Waco, TX researchED 2027

SPEAKER BIOS, MASTER SCHEDULE, BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Real Teaching.
Real Evidence.
Real Results.

Master Schedule

Time	Session
8:00 - 9:00 AM	Registration / Check-In / Coffee
9:00 - 9:10 AM	Freedom in Education: Welcome & Opening Remarks
9:10 - 9:20 AM	Baylor University: John Eckert “Baylor’s K-12 Program”
9:20 - 9:45 AM	Keynote: Tom Bennett: Setting the Stage: What researchED Is and Why It Matters
9:55 - 11:00 AM	Keynote: Doug Lemov: The Why and How of the Science of Learning
11:00 - 11:10 AM	Transition Break
11:10 - 12:00 PM	Breakout Block 1
12:00 - 12:50 PM	Lunch & Networking
12:50 - 1:40 PM	Breakout Block 2
1:40 - 1:50 PM	Transition Break
1:50 - 2:40 PM	Breakout Block 3
2:40 - 2:50 PM	Transition Break
2:50 - 3:30 PM	Closing Panel and Q&A

Keynote Speakers

Tom Bennett

Author, Consultant, and Founder of researchED

Founder of researchED and internationally recognized author and consultant focused on school culture, classroom management, and evidence-informed teaching.

Keynote: Setting the Stage: What researchED Is and Why It Matters.

Doug Lemov

Chief Knowledge Officer and Founder

Doug Lemov is the author of the international bestseller *Teach Like a Champion*, now in its 3.0 version, *The Coach's Guide to Teaching*, and the co-author, with TLAC colleagues, of *Practice Perfect*, *Reading Reconsidered*, *Teaching in the Online Classroom*, and *Reconnect*. Doug is known for his influential work on instructional practice and classroom excellence.

Keynote: This session will offer an overview of how four key principles from cognitive science- attention, perception, encoding, and retrieval- interact to shape teaching & learning. We'll watch and discuss actual classroom videos to help participants use and apply the ideas more clearly.

Breakout Structure

Four concurrent sessions in every round.
Attendees choose their own path and attend three of four sessions.

Breakouts	Ballroom	Room A	Room B	Room C
Block 1: 11:10 - 11:50 AM	**Nathan Gwinn** The Cognitive Edge: Analog Instruction	**Ben Zulauf** Working Memory Matters: Designing Instruction for How Students Think	**Samantha Lippert** Performance vs Learning: Helping Students Succeed Today and Remember Tomorrow	**Laura Stam** Ausubel's Meaningful Learning and the Instructional Hierarchy
Block 2: 12:50 - 1:40 PM	**Ben Zulauf** Writing Doesn't Just Happen: What Research Tells Us About Effective Writing Instruction	**Luke Morin** Close Reading That Builds Independent Readers	**Brett Benson** Cognitive Apprenticeship — Making Expert Thinking Visible	**Nathan Gwinn** Fewer Fires, More Teaching: Winning Back Your Students' Attention, and Your Own
Block 3: 1:40 - 2:40 PM	**Samantha Lippert** When Learning Clicks: Math Automaticity in Four Minutes a Day	**Laura Stam** Increase Attention to Increase Learning	**Luke Morin** Do They Understand? Active Monitoring as the Engine of the Text-Based Classroom	**Brett Benson** Desirable Difficulties — Securing Essential Knowledge in Long-Term Memory

Breakout Speakers

Brett Benson

Teacher, 7th-grade World Studies, 18th year in the classroom

Professional Bio

Brett is a 7th-grade World Studies teacher at North Middle School in Millard Public Schools, Omaha, Nebraska. He's in his eighteenth-plus year in the classroom.

What makes him a strong fit is the story: after nearly two decades teaching on experience and intuition, he overhauled his entire practice through independent study of cognitive science — no formal training, no ed school, no district PD. He names Willingham, Rosenshine, and Lemov as the people who changed his thinking. He now runs a cognitive science PLC at his own school.

He writes the Substack SoL in the Wild. His essay "Why I Want to Be the Most Boring Teacher in the Building" argues against performative, high-energy teaching in favor of calm, focused classrooms where retrieval, feedback, and practice do the work — it was picked up by AEI. Holly Korbey interviewed him about the year he spent making the change and what happened to his students.

Session Topics

- **Cognitive Apprenticeship — Making Expert Thinking Visible**

  Description: Based on the research of Collins, Brown, and Newman on cognitive apprenticeship, this topic explores how teachers can make expert thinking visible through content alignment, modeling, think-alouds, coaching, scaffolding, and guided practice. Learn how explicit instruction helps students develop the knowledge, strategies, and ways of thinking needed to become increasingly expert thinkers.

- **Desirable Difficulties — Securing Essential Knowledge in Long-Term Memory**

  Description: Based on the research of Robert and Elizabeth Bjork on desirable difficulties, this topic explores how instructional strategies that make retrieval desirably effortful can strengthen long-term retention. Learn how retrieval practice, spacing, interleaving, and varying conditions of retrieval can help students develop durable knowledge that supports future learning and more complex thinking.

Nathan Gwinn

Teacher, Senior Advisor for Curriculum and Instruction at Freedom in Education

Professional Bio

Nathan Gwinn is a teacher and former Principal, and he serves as the Senior Advisor for Curriculum and Instruction at Freedom in Education, where he advises states on evaluating instructional materials and developing robust academic frameworks. His expertise is rooted in extensive experience teaching 5th through 12th grade in public schools and serving as an administrator across all K-12 levels. He brings this on-the-ground perspective to developing comprehensive model standards in mathematics and science. By bridging the gap between high-level educational policy and classroom reality, Nathan equips education systems nationwide with the practical, high-quality tools needed to drive student achievement.

Session Topics

- **The Cognitive Edge: Analog Instruction**

  Somewhere between the 1-to-1 device rollout and the app-for-everything era, classroom management became a lost art. This session explores how strong leadership and ironclad procedures reduce cognitive load and create classrooms built on trust, efficiency, and human connection.

- **Fewer Fires, More Teaching: Winning Back Your Students' Attention, and Your Own**

  Learning starts with attention, but between distractions, disruptions, and a never-ending inbox, everyone's attention gets pulled in a dozen directions, including yours. We'll walk through the everyday things quietly working against your teaching: how your room is set up, the behaviors that eat up class time, and the parent emails and admin requests that follow you home. You'll leave with a few key mindset shifts and simple systems that help you spend less time putting out fires and more time teaching.

Samantha Lippert

Third Grade Teacher, Westfield Central School District

Professional Bio

Samantha Lippert is a veteran educator with 18 years of experience whose work focuses on practical applications of the Science of Reading and Science of Learning. Her evidence-based classroom systems have produced measurable student growth, including a 92% general education ELA proficiency rate in her current co-taught classroom.

Session Topics

- **Performance vs Learning: Helping Students Succeed Today and Remember Tomorrow**

  Strong performance in a lesson often reflects working memory, not lasting learning, which is why so much is forgotten within weeks. This session explores the forgetting curve and how to move knowledge past the working memory bottleneck into long-term memory. Teachers will leave with practical retrieval and spacing strategies that help students remember and recall what they've learned all year.

- **When Learning Clicks: Math Automaticity in Four Minutes a Day.**

  Participants will explore how mastery-based retrieval practice can improve fluency, reduce cognitive load, and strengthen student confidence in mathematics.

Luke Morin

Author of the Middle School Literacy Project and Founder of A-Team Education

Professional Bio

Luke is a Colorado-based educator with over a decade in the middle school classroom and later as a middle school administrator. He writes The Middle School Literacy Project, a Substack focused on the craft of teaching reading, and founded A-Team Education. He's a University of Colorado Boulder graduate and has become a recognizable voice in the Science of Learning conversation.

Session Topics

- **Lily Pad Moments: Close Reading That Builds Independent Readers**

  How do we help students become readers who can handle difficult text with confidence, persistence, and a growing capacity to make meaning for themselves? This session explores “lily pad moments”—intentionally chosen passages where students can catch their breath, work through complexity alongside their teacher, and build the knowledge they need to “swim on” through challenging text. Through live modeling and guided practice, participants will explore how these moments of shared reading can become a lasting investment in students’ independence as readers.

- **Do They Understand? Active Monitoring as the Engine of the Text-Based Classroom**

  One student offers a sharp interpretation, a few others nod, and the discussion moves on. But how do we know whether that answer reflects one student’s understanding or the whole class’s—and what should happen next? Drawing on Dylan Wiliam’s work on formative assessment and his concept of the hinge question, this session explores how to make students’ unfolding understanding of a text not just an aside, but the engine of the lesson, using active monitoring to surface ideas, uncover confusion, and shape the reading, writing, and discussion that follow.

Laura Stam

Third Grade Teacher | Goyen Fellow | Founding Board Member, The Reading League Wyoming

Professional Bio

Laura Stam is a third-grade teacher in Wyoming, a 2024–2025 Goyen Fellow, and a founding board member of The Reading League Wyoming. She writes The Knowledge Exchange and hosts the Wyoming Science of Teaching and Learning Collaborative conference. Laura collaborates on multiple instructional projects and regularly presents on evidence-based teaching practices.

Session Topics

- **Ausubel's Meaningful Learning and the Instructional Hierarchy**

  This session will focus on how to apply Ausubel's meaningful learning theory to advance students into the generalization and adaptation phases of the instructional hierarchy by utilizing key learning connections across units and content and explicitly connecting previously learned knowledge.

- **Increase Attention to Increase Learning**

  This session will focus on the importance of attention as the first step to learning and the routines teachers can use to increase attention and engagement in the lesson to ensure all students stay focused on learning.

Ben Zulauf, EdD

Director of Teaching and Learning, Cicero School District 99

Professional Bio

Ben Zulauf is the Director of Teaching and Learning in Cicero School District 99, where he leads the district's shift toward evidence-based literacy practices. He has served in multiple instructional leadership roles and has presented at local, state, and international conferences while consulting with school districts across the Midwest.

Session Topics

- **Writing Doesn't Just Happen: What Research Tells Us About Effective Writing Instruction**

  Writing is one of the most cognitively demanding tasks students encounter, yet writing instruction often focuses more on assigning and evaluating writing than explicitly teaching students how to write. What does research tell us about developing proficient writers? In this interactive session, participants will explore the research behind effective writing instruction, examine common misconceptions, and consider the knowledge and skills students need to become proficient writers. Participants will experience evidence-based instructional practices that support sentence construction, planning, drafting, and revising and leave understanding how explicit instruction can help students become more knowledgeable, strategic, and independent writers.

- **Working Memory Matters: Designing Instruction for How Students Think**

  Students are expected to listen, process information, follow directions, and solve problems throughout the school day. But working memory has significant limitations that can interfere with these demands, even when students are attentive and motivated. How can understanding these limitations help teachers design more effective instruction? This session will demonstrate how thoughtful instructional design can make complex learning more manageable. Participants will explore the science of working memory and cognitive load, examining how instructional decisions influence students' ability to process information. Through practical examples and engaging activities, educators will experience working memory limitations and identify evidence-informed approaches to delivering clearer explanations, managing cognitive demands, and providing effective instructional support.