

PROGRAM

**SHERATON HARTFORD SOUTH HOTEL
100 CAPITAL BLVD, ROCKY HILL, CT**

GRAND BALLROOM

- 8:00-8:30 Registration & Continental Breakfast
- 8:30-8:45 WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS
Betty J. Sternberg – Director of the Teacher Leader Fellowship Academy at Sacred Heart University and CT Commissioner of Education, Emerita
- 8:45-9:45 JOY & LAUGHTER IN THE CLASSROOM
Devin Siebold, nationally acclaimed classroom teacher and humorist.
- 9:45-10:00 INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY
Kate Dias – President, CEA
Joslyn Delancey – Vice President, CEA
- 10:00-10:05 Passing Time
- 10:05-11:20 WORKSHOPS LED BY TEACHER LEADERS – Session 1*
- 11:20-11:25 Passing Time
- 11:25-12:10 ENCHANTED EDUCATION: THE MAGIC OF JOYFUL LEARNING
Edward Pietrzak, magician, educator and motivational speaker, will explore the enchanting synergy between magic and teaching, revealing how educators can create captivating and joyful learning environments that inspire students to learn, grow, and flourish. Ed will perform mesmerizing magic tricks throughout the presentation, demonstrating firsthand the transformative power of magic in education. Get ready to witness the wonder, ignite your imagination, and leave with a bag of teaching tricks up your sleeve!
- 12:10-12:15 Passing Time
- 12:15-1:00 Lunch
- 1:00-1:05 Passing Time
- 1:05-2:20 WORKSHOPS LED BY TEACHER LEADERS – Session 2*
- 2:20-2:30 Passing Time
- 2:30-3:15 JOYFUL SEND OFF
Kate Dias and Joslyn Delancey
- 3:15 Collect Certificates & Depart

*See enclosed for workshop locations

SPEAKERS



Devin Siebold is a comedy force to be reckoned with. Devin has been named 2015 iHeartMedia Monster's in the Morning Comedian of the Year, won the Boston World Series of Comedy, appeared on Laughs on FOX, won Side Splitters Comedian of the Year 2014, been selected for Comedy Central Up Next, Florida Top 10 College Picks, and a semi-finalist in Florida's Funniest Comedian.

Devin delivers an endless supply of intelligent, clean humor that appeals to all demographics. He has a unique wit-filled style to his delivery and will leave audiences engaged and rolling with laughter. He prides himself on being highly original and thought provoking and pulls material from his unbelievable past dating experience, love of theme parks, and spending his past 10 years as a middle/high school teacher in Florida.

He has opened for Peter Cetera, Gilbert Gottfried, Pauly Shore, Nick DiPaolo, Adam Ferrara, Loni Love, Chris D'Elia, Ralphie May, and many others. He tours nationally and works all the major comedy club brands in the US. Devin has headlined many private communities and had the pleasure of performing

corporate events for the annual meetings of Clinicon, Narcotics Anonymous, and headlining the National Firefighters Convention in Indianapolis.

To learn more about Devin, his tour dates and podcast, go to www.devincomedy.com



Meet Edward Pietrzak, a multifaceted professional magician, data specialist, achievement coach, and a seasoned elementary teacher with nearly 20 years of experience. Ed received his Master's in Educational Entrepreneurship from the University of Pennsylvania where he presented on the integration of magic in the STEM classroom. During the 2015-2016 school year, Ed's expertise on integrating joy into learning environments earned him the title of Teacher of the Year in his school district in Mantua, NJ.

In 2015, Ed was selected to work with the NJ Department of Education as an Achievement Coach. He was tasked with supporting and training teachers on how to enhance classroom management, maximize student engagement, and build high quality assessments. With a passion for both education and magic, Ed is truly a unique and dynamic individual, constantly pushing the boundaries of what's possible in both fields.

If you would like to connect with Ed, please reach out to him!

magicbyed@gmail.com

www.magicbyed.NET

www.linkedin.com/in/ed-pietrzak

WORKSHOPS – SESSION 1

10:05-11:20AM

1. PROMOTING JOY, ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS THROUGH CHOICE THEORY

Presenter: Stephen Tracy

Salon A

2. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES

Presenter: Kate Field

Salon B

3. BUILDING A CULTURE OF EMPATHY

Presenter: Elizabeth Sked

Salon C

4. MENTAL HEALTH RESPONSE

Presenter: Nikita Joslyn

Salon D

5. PROMOTE CURIOSITY AND NEW LEARNING THROUGH PLAY-BASED ARCHITECT PROJECTS

Presenter: Diane Gozemba

Hartford Room

6. PLAYFUL CONVERSATIONS WITH AI FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Presenter: Luke Forshaw

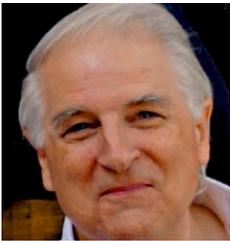
Rocky Hill Room

1. PROMOTING JOY, ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS THROUGH CHOICE THEORY

Every educator is in the influence business. We seek to influence students to work hard to develop the knowledge and understanding that will serve them well throughout their lives. Therefore, understanding the psychology of influence and relationship building is critical to our success.

This session will introduce participants to *Choice Theory*, the psychological model developed by the late William Glasser. We will explore the concepts of internal control, basic needs, caring & deadly habits and the quality world. Application of these concepts to instruction, grading, classroom management, counseling and discipline will be discussed.

The foundation of *Choice Theory* is that all behavior is chosen in an effort to satisfy the basic needs for safety, belonging, power, freedom and fun. The surest way to rekindle joy in our schools is to create environments in which every student and faculty member is able to meet those needs on a daily basis.



Presenter: Stephen Tracy is a former teacher and superintendent, and is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Glasser Institute for Choice Theory. He has served as the superintendent of schools for the town of New Milford, the city of Derby and the Connecticut Department of Children and Families.

Steve earned his undergraduate degree in public and international affairs from Princeton University, his master's degree in teaching from Columbia University and his doctorate in educational leadership from Harvard University. He and his wife, Mary, reside in Goshen, Connecticut where they manage a small dairy farm. He can be reached at stephentrac7@gmail.com.

2. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES

This fun, interactive workshop focuses on improving student engagement and participation at all grade levels. Different types of student engagement will be explored, opportunities to share and learn from each other will be provided, and easily implementable tools and strategies that promote engagement, participation, and joyful learning will be offered. **Participants will have several opportunities throughout the workshop to interact and practice implementing selected strategies.**



Presenter: Kate Field was a teacher and school administrator for 18 years before joining the staff at the Connecticut Education Association in 2015, where she specializes in professional learning and teacher evaluation. A 2007 finalist for Connecticut Teacher of the Year, she was also recognized as UConn's Outstanding High School Educator of the Year in 2015. A two-time Fulbright Scholar, Kate has visited schools around the world, including South Africa, Japan, China, Hungary, Germany and Finland. She's presented for numerous national organizations, including ASCD, Learning Forward, National Council for Social Studies, National Association of

Biology Teachers, and the College Board. She is certified in mindfulness-based stress reduction and Mental Health First Aid. Kate can be reached at katef@cea.org.

3. BUILDING A CULTURE OF EMPATHY

Appropriate for teachers of all grade levels and subjects, this workshop focuses on systematically building empathy for others. Included are practical techniques and strategies that can be easily integrated into existing lesson plans that encourage students to listen to others, appreciate different perspectives, and be sensitive to the feelings of others.



Presenter: Elizabeth Sked was a classroom teacher and instructional coach in New London for over 25 years before joining the staff at the Connecticut Education Association in the fall of 2022 as the Educational Issues Specialist. In this role, she provides professional development to teachers across the state, helps teachers navigate certification issues, and serves as the State Organizer for the Aspiring Educator Program as well as the liaison for retirees. Elizabeth was awarded CEA's 2019 John McCormack Award, the 2020 California Casualty Award for Teaching Excellence, the 2020 Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence and was one of five national finalists for the 2020 NEA Member Benefits Award for Teaching Excellence. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her husband, two daughters and two rescue pups. She can be reached at elizabeths@cea.org.

4. MENTAL HEALTH RESPONSE

Communities everywhere face serious mental health needs, making the difficult work of educators even harder. It can be a challenge for educators to maintain their own mental health and well-being, but not knowing how to respond to students, loved ones, and colleagues who show signs of a mental health challenge can be especially difficult. Fear, stigma and lack of knowledge impact our ability to respond to others effectively and can disrupt our own wellness. Educators need the confidence and skills to recognize and support someone experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis. **This training will empower participants with the basic skills needed to recognize and address the symptoms of common mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety and addiction.** Learning how to respond to someone experiencing a mental health challenge can save a life, steer someone down the path of recovery, and add joy and meaning to our own lives.



Presenter: Nikita Joslyn, LMSW, is the Director of Business Development for The Connection, a human development agency in Connecticut. In her current role, she manages the operations of the Connection's Institute for Innovative Practice, assists with plans for business and revenue growth, and cultivates relationships with community partners and other non-profit organizations. She has also served as the Co-Chair of The Connection's Race, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice Committee from 2019 to 2023. Nikita is a certified Adult, Youth and Teen Mental Health First Aid Instructor through the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, and Adult and Pediatric CPR/First Aid/AED Instructor through American Red Cross. She has over 10 years of experience working with domestic violence survivors and their families. Since 2019, she has served on the Board of Directors for the Prudence Crandall Center Inc., a domestic violence non-profit organization and chairs the agency's Program Committee. She can be reached at nljoslyn@theconnectioninc.org.

5. PROMOTE CURIOSITY AND NEW LEARNING THROUGH PLAY-BASED ARCHITECT PROJECTS

Remember the joy of being able to use your power of curiosity with found materials to construct a home, a fort, a bridge, or a campsite? **During this session, examine your role as an early childhood educator to draw in children’s attention to some of the big ideas and essential questions that require mathematical and architectural thinking.** Come prepared to reflect, develop provocations and invitations that will lead to a world of learning.



Presenter: Diane Gozemba enjoys using nature to build big ideas around meaningful play-based learning. She provides professional learning statewide, funded by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, supporting teachers and coaches through reflective-practice techniques. Working as an administrator in both urban and rural areas, she previously served as the Director of EASTCONN’s Early/Head Start program, chaired the Department of Education at Mitchell College, directed a lab-school, and developed a Family Center at Brooklyn Friends School. She holds an M.A. from Bank Street College of Education, M.B.A. from University of New Haven, and a B.A. in Dance from Connecticut College. Diane can be reached at DGozemba@eastconn.org.

6. PLAYFUL CONVERSATIONS WITH AI FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Embrace play-based learning together as we fire up some of the most well-established artificial intelligence (AI) models to explore what they can do for us as teachers and learners.

Through guided play, I’ll invite you to open your device and explore how developing a conversational style with AI can augment your skills in teaching and writing to support your practice.

You’ll leave this session with greater confidence in using AI as your “co-pilot” in serving students and your communities.



Presenter: Luke Forshaw, Ed.D. is the Director of Professional Development Services at Cooperative Educational Services (CES) in Trumbull, CT. Prior to this role, Luke has been a classroom teacher and educational leader with experience in both building and district service. He continues to teach graduate course work in curriculum & teaching, leadership and research design. Luke is a firm believer in the power of adult learning and is a champion for continuous improvement on behalf of students and families.

Luke holds a B.A. in Psychology from Trinity College and an M.A. and Ed.D. in Curriculum and Teaching from Teachers College, Columbia University. You can reach Luke at forshawl@cestrumbull.org.

WORKSHOPS – SESSION 2

1:05-2:20PM

7. MORNINGS MADE EASY AND JOYFUL WITH ENGAGING LEARNING CHALLENGES

Presenter: Christine Nuzzolo
Salon A

8. PLAY BASED LEARNING: BRINGING JOY AND ACCESS TO OUR MOST VULNERABLE STUDENTS

Presenter: Joslyn DeLancey
Salon B

9. TRANSFORMING CLASSROOMS INTO SPACES OF LOVE, JOY, EQUANIMITY AND EMPATHY

Presenter: Joseph Polizzi
Salon C

10. BE THE LIGHT: SPARK BELONGING, CONFIDENCE AND JOY IN OUR SCHOOLS

Presenter: Michelle D. McKnight
Salon D

11. THE WELL-BALANCED STUDENT

Presenter: Drew Schrader
Hartford Room

12. OLD SAYBROOK STUDIES: REIMAGING THE MODERN CLASSROOM

Co-Presenters: Mark Carroll, Matt Walton & Krista Bauchman
Rocky Hill Room

13. FUND FOR TEACHERS: FROM INSPIRATION TO IMPACT

Presenter: Dale Bernardoni
Grand Ballroom

7. MORNINGS MADE EASY AND JOYFUL WITH ENGAGING LEARNING CHALLENGES

This breakout session will help teachers to start off mornings smoothly by actively engaging children in purposeful play provocations/challenges. No more morning worksheets, student complaints, expensive or unusual materials, or hours of planning.

This session will guide teachers toward creating fun-filled, stress-free morning transitions into school. Teachers will learn some practical, easy ways to create morning material bins using materials that can already be found in your school. Teachers will explore ideas for creating easy plans for implementing morning provocations/challenges that will foster joy, belonging, independence, teamwork, executive function, and learning through play.

Not only are these activities fun, but also they can be linked to the existing curriculum, can be extended to play/learning centers, and address CT Standards of learning.

This session is hands-on so get ready to play!!



Presenter: Christine Nuzzolo has been teaching for 20 years in kindergarten, first, and sixth grade. She is currently a kindergarten teacher in the Enfield School District. In recent years, her focus has been bringing purposeful play back into the classroom through provocations and play scenarios. She can be reached at cnuzzolo@enfieldschools.org.

8. PLAY BASED LEARNING: BRINGING JOY AND ACCESS TO OUR MOST VULNERABLE STUDENTS

In this session, you will experience the power of play and its positive impact on learning in our classrooms. This session will include play-based learning activities and provocations as well as data and statistics on how play supports the building of early literacy and number sense as well as important life skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and positive risk-taking. You will explore ways to engage and provide access to our most vulnerable students, as well as take a deep dive into how to bring joy to learning starting in our earliest grades. You will see how joy can set all learners up for success - both socially and academically - in schools.

Presenter: Joslyn DeLancey is Vice President of the Connecticut Education Association, President of Connecticut Education Foundation, CEA's nonprofit arm, and a 19-year veteran elementary school teacher in Darien as a third, fourth, and fifth grade teacher. She played a key role in the Association's initiative to pass legislation mandating play-based learning pedagogies in the primary grades, as well as worked on the statewide Educator Evaluation and Support Council to create a growth-model teacher evaluation plan. Joslyn has a master's degree in special education and holds 092 certification. She is committed to bringing joy back to the profession and classroom. Joslyn can be reached at joslynd@cea.org.



9. TRANSFORMING CLASSROOMS INTO SPACES OF LOVE, JOY, EQUANIMITY AND EMPATHY

In a world where educators face numerous challenges, it's crucial to explore how we can transform our classrooms into spaces of profound growth, connection, and joy. Join Joe Polizzi, Ph.D. for an inspiring presentation where we delve into the heart of education and shine a light on a joyful path towards a bright future.

Drawing from Joe's book, "Understanding Suffering in Schools: Shining a Light on the Dark Places of Education," we'll navigate the complex landscape of teaching with compassion and empathy. Through meaningful discussions that lead to practical strategies, we will learn how to foster a classroom environment that cultivates equanimity, joy, and compassion.

We will discover the power of empathy as a tool for building lasting connections with students. We will explore the art of equanimity, finding balance in ourselves amidst chaos in the school or classroom. We will learn to cultivate joy, not just as a fleeting emotion, but as a sustainable force for positive change. And finally, we will embrace the transformative potential of compassion, both for your students and yourself.

Together, we will create a path that not only helps us overcome post-pandemic suffering in schools but also empowers us to manifest a brighter, more compassionate, and joyful future for education. Come together on this journey toward a classroom where empathy, equanimity, joy and compassion thrive, fostering an environment in which students, teachers, and schools flourish.



Presenter: Joseph Polizzi, Ph.D. is the Director of the Penn State University World Campus Education Doctorate and an Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of Education Policy Studies. He is licensed in CT and NY to teach English 7-12 and holds the 093 Superintendent License and the SDA in New York. He is the author (with Bill Frick) of "Understanding Suffering in Schools: Shining a Light on the Dark Places of Education" (Routledge 2023), and numerous articles on education and leadership. He lives in Guilford, CT. Joe can be reached at jap383@psu.edu.

10. BE THE LIGHT: SPARK BELONGING, CONFIDENCE AND JOY IN OUR SCHOOLS

The purpose of this session is to engage educators in meaningful discourse about the importance of creating avenues of joy, confidence and belonging for each learner in our schools. Participants will take part in a "world cafe" discussion. Collaboratively, you will **create an action plan** to take back to your classroom, school, and district.



Presenter: Michelle D. McKnight is a math instructional coach, with over twenty years' experience in education. Michelle is a social justice educator and strives for equity and belonging for each student and educator in our schools. Pursuing transformation in education, Michelle has instructed Social Justice Mathematics with elementary and middle school students, and often speaks about this powerful way to teach mathematics to a wide audience.

Michelle has many interests. She loves to walk and hike, do yoga, workout, swim, dance, travel, read, write and color. At this time, she is also pursuing peace and happiness through meditation. You can reach Michelle at michelledmcknight26@gmail.com.

11. THE WELL-BALANCED STUDENT

In a high-stakes, high-pressure culture, parent and school expectations may have unintentional but damaging effects on students. Increasing demands on students may lead to unhealthy stress, resulting in burnout, disengagement, or debilitating physical and mental health symptoms. **This workshop examines the tension that parents, students, and teachers often experience over issues such as homework, grades, and the culture of competition, and offers tools for creating a healthier school climate.**



Presenter: Drew Schrader, M.Ed., is a School Design Partner. He has worked to help educators across a wide range of contexts redesign their systems around deeper learning for all students with a particular focus on project-based learning and authentic assessment. Prior to working at Challenge Success, he served as the Director of Assessment and a School Development Coach for New Tech Network. He was also a founding teacher and local teacher advocate at The Academy of Science and Entrepreneurship in Bloomington, IN. You can reach Drew at dschrader@challengesuccess.org.

12. OLD SAYBROOK STUDIES: REIMAGING THE MODERN CLASSROOM

The opportunity to create an authentic learning environment in a public educational setting does not present itself that often. Teachers and students work alongside one another to create experiences that reimagine the classroom by developing a learning environment aimed at creating an engaging and fun classroom space for learning.

Thus, was born Old Saybrook Studies, a hands-on, experiential learning course, connecting our town's past with the present. Students take part in a variety of authentic activities involving history, sociology and economics leading up to a self-selected Capstone Project. They accessed town resources and locations such as the historical society, local businesses, Cypress Cemetery, historical homes, the Town Hall, and the Chamber of Commerce, to name a few. **This course involves *doing and creating* as opposed to a more traditional approach to learning.** All student-created products and archeological finds are displayed in an OSMS local history museum located within our school.

Session attendees will have time to work with presenters to develop and brainstorm how this type of learning could look within their own districts.



Co-Presenter: Mark Carroll has been an educator for 31 years and an ELA integrationist at Old Saybrook Middle school for seven years. His role allows him to integrate ELA skills into other core content areas and to think deeply about developing engaging learning for his students that is in no way conventional. Mark is a creative out-of-the-box thinker who works hard to ensure positive learning opportunities for all students. Mark can be reached at mcarroll@oldsaybrookschoos.org.



Co-Presenter: Matt Walton has been in the field of education for the past 24 years. During his tenure he has served as an ELA teacher, the ELA district department head, and for the past twelve years the Associate Principal at Old Saybrook Middle School. Additionally, Matt is committed to the children outside the town of Old Saybrook. His many roles at the Connecticut Association of Schools include: CAS Board of Control, Middle Level Board of Control, Chair of the Awards and Recognition committee, and work with the Associate Principals committee. Matt was also a long-standing member of the New England League of Middle

Schools Board of Directors. In 2018-2019, Matt was awarded the Connecticut Association of School Administrators Administrator of the Year Award. Matt can be reached at mwalton@oldsaybrookschoools.org.



Co-Presenter: Krista Bauchman is a graduate of Central Connecticut State University where she studied elementary education, science education and educational leadership. During her 22 years in education, Krista has served as an elementary school teacher in Bloomfield, a middle school science teacher in RSD 13, a middle school assistant principal in Farmington and is currently the principal of Old Saybrook Middle School. She is also serving as the chairperson for the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) Center for Leadership and Innovation Committee and serves on the CAS Board of Control. She has been recipient of the CAS Assistant

Principal Award, the Excellence in Education award from the State Department of Education and the Outstanding Alumni Educational Leadership Award. Krista can be reached at kbauchman@oldsaybrookschoools.org.

13. FUND FOR TEACHERS: FROM INSPIRATION TO IMPACT

The nature of the teaching profession requires that teachers, year by year, need to be learners in order to remain current with changes in their profession. Standards are adjusted, curriculum is revised, new technology is introduced and societal shifts significantly impact students' needs. School system professional development workshops and topical statewide conferences are designed to enhance teachers' understandings relative to the changing landscape in the profession.

Arguably, the most impactful form of professional growth occurs when it is designed by the teachers themselves. They are the keepers of the discrete and personal information about the intellectual and emotional needs of their students.

The Fund for Teachers (FFT) is a national non-profit agency that provides funding for self-designed teacher fellowships. Applicants determine what they need to know and where they need to go in order to gain knowledge and experiences that will enhance their teaching capacity. If awarded a fellowship, they receive funding to travel during the summer months to deepen their understandings and enrich their experiences about their subjects taught and/or the cultures of their students and their families. Since 2016, over 1,000 Connecticut teachers from over 150 Connecticut schools have been awarded FFT grants.

In this session you will learn details about your eligibility and the application process, be introduced to examples of fellowship activities and become inspired about ways in which fellowships help teachers rediscover joy in their classrooms. Betty Sternberg will be available to discuss the travel options available through the TLFA.



Presenter: Dale Bernardoni, the Fund for Teachers Connecticut Program Director, is a long time Connecticut educational leader. She began her career as an intermediate grade classroom teacher. She also designed and implemented a gifted and talented program and was an Instructional Facilitating Teacher. Dale transitioned to school leadership becoming a principal in three schools - a suburban intermediate school, a K-8 interdistrict magnet school and a PK-5 multicultural school. She has also served as an Assistant Professor in Educational Leadership at SCSU, a Clinical Supervisor in the UConn Administrator Preparation Program (UCAPP), a CT

Association for Schools (CAS) Mentor for beginning principals, and an Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) Evaluator for the CSDE. Dale currently serves on the boards of Chester Elementary School, RSD 4, LEARN and the Crosby Fund for Haitian Education. Dale can be reached at dbernardoni@comcast.net and fundforteachers.org.
