EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION
Tier 1 Best Practices
INSTITUTE

Agenda

Irving, TX • November 12–13, 2025

Wednesday, November 12

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:30 a.m.	**Keynote**—Paula Maeker and Sarah Schuhl *Making the Shift: Moving From Teaching to Learning*	
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–10:45 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See page 2.
10:45–11:00 a.m.	Break	
11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See page 2.
12:00–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	
1:00–2:00 p.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See page 2.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	**Stick With It: Strategies That Make Learning Last** *A hands-on session about the power of consolidation and re-engagement.*	

Thursday, November 13

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:00 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See page 2.
9:00–9:15 a.m.	Break	
9:15–10:15 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See page 2.
10:15–10:30 a.m.	Break	
10:30–11:30 a.m.	**Team Time**—*Presenters aid in your collaborative team discussions.*	
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	
12:30–1:30 p.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See page 2.
1:30–1:45 p.m.	Break	
1:45–3:15 p.m.	**Keynote**—William M. Ferriter *Changing Practices Means Changing Your Peers: Understanding Human Resistance to Change and Identifying Next Steps to Move Your Colleagues Forward*	

Agenda is subject to change.

Breakout Sessions at a Glance

Rooms are listed beneath titles in *blue italics*.

Presenter	Wednesday, November 12			Thursday, November 13		
	9:45–10:45 a.m.	**11:00 a.m. –12:00 p.m.**	**1:00–2:00 p.m.**	**8:00–9:00 a.m.**	**9:15–10:15 a.m.**	**12:30–1:30 p.m.**
William M. Ferriter	Building Student Commitment to Learning: Good Instruction Means Nothing if Students Don't Feel Like They Belong *Room TBD*	The Best Instruction Comes Through Reflection: Studying the Characteristics of Effective Feedback to Learners *Room TBD*	Using AI Tools to Make Differentiation Doable *Room TBD*	Reaching Goals Matters to Kids, Too: Understanding the Brain Research Behind Student Goal Setting and Monitoring *Room TBD*	A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words: Understanding the Brain Research Behind Visualizations and Concrete Examples *Room TBD*	Moving Beyond Complaining About Student Behaviors: Identifying and Teaching Academic Skills and Dispositions *Room TBD*
Paula Maeker	The Language of Learning: Effective and Engaging Vocabulary Instruction for Grades 7–12 *Room TBD*	Now That Makes Sense! Tried and True Comprehension Strategies for Grades 3–12 *Room TBD*	The Language of Learning: Effective and Engaging Vocabulary Instruction for Grades PreK–6 *Room TBD*	Write Now! Engaging Scholars in Meaningful Writing Across Content Areas *Room TBD*	Reading Is *Fun*damental: Embedding Play Into PreK–2 Literacy Classrooms *Room TBD*	Moving Right Along: Engaging the Brain in Movement and Mindfulness in the Classroom *Room TBD*
Sarah Schuhl	Teaching Mathematics Content: Grades 3–5 *Room TBD*	Teaching Mathematics Content: Grades PreK–2 *Room TBD*	Teaching Mathematics Content: Grades 6–12 *Room TBD*	Strategies for Effective Mathematics Intervention *Room TBD*	Teaching Students to Think Like Mathematicians *Room TBD*	Analyzing Student Work to Make Mathematics Instructional Decisions *Room TBD*

Agenda is subject to change.

Session Descriptions—Day 1

KEYNOTE—8:00–9:30 a.m.

Paula Maeker and Sarah Schuhl

Making the Shift: Moving From Teaching to Learning

Ensuring every student learns at grade level or above requires a paradigm shift from the traditional practice of teaching to a culture that embraces learning as its fundamental purpose. Making this shift requires that educators rethink the way we approach instruction, assessment, and feedback across all tiers of support. In this keynote, Paula Maeker and Sarah Schuhl share practical strategies for strengthening daily Tier 1 instruction focused on student learning. They clarify the planning and foundations needed for students to engage in and learn the essential standards in each grade level or course. Participants examine and explore instructional practices in Tier 1 that shift the focus of instruction from what is taught to what is learned.

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS—9:45–10:45 a.m.

William M. Ferriter

Building Student Commitment to Learning: Good Instruction Means Nothing if Students Don't Feel Like They Belong

True learning begins when students feel valued, respected, and connected in their classrooms. In this session, William M. Ferriter explores the vital link between a sense of belonging and academic achievement. Participants discover the research behind learning spaces where every student feels seen and believes they have something meaningful to contribute. Participants learn simple strategies for building community and igniting a commitment to learning in all students.

Participants in this session:

- Explore strategies for creating a classroom culture where every student is seen as an important contributor to the learning environment.
- Develop actionable plans to increase students' sense of belonging in their learning space.

Paula Maeker

The Language of Learning: Effective and Engaging Vocabulary Instruction for Grades 7–12

Much of learning is dependent upon the language we use to consume, produce, and transfer meaning. Research shows that developing a comprehensive academic vocabulary allows students to analyze information more deeply, differentiate nuances in meaning, and express their thoughts with precision. In this interactive session, Paula Maeker shares with secondary educators how to incorporate meaningful and engaging vocabulary instruction to increase student achievement, unlock deeper meaning across concepts and comprehension, and build our scholars' efficacy and confidence as proficient learners.

Sarah Schuhl

Teaching Mathematics Content: Grades 3–5

Students in grades 3–5 build on their learning of mathematics from previous grades. They extend their understanding of place value, operations such as addition and subtraction, measurement, and geometry. More specifically, students in grades 3–5 develop strategies to make sense of multiplication and division, solve multistep word problems, understand fractions and decimals, classify geometry shapes, grow their understanding of measurement, and work with data displays.

Participants in this session learn how to teach rigorous mathematics so students learn procedural fluency from conceptual understanding and application. Sarah Schuhl explores the vertical progression of mathematics standards to demonstrate how mathematics learned in grades 3–5 extend from the skills learned in the primary grades and support those gained in middle school mathematics. Participants investigate manipulatives, strategies, and models to teach identified grade-level standards and gain ready-to-implement strategies.

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS—11:00 a.m. –12:00 p.m.

William M. Ferriter

The Best Instruction Comes Through Reflection: Studying the Characteristics of Effective Feedback to Learners

Transform your teaching by harnessing the power of reflection and effective feedback. In this session, William M. Ferriter explores the characteristics of feedback that drive meaningful learning and student growth. Participants discover how thoughtful, timely, and specific feedback can empower students to take ownership of their progress. Participants also learn strategies for integrating reflection and feedback into their instruction to foster a classroom culture where improvement is a shared goal.

Participants in this session:

- Examine the characteristics of feedback that promote student growth and learning.
- Explore practical strategies for providing effective feedback to students.
- Develop plans to integrate reflective practices and effective feedback into daily instruction.

Paula Maeker

Now That Makes Sense! Tried and True Comprehension Strategies for Grades 3–12

There are so many complex factors that make reading comprehension in any content area a nuanced and challenging skill to teach effectively. Not only does it require a variety of instructional strategies, but teachers also must engage learners in the metacognitive aspects of developing deeper meaning in text. Even though this isn't easy, it's doable! In this session, Paula

Maeker helps teachers uncover brain-based research and practical classroom strategies to ensure all scholars are learning at high levels through text.

Sarah Schuhl

Teaching Mathematics Content: Grades PreK–2

The mathematics learned in PreK–2 is fundamental to building number sense, developing procedural fluency, and making sense of mathematics and its application to the real world. Students learn and apply place value, practice adding and subtracting, and discover how to measure and identify shapes and their characteristics. As students learn, they utilize concrete objects, pictures, expressions, and equations. The mathematics learned in PreK–2 leads to concepts learned in grades 3–5 such as multiplication and division, multistep word problem solving, and fractions and decimals.

In this session, Sarah Schuhl demonstrates how to teach rigorous mathematics so students learn procedural fluency from conceptual understanding and application. Participants explore the vertical progression of mathematics standards to see how the skills learned in PreK–2 support those learned in grades 3–5. Participants investigate manipulatives, strategies, and models to teach identified grade-level standards and gain ready-to-implement strategies.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS—1:00–2:00 p.m.

William M. Ferriter

Using AI Tools to Make Differentiation Doable

Participants are encouraged to bring a fully charged computer or tablet to take full advantage of their time in this session.

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are reshaping everything about education, offering innovative ways to enhance both teaching and learning. Participants in this session explore how tools like ChatGPT can help reduce the time, energy, and effort required to effectively differentiate instruction.

Participants in this session:

- Develop a clear understanding of what differentiation is and why it is essential for meeting diverse student needs.
- Explore practical ways to use AI tools like ChatGPT to streamline planning and delivery of differentiated instruction.
- Identify strategies to leverage AI for creating personalized learning experiences that support both initial reteaching and extension of grade-level essential standards.

Paula Maeker

The Language of Learning: Effective and Engaging Vocabulary Instruction for Grades PreK–6
Much of learning is dependent upon the language we use to consume, produce, and transfer meaning. Research shows that developing a comprehensive academic vocabulary allows students to analyze information more deeply, differentiate nuances in meaning, and express their thoughts with precision. In this interactive session, Paula Maeker shares with elementary educators how to incorporate meaningful and engaging vocabulary instruction to increase student achievement, unlock deeper meaning across concepts and comprehension, and build our scholars' efficacy and confidence as proficient learners.

Sarah Schuhl

Teaching Mathematics Content: Grades 6–12
Students in grades 6–12 build on their learning of mathematics from previous grades. They extend their understanding of place value and operations, multistep word problems, operations with fractions and decimals, and measurement and geometry. These students develop strategies to make sense of proportional reasoning and linear equations, learn about and work with rational numbers, solve equations, apply area and volume formulas, and develop an understanding of probability and statistics. Students in high school continue making connections to previous mathematics lessons and make sense of, graph, and create functions, solve simple and complex equations and inequalities, identify and apply transformations, grow their geometry understanding, and use probability and statistics to generate valid conclusions related to data.

In this session, Sarah Schuhl demonstrates how to teach rigorous mathematics so students learn procedural fluency from conceptual understanding and application. Participants explore the vertical progression of mathematics standards to see how the skills learned in grades PreK–5 are extended to grades 6–12. Participants explore manipulatives, strategies, and models to teach identified grade-level standards and gain ready-to-implement strategies.

AFTERNOON CLOSING SESSION—2:15–3:15 p.m.

All Presenters

Stick With It: Strategies That Make Learning Last
Learning doesn't end when a lesson does. In fact, it often begins again when we revisit important ideas in new ways and at new times. This interactive session invites participants to explore the power of consolidation—a research-backed practice that strengthens memory, deepens understanding, and supports long-term transfer of learning.

Across three fast-paced, hands-on segments, participants experience consolidation strategies as learners, reflect on their impact, and consider how each strategy might support their students'

retention and transfer of essential concepts. Participants review insights from the day's breakout sessions—this time with a fresh perspective and a chance to connect ideas across experiences.

Participants in this session:

- Explore the role of consolidation in the learning process.
- Experience three practical consolidation strategies and reflect on how each one supports retention, sense making, and application.
- Identify at least one consolidation strategy they can adapt and implement in their own classroom or professional learning setting.

Session Descriptions—Day 2

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS—8:00–9:00 a.m.

William M. Ferriter

Reaching Goals Matters to Kids, Too: Understanding the Brain Research Behind Student Goal Setting and Monitoring

Student goal setting is an underutilized instructional strategy that can transform learning by fostering motivation, self-direction, and achievement. In this session, William M. Ferriter explores the brain research behind why setting, monitoring, and achieving goals is crucial for student success. Participants learn practical strategies to help their students define clear objectives, track their progress, and celebrate their accomplishments. By integrating goal-setting practices into their teaching, participants can foster a growth mindset and empower students to take ownership of their learning journey.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the neuroscience behind student goal setting and its impact on learning and motivation.
- Explore effective strategies for guiding students in setting, monitoring, and achieving personal learning goals.
- Develop plans to incorporate goal-setting and monitoring techniques into daily instruction.

Paula Maeker

Write Now! Engaging Scholars in Meaningful Writing Across Content Areas

Writing isn't just prompts and essays, it's a critical component of transferable learning. When teachers incorporate meaningful writing opportunities across different subject areas, they create a more comprehensive, engaging, and effective learning environment that supports scholars' overall academic growth and skill development. As powerful as writing about thinking and learning is, scholars are rarely excited about picking up that pencil. In this session, Paula Maeker shares researched-based, engaging writing strategies to incorporate into all aspects of learning that will have scholars excited to immortalize their thinking!

Sarah Schuhl

Strategies for Effective Mathematics Intervention

Students who learn mathematics at high levels can reason logically, problem solve, and make connections needed to be successful in the next grade level or course. Unfortunately, too many students are not yet learning grade- or course-level mathematical content from one year to the

next. How do teachers work together to ensure all students learn mathematics? How do teachers match interventions to the mathematics skills students struggle to attain?

Essential standards and required prior knowledge inform any mathematics intervention needed to accelerate learning to grade level and beyond. Additionally, to more effectively reason and make sense of the mathematics they are learning, students must develop mathematics habits of mind during Tier 1 and Tier 2 learning experiences. Participants in this session explore formative use of mathematical tasks, strategies to re-engage students in learning mathematics, and considerations to create effective and intentional instructional practices in Tiers 1 and 2.

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS—9:15–10:15 a.m.

William M. Ferriter

A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words: Understanding the Brain Research Behind Visualizations and Concrete Examples

Participants in this session unlock the power of visualization to deepen learning and engagement in their classrooms. William M. Ferriter explores how research-backed strategies—like metaphorical thinking, body vocabulary, and worked-out problems—can help students connect with and retain complex content more effectively. Participants learn how to make abstract ideas concrete and turn their lessons into memorable experiences that boost student success.

Participants in this session:

- Examine the science behind visualizations and concrete examples and their impact on learning and retention.
- Learn practical strategies to incorporate visualizations and concrete examples into instruction.

Paula Maeker

Reading Is *Fun*damental: Embedding Play Into PreK–2 Literacy Classrooms

Play isn't just for recess! It's a fundamental learning process that supports child development across multiple cognitive domains. Research shows that play-based learning activates engagement, supports complex neural connections, develops foundational reading skills, and enhances literacy learning through immersive language and communication. In this session, Paula Maeker shares how to strategically create environments and experiences that purposefully support literacy development through play-based learning.

Sarah Schuhl

Teaching Students to Think Like Mathematicians

When students successfully learn mathematics, they learn both the grade-level content and the habits of mind needed to think mathematically. They are able to create a toolkit of strategies to use when solving tasks, and they understand when algorithms are most efficient. Instead of seeing mathematics as discrete steps to follow, they see connections. Students make sense of problems and justify their reasoning.

Every state has a set of process standards that share the mathematical thinking students must develop in K–12 to be successful mathematicians. In this session, Sarah Schuhl explores routines and strategies used to teach mathematics habits of mind when teaching content standards. Participants investigate *how* students learn mathematics and gain ready-to-use tools and strategies to teach mathematics for greater student learning.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS—12:30–1:30 p.m.

William M. Ferriter

Moving Beyond Complaining About Student Behaviors: Identifying and Teaching Academic Skills and Dispositions

Tapping into every student's full potential requires that educators emphasize the skills and dispositions that drive success in school and beyond. In this session, William M. Ferriter explores how teaching essential learner habits—such as perseverance, self-regulation, and collaboration—can complement academic instruction and improve outcomes for all. Participants discover research-based strategies to embed these critical skills into their daily practice and foster a classroom culture where every student can thrive.

Participants in this session:

- Identify the key skills and dispositions that define successful learners.
- Explore practical strategies to teach these habits in engaging and effective ways.
- Develop tools to assess and support student progress in mastering essential learner skills.

Paula Maeker

Moving Right Along: Engaging the Brain in Movement and Mindfulness in the Classroom

Remember when the model of a perfect classroom looked like teachers and students sitting quietly at desks? Let's ditch that old paradigm and put learning into motion, where we think of our classrooms as a gym where brains work out. Participants in this session share ideas and engage in strategies that transform learning experiences and classroom routines into meaningful movement that increases engagement, mindfulness, and motivation for both students and teachers.

Sarah Schuhl

Analyzing Student Work to Make Mathematics Instructional Decisions

Student work reveals effective instructional strategies and their mathematical thinking. How are teachers and teams engaging in a process of examining data and student work to determine their learning needs as individuals and as groups? Common formative assessments provide numerical data and student work that, when analyzed by a team, offer insights into the extent students learned essential standards and what next steps will help them grow. Additionally, the use of high-level tasks within a mathematics lesson reveals student thinking and provides an opportunity to address their learning within the lesson.

In this session, Sarah Schuhl explores how teams analyze data and student work to plan effective reengagement learning experiences (intervention and extension). Participants explore how they can analyze student thinking and work throughout a mathematics lesson.

KEYNOTE—1:45–3:15 p.m.

William M. Ferriter

Changing Practices Means Changing Your Peers: Understanding Human Resistance to Change and Identifying Next Steps to Move Your Colleagues Forward

Change is hard, and understanding why can help you lead your colleagues more effectively. In this keynote, William M. Ferriter unpacks the four common reasons humans resist change by sharing relatable examples from business, industry, and everyday life. He connects those reasons to the unique challenges educators face in schools and offers practical insights into how resistance shows up in teams and classrooms. Participants become better equipped to identify the root causes of resistance in their peers and to develop actionable strategies for moving their colleagues—and their schools—forward.