

Professional Development Schedule 2026



FRIDAY, JANUARY 30

8:00-9:30 AM

CS&A Welcome + Keynote Address by Crissy Cáceres

10:00 AM – Interviews begin (through 5:00 PM)

10:00-11:15 AM – **Block 1**

Session 1 - Tell Your Tale. Save Your Tail.

Seliat Dairo & Brandon Jacobs - Carney, Sandoe & Associates

Regency A

This is a moment to practice perfecting your professional story. Schools can't ask everything they want to know and perhaps not even the things you do want to share. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commissions (EEOC) guidelines prohibit it. Explore how to express what's most important to you, even if they don't prompt it. Join this session to better understand the hiring process, gather what schools and hiring contacts really want to know and practice speaking in a way that addresses their concerns.

Session 2 – Feedback, Belonging, and Adult Retention: Building Inclusive Cultures Through Strategic Communication

LaShundra McCook - AIM Academy

Regency B

This presentation will explain how feedback influences feelings of belonging among adults and its direct impact on retention across organizational and educational settings. We will explore the mechanisms through which inclusive feedback practices strengthen psychological safety, foster trust, and create environments where individuals feel valued and committed to staying. Attendees will discover evidence-based strategies for implementing feedback systems that enhance belonging and increase retention.

11:45 AM-12:45 PM – Block 2

Session 1 – *What is Your Narrative: Clarifying Your Leadership Style and Journey*

Priscilla Morales - Park School of Baltimore, Justin Brandon - George School, and David Thompson

Regency A

These two most common questions asked in senior and junior administrator interviews:

What is your leadership style? What is your leadership journey?

Are you ready to give your clear, compelling, and authentic answers? This engaging and practical session, led by two long-tenured independent school leaders, will guide you through a series of introspective exercises designed to help you reflect upon, define, and consider your own leadership style and journey. Drawing on our own career trajectories and experiences, as well as the experiences of other independent school leaders, we will help you move to deeper understanding of your leadership that is both genuine and strategic. We will also help participants consider aspirational perspectives on their leadership.

Session 2 – *What the Brain Needs: Building Inclusive, Equitable Classrooms Through Cognitive Science*

Jen McAleer & Mel Dexter - Lawrence Academy

Regency B

Independent schools increasingly serve students with a wide range of cognitive, attentional, and learning profiles. Yet many educators feel unprepared to interpret neuropsychological evaluations or learning profiles in ways that meaningfully inform daily classroom practice. This session bridges that gap by showing how neuropsychological testing data, paired with cognitive science and classroom-tested strategies, can drive high-impact teaching moves that expand access and improve learning for every student.

1:00-2:15 PM – Block 3

Session 1 - *Strengthening Employee Retention Through Effective Management and Engagement Strategies*

Jenny Jun-lei Kravitz - The Rivers School

Regency B

After we've invested time, energy, and resources into recruiting, hiring, and onboarding folks, how do we strengthen retention, particularly for highly specialized roles and underrepresented identities? In this workshop, we will examine two key areas of effective retention: effective managerial practices (i.e. having a great boss) and high role engagement. To understand what makes a great manager, we will look at the research from Google's Project Oxygen, which identified 8 key aspects of highly effective supervisors. To understand how to effectively engage employees in their jobs, we will look at the work of Peter Cappelli from the Wharton School of Business, who has defined 5 core job dimensions for role satisfaction. By the end of this workshop, participants will walk away with a deeper understanding of how to actively shape job environments for high employee retention, including support around key insights about their own institutions.

1:00-2:15 PM – Block 3 (continued)

Session 2 – Recognizing and Intervening in Different Types of Bias School Wide

Alex Halladay - The Northwest School, Sarah Meteyer - Brentwood School

Regency A

Join us for an engaging and practical session exploring how different types of bias show up in schools across departments—including HR, Admissions, Academics, and Advancement. Whether you are new to equity work or building on prior experience, you'll gain clear, data-informed strategies to recognize and interrupt bias in your daily practice. Attendees will leave with 2–3 concrete tools they can use right away to foster a more inclusive, equitable school community from their unique role. Open to all faculty and staff members, this session centers self-reflection, shared learning, and skills you can apply immediately.

2:30-3:45 PM – Block 4

Session 1 – Preparing for Your First (or Second) Leadership Search

Chris Boyle - Carney, Sandoe & Associates

Regency A

For many considering a move into school leadership, approaching a search can feel daunting. You may find yourself asking some of the following questions: “What roles are currently within my grasp?”, “How might I build my experience and skills in preparation for the roles that most interest me?”, and “How do I demonstrate readiness – through my written materials and interviews – to be successful in a new role?” Carney, Sandoe & Associates Search Consultant, Chris Boyle will provide concrete and actionable advice to prepare for your first (or second) foray into a leadership search.

Session 2 – One True Voice: The Power of Leading and Communicating with Authenticity

Angela Garcia - Near North Montessori School, Christina Hutholm - SMCH Consulting

Regency B

When it comes to leadership, consistency matters. Members of our communities expect school leaders to demonstrate their personal values and the mission of the institution in ways that feel authentic and unwavering, and never more so than in times of crisis. In these moments especially, school communications can build trust—or erode it. Angela Garcia, Head of School at Near North Montessori School in Chicago and Christina Hutholm, a communications consultant and partner at SMCH Consulting, will share their experiences working together during a particularly challenging time at Near North Montessori. They will discuss how developing communications strategies centered on authenticity can help school leaders weather storms and create strong foundations on which to rebuild.

*Saturday, January 31 schedule begins on the next page.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

10:00-11:15 AM – Block 1

Session 1 - Meeting the Moment

Chéleah Googe - The Breck School, Megan Chounoune - Beauvoir School

Regency B

How can you intentionally leverage relationships and professional experiences to access growth opportunities and step into leadership roles? What unspoken rules and expectations shape school communities, and how do you learn to read them?

Join two educators of color, both in senior leadership roles, as they share insights from their journeys to leadership. Together, they will explore strategies, lessons learned, and key mindsets that will empower you to recognize, enter, and fully meet your moment.

Session 2 - Résumé Roundtable

Carney Sandoe Placement Team

Regency A

In this session, experts from the Carney Sandoe team will share practical guidance on how to craft a strong, effective résumé that stands out. The discussion will cover best practices around résumé length, how to highlight relevant skills, and the key features schools and hiring leaders look for when reviewing candidates. Participants will gain insider tips and actionable advice directly from our experts to help present their experience clearly, confidently, and competitively.

11:30 AM - 12:45 PM - Block 2

Session 1 - How Learning Inclusivity Literacy Enables You to Become a More Self-Aware School Community

John Daves - Friends Central School

Regency A

In a time where DEI work is continually threatened, this workshop will provide a clear understanding about how to learn and utilize inclusivity literacy to enable participants to become more prepared to implement strategic inclusivity critical thinking skills within their school to enhance the safety, the social and emotional learning of students and adults in schools, and the overall health and wellness of the community.

Session 2 - Anti-Bias in the Early Stages of the Hiring Process

Jasmine Meade & Ann Weymouth - The Madeira School

Regency B

After defining bias and discussing ways it may come up in the hiring process, participants will look at various scenarios and discuss how they can train their thinking to start from a place of curiosity and grace rather than relying on snap judgments to make hiring decisions.