

Block I- Friday Evening (7:10 – 8:25 PM) Professional Learning Breakout Sessions

A. Building and Sustaining Community in the Classroom

Finding the magic in teaching while creating a classroom community can be hard. Join third-grade teacher and content creator Ms. Jess Porter (IG—FreeThinkingTeacher) for tips, info, and strategies for creating and maintaining a classroom community at the elementary level to create the best classroom community possible for your students.

Ms. Jess Porter, 3rd grade teacher, North Hills SD, IG@freethinkingteacher

B. Landing That First Teaching Job and Beyond!

In this session, we will discuss elements of the application and hiring process, including interviews, group interviews, and teaching interviews. We will also talk about working toward a Level 2 certificate, earning Act 48 credits throughout your career, and how to understand salary schedules. Join us to learn the nuts and bolts of being a teacher in PA!

Ms. Marilyn Pryle, 2019 PA Teacher of the Year

C. A Discussion on Trends in Behavior Intervention in Schools Today

This Special Education-focused session will review current rates and trends in school behavior and the available support to address these needs. The information presented aims to establish a baseline for understanding current challenges, enabling teachers to respond effectively as they progress in their careers. This includes revisiting the communicative nature of challenging behaviors and recognizing their emotional impact on professionals as they assist these learners.

Dr. Eric Bieniek, Slippery Rock University

D. Thriving as a Future Educator: Strategies for Successfully Supporting and Impacting ALL Students

As a future educator, you have the power to make a lasting impact on your students and create meaningful change in the classroom. This session is designed for college students preparing to become teachers. Explore strategies to navigate challenges in the profession, build strong support networks, and embrace the importance of diverse perspectives in education. Together, we'll discuss how all aspiring teachers can contribute to creating equitable and inclusive learning environments that empower every student to succeed.

Mr. Leon Smith, 2025 PA Teacher of the Year

E. Crush Student Teaching From Day 1: Strategies for Success

Student teaching is a critical step in your journey to becoming a teacher, and success begins on day one. This interactive workshop will provide practical strategies and actionable tips to help student teachers build strong relationships, find their teaching style, stay organized, and prioritize self-care throughout their teaching journey. Led by Dr. Sam Fecich, author of *EduMagic: A Guide for Preservice Teachers*, this session equips future educators with tools to thrive during their student teaching experience and beyond.

Dr. Samantha Fecich

Block II- Saturday Morning (9:30 – 10:45 AM) Professional Learning Breakout Sessions

A. Advice, Tips, and Strategies from the 2019, 2022, 2023, & 2025 PA Teachers of the Year!

Participants will be able to ask questions and receive sage advice, techniques, stories, and strategies from the 2019, 2022, 2023, and 2025 PA Teachers of the Year! How awesome is that?!

Ms. Marilyn Pryle, Ms. Elizabeth Raff, Mr. Ryan Hardesty, & Mr. Leon Smith

B. Critical Thinking Across the STEM Curriculum

In our increasingly technological world, critical thinking and creative problem-solving are more important than ever. Learn how STEM activities can help your students develop these skills in all curriculum areas. This session is geared toward future elementary teachers, but all attendees will find ideas to enhance their classroom practices.

Mr. Mike Soskil, 2017 PA Teacher of the Year

C. Building and Sustaining Community in the Classroom

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Ms. Jess Porter, 3rd grade teacher, North Hills SD, IG@freethinkingteacher

D. Understanding Your Future Contract and Responsibilities through Scenarios: Avoiding those career-killing landmines in your first three years of teaching

This workshop will focus on the transitions from SPSEA to PSEA membership and why it is important to grasp the differences. Students will role-play administrators and/or teachers and discuss the priorities and agendas of each through hypothetical scenarios that could occur in the first three years of teaching. Please note: If you have taken this workshop before, the scenarios have been updated.

Ms. Jennifer Wahl- 2018 PA ToY & Dr. Craig Miller, PA College Of Technology

E. Solutions to Help Support Your Future Students with Behavior-Based Interventions

This Special Education-focused session will discuss potential solutions to proactively support students and empower teachers will be introduced. The presentation will cover trauma-informed care, reversing historical trends in behavior support, social-emotional learning, and transactional thinking. Participants will be encouraged to apply the proposed frameworks to their work as they begin their careers in education.

Dr. Eric Bieniek, Slippery Rock University

Block III- Saturday Afternoon (1:45 – 3:00 PM) Professional Learning Breakout Sessions

A. Advice, Tips, and Strategies from the 2017, 2018, & 2024 PA Teachers of the Year!

Participants will be able to ask questions and receive sage advice, techniques, stories, and strategies from the 2017, 2018, and 2024 PA Teachers of the Year! How awesome is that?!

Mr. Mike Soskil, Ms. Jennifer Wahl, & Ms. Ashlie Crosson,

B. Teaching Contracts 101: Understanding and Felling Confident About Your Signing Your First Teaching Contract

Teacher contracts can feel overwhelming, but understanding them is key to setting yourself up for success. In this session, we'll break down how to read a salary schedule, helping you map out your earning potential over time. You'll also learn how to navigate healthcare benefits, comparing options to make informed choices. Finally, we'll explore other work conditions and benefits like leave policies, contract days/hours, and more. Walk away with the confidence to understand, evaluate, and advocate for your contract.

Mr. Ryan Hardesty, 2023 PA Teacher of the Year

C. New Teacher Toolkit

Join Elizabeth Raff, 2022 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year, and Tony Carrodo, K-12 Learning Facilitator at Penn Manor School District, as they unpack engaging ways to teach for clarity, take a pulse on learning, and support differentiation strategies in your future classrooms. These bite-sized tips and tricks will leave you with a variety of tools to implement right away and set you up for teaching success. Your new teacher toolkit will be packed and primed to understand what your students know and how to best support them!

Ms. Elizabeth Raff, 2022 PA Teacher of the Year

D. Student PSEA Alumni Panel: What might my first year OUT of college be like?

Panelists will discuss different avenues that emerge in your first year OUT of college as an educator, including the job search process, interviews, subbing, etc.

Student PSEA Alumni Panel