strategies for Educators to Ignite Hope, Inspire Students and Transform Schools" (Center for Learning and Well-Being, 2022), and "Start with the Heart: Igniting Hope in Schools Through Social and Emotional Learning" (Corwin, 2019). Of utmost importance, Michelle says her most cherished lifework is in her role as a wife and mom. Her husband, David, and their adult children, Corey, and Dani, fill her life with adventure and joy. Feel free to contact Michelle at [michelle@ignitinghopenow.com](mailto:michelle@ignitinghopenow.com) or 775.339.3010.

Video clips:

Corwin Clip: *Start with the Heart*

Collective Efficacy Clip: *We are Better Together*

Keynote: *Thriving through Adversity with 5 Ways to Ignite Hope*



**Wayne Workman, Superintendent, Lyon County School District, Nevada**

Lyon County School District Superintendent Wayne Workman was born in Seattle, Washington and grew up in the small town of Stockton, Utah where he graduated from Tooele High School. After serving a two-year LDS mission in Denmark, he earned his bachelor's degree in education and athletic training from Utah State University and his master's degree in administration from the University of Phoenix. His 24-year career in education includes 8 years as a health and sports medicine teacher in Utah; 2 years as an assistant principal and 3 years as the principal of Dayton High School; 1 year as the Human Resources Director and 3 years as the Deputy Superintendent of the Lyon County School District; and he is now serving in his eighth year as Superintendent for the LCSD. Wayne served as the Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS) President during the 2019-2020 school year and was named the Nevada Superintendent of the Year for both the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB) in 2021. He has been married to his beautiful wife, Jenni, for 28 years and they are the proud parents of four children (Oakley-24, Kobey-22, Kirsten-19, and Raquel-17), all of whom currently attend or graduated from Dayton High School. He enjoys spending time with his family, golfing,



serving in his church, and serving the students, staff, and families of the Lyon County School District.



**Dr. Cynthia Glover Woods, Educational Consultant and former Chief Academic Officer, Riverside County Office of Education, California**

Cynthia Glover Woods has served California districts located in Los Angeles County and Riverside County. She has worked as an instructional assistant, teacher, curriculum specialist, principal, professional development coordinator, curriculum director, and assistant superintendent of instructional services. She also served as the Chief Academic Officer of the Riverside County Office of Education, a position she held until her retirement. As chief academic officer, she led the county office's Educational Services division with a focus on equitable learning environments, student academic achievement, and post-secondary readiness. She facilitated the provision of services to school districts and charter schools in the areas of curriculum, data and assessment, educational technology, equity and access, college readiness, and teacher and administrator credentialing.

Dr. Glover Woods currently serves as a member of the California State Board of Education. She is also a member of the College Board National Academic Assembly and serves as a board member for multiple community-based organizations and committees.



**Tiffany Young, Director, Department of Defense, High Sierra STARBASE Program**

Ms. Young is a mother of two beautiful children, KaPreace (25) and Anthony (20). She is an advocate for families, community, young women, and education. As a resident of the Reno/Sparks community for over 25 years, she has been a spokesperson for the community, diversity and equitable practices, student achievement, and community and economic development. She is a public speaker, trainer, business owner, workshop facilitator and community collaborator at heart. Ms. Young is the former Director of Equity and Diversity for the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and has recently been appointed the Program Director for the Department of Defense High Sierra STARBASE

program. Her work has been within systems to support and clarify the role of Equity and cultural competency interwoven into all schools, departments, and systems.

Ms. Young lead work around programs and policies that must addressed through an equitable and culturally responsive lens, as well as creating and facilitating professional learning around Equity and Cultural Competency and owns her own consulting business, Tiffany Young Consulting LLC. Ms. Young is a Fulbright Specialist with U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Ms. Young holds an M. Ed. and B.A. from the University of Nevada Reno where she is also an Adjunct Professor in the Human Development and Family Studies Department. Ms. Young has served the WCSD Parent Involvement Committee as a member chair. Ms. Young has been a Commissioner for the Nevada Equal Rights (NERC) Commission since January 2006, and has participated as a Peer Mentor for the Department of Justice.