

Keynote Speaker



REGIE ROUTMAN is an internationally respected teacher and author whose teaching experience of more than forty years includes being a classroom teacher, a reading specialist, a learning disabilities tutor, a Reading Recovery teacher, a language arts resource and mentor teacher, a staff developer, and a literacy coach. Her current work involves weeklong school residencies where she does daily demonstration teaching in classrooms, coaching teachers and principals, and facilitates ongoing professional conversations, all as a catalyst for whole school change.

See www.regieroutman.com for complete information on Regie's bio, books, and her newest professional development resource, the job-embedded, DVD-based, *Regie Routman in Residence: Transforming Our Teaching* series. The literacy series, on effective teaching of reading and writing in diverse classrooms, was developed for school and district leaders, coaches and teachers seeking to increase and sustain literacy achievement, schoolwide.

Keynote Presentations

Day 1 - With Literacy and Leadership For All: Literacy Essentials

Keynote and whole group session

Through demonstrations and explanations supported by classroom photos, video clips, samples of student work, and stories from her work with students, teachers, coaches, and principals in diverse classrooms, Regie will focus on proven, authentic practices that align with implementation of the Common Core State Standards and lead to more effective, efficient, and joyful literacy teaching, leading, and learning. Topics will include raising expectations for what's possible for ALL learners, bonding with students and adults, utilizing the power of celebration, teaching with a sense of urgency, understanding and applying an optimal learning model, teaching for deep understanding, developing shared beliefs, and knowing and applying highly effective reading and writing practices that lead to self-determining readers and writers.

Day 2 - With Literacy and Leadership For All: Leadership Essentials

Keynote and whole group session

Drawing on her 15 years of conducting whole-school residencies in diverse classrooms, Regie will build on Day 1's focus on literacy and continue to show that literacy and leadership must be interconnected for whole school, sustainable achievement. She will discuss and demonstrate how she mentors and supports principals, school leaders, literacy coaches, and teachers in developing a collaborative and trusting school culture, dealing effectively with CCSS, organizing and facilitating literacy-based professional learning communities, establishing a highly functioning leadership team, conducting daily instructional walks, providing supportive language and feedback that move instruction and assessment forward, and reducing the stresses of teaching, coaching, and leading.

Large group session

Examining Our Beliefs about Literacy and Learning: *Aligning Our Beliefs With Our Practices*

Sandra Figueroa

Because shared beliefs are crucial to a successful professional learning community and a high achieving school culture, Sandy will take all participants through a group process of examining beliefs about learning, in this case, the reading/writing connection. She will also discuss how our beliefs drive all our instructional practices and how beliefs connect to the Common Core State Standards.

During the whole group session participants will actively participate in a PLC process that includes:

- Discussing and reflecting on current reading/writing beliefs and how they relate to practices
- Reading and discussing current professional reading/research
- Viewing a video of Regie Routman interviewing a fourth grade teacher and finding out how a teacher's beliefs and practices have changed over time as a result of a highly functioning professional learning community
- Planning for application of new learning with peers.

Participants will walk away with a deep understanding of how it feels to participate in a literacy-based professional learning community and, at the same time, leave with a process that any leader can immediately implement in their school to help a whole school community examine their beliefs, come to agreement on some beliefs, and connect their beliefs to applying more effective literacy practices.

Featured Presenters



JUDY WALLIS has spent the past four decades as a teacher, literacy coach, staff developer, and university instructor. She served two large, diverse, Houston, Texas school districts as language arts director and provided leadership support for literacy coaches for 21 years. Her professional interests and work focus on leadership and whole-school/district change through robust literacy instruction. She currently works with schools and districts across the country as a staff developer and educational consultant.

Judy's strengths lie in her deep knowledge of research and practice, her ability to bring out the strengths in others, and her warm, collaborative style. Judy has authored a number of professional book chapters and articles and written the "Blue Pages" in *Conversations with Regie Routman*. Recent books, *Comprehension Intervention, K-2* and *Comprehension Intervention, 3-6*, were co-authored with Steph Harvey and Anne Goudvis.



SANDRA C. FIGUEROA is a strong, collaborative leader and advocate for underserved students. She is bilingual and bicultural, a former teacher, elementary school principal, K-12 literacy director in a large district, and co-writer and collaborator of *Regie Routman in Residence*, a literacy-based, professional development series. Currently, Sandy is a high school instructional coach at a rural, high poverty school in Rio Rico, Arizona. She also she works to support schools and districts in the change process and is writing her first book, *Empowering English Language Learners Through High Level Literacy Teaching and Learning: An Advocacy Guide and Resource for Excellent Instruction, Research and Practice*.



KATHY SCHMITT is the Literacy Coordinator for CESA6, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Through consulting, mentoring, providing demonstration lessons, and serving as a literacy coach, Kathy has helped many schools, K-12, implement structures such as an RTI model, a Balanced Literacy Framework, and content area literacy strategies. Kathy's work with leaders of these initiatives emphasizes expanding one's literacy knowledge base, developing an eye for rigor and relevancy, and acquiring a skill set to smoothly manage individual and systemic change.

Featured Presenters (Continued)



NANCY MCLEAN has been a classroom teacher, reading interventionist, literacy coach and staff developer in Colorado schools for over three decades. In recent years her focus has been school change and teacher transformation through on-going professional development and side-by-side literacy coaching.

Recognized as an exemplary coach, Nancy's strengths lie in building trusting and respectful professional relationships; coaching in a manner that is responsive, respectful and empowering; as well as collaborating with teachers to improve instructional practice and increase student achievement. Currently she works in schools and districts as an educational consultant, staff developer, and literacy coach.



TRENA SPEIRS has been an elementary administrator for ten years following eight years teaching in various elementary settings such as first grade and fifth grade. She is currently the principal at North Star Elementary School in Thornton, CO where she leads a diverse community of teachers, parents, and students. Among Trena's many strengths are her ability to relentlessly focus on intentional and purposeful teaching and learning and to establish and lead a professional learning community that creates and sustains a collaborative culture of shared learning.

Breakout Sessions

Engaging Schools in Change: Insights and Practical Solutions

-Judy Wallis

Our work begins with establishing healthy cultures that reflect our shared beliefs and practices rather than in the search for a single program. In the past four years, I have had opportunities to work in both local schools and districts and others throughout the country. The pattern most present in today's schools is a dependency on programs to increase teacher effectiveness and boost student achievement. Not only do students experience an often-chaotic programmatic progression from year to year, but they must also adapt to differences in instructional practices and what teachers believe is most important. While the Common Core State Standards may support a better alignment in *what* we teach, we must also turn our attention to an alignment in *how* we teach.

In my experience, the staff that engages in productive conversations around what they believe about teaching and learning literacy creates a culture in which practices grow out of those deeply held beliefs. Within such a culture, the instruction strengthens and practices become generative. While the changes are gradual, they are systemic and productive. We must acknowledge that teachers are the *single* most important unit of change. While principals and school leaders can be initiators, it is uniting a staff that facilitates and makes change possible. Teachers grow more open and invested in their colleagues. Students move from grade to grade with assurance and confidence. Schools are transformed into communities of thoughtful practice.

Judy Wallis has been a teacher, a literacy coach, and a language arts director in two large, diverse districts. She has written chapters and books on comprehension, literacy practices, and assessment. Her recent experiences working with schools and districts across the country have provided insights she will share. The session will include in-depth discussion on . . .

- How to create a literacy team to strengthen school-wide culture
 - Use of a framework for creating meaningful conversation around beliefs
 - School-wide practices that promote shared beliefs
 - Marking progress through peer visits and coaching and student performance
-

Empowering English Language Learners: *Connecting CCSS with Student Friendly Content and Exemplary Language and Literacy Goals*

-Sandra Figueroa

Sandy will discuss and demonstrate how to enrich instruction and raise achievement through rigorous and meaningful listening, speaking, reading, and writing practices across the curriculum. The speaker will connect recent and relevant research with proven and authentic language and literacy classroom practices to maximize responsive teaching, student interaction, and engagement. She will also draw on her experiences as a bilingual and bicultural educator, a teacher, elementary school principal of a high poverty school, K-12 literacy director in a large district, co-writer and collaborator of *Regie Routman in Residence Professional Development Projects*, and, presently, as a high school instructional coach in a high challenge school.

The speaker will show what's possible for all English Language Learners and low achieving students' as they become proficient listeners, speakers, thinkers, readers, writers, and competent language users. Participants will learn how through merging *Sheltered Instruction* and the *Optimal Learning Model* across the curriculum we can empower all students to reach high levels of literacy. By participating in a whole group professional learning community process, the speaker will:

- Demonstrate how to increase student interaction and engagement by using the Sheltered Instruction and the Optimal Learning Model as a framework for all instruction to empower and engage all English Language Learners and underachieving students at high levels.
 - Facilitate a process that will identify a strand from the K-12 Common Core State Standards and, also, demonstrate how to write student friendly content, language, and literacy goals connected to CCSS.
 - Show how to ensure students have access to a rich print environment through authentic, meaningful, and relevant reading and writing across the curriculum.
-

Effective Use of the Optimal Learning Model: Ensuring Rigor, Relevancy and Relationship-Building

-Kathy Schmitt

Seeing the Forest through the Trees-Many teachers lack certainty in whether their students' literacy tasks meet the CCSS's criteria for rigor and relevancy. Additionally, teachers express an on-going need for support in implementing the necessary strategies and routines that effectively support students towards mastery. Participants will analyze reading/writing units of study for strengths and weakness. This session will clarify how to refine teaching so that it is more authentic and rigorous, thus, ensuring higher success and deeper understanding for all students.

Kathy has supported several schools in the launching of *Regie Routman in Residency* toolkits. Successful implementation results in significant improvements in reading and writing achievement, as well as a reduction in identification of students with learning disabilities. Through simulations and investigations of two units on the same topic, participants will self-assess their capacity to put into practice the following components which are key to successful implementation: 1) discern between units with a meaningful focus versus units with a trivial focus; 2) effectively use teacher and student strategies within each phase of the Optimal Learning Model; and 3) make scaffolding decisions based upon ongoing, formative assessment in the process of teaching.

Session Segments:

- Identify the Rigor
 - Participants will examine two units of study on the same topic that demonstrates reading-writing connections. In the investigation, participants will discover the elements that are meaningful and worthy of student time.
 - Use Strategies Effectively
 - Participants will experience a simulation of an Informational Writing Unit of Study to examine the critical student and teacher strategies within each phase of the Optimal Learning Model. Observation checklists for each phase will assist in the examination.
These checklists can be used by teachers to aid in self-reflection and professional goal setting.
 - Use Formative Assessment to Make Scaffolding Decisions
 - Participants will identify possible formative assessment strategies and tools that would effectively aid in scaffolding decision-making for the units of study examined in the workshop session.
-

Coaching in a Professional Learning Community: Supporting and Sustaining Highly Effective Literacy Instruction

-Nancy McLean

Successful coaching is a crucial element in schools in order for a culture of professional learning to take hold and thrive. In this session, participants will examine the coaching practices that result in refined literacy instruction and increased student achievement. Those practices include working within the PLC to build relationships of trust and collaboration, demonstrating and strengthening the implementation of Tier 1 Literacy instruction, and providing useful feedback that highlights strengths and encourages growth. Participants in this session will also examine the multi-faceted nature of the coaching role, which includes supporting systemic change and the school-wide vision for literacy instruction, while providing “at-the-elbow” support to individual classroom teachers. How *Regie Routman in Residence: Transforming Our Teaching* can be used as one resource to help coaches become more knowledgeable will be demonstrated.

Session components:

- * Participants will examine the role(s) of coaches in schools that have developing and/or strong PLCs by viewing videos of coaching contexts in those schools, participating in a simulation of a coaching conference, and reviewing tools/materials that support effective coaching.
Topics covered include -
 - *building relationships
 - becoming more knowledgeable as a literacy coach
 - *demonstrating and strengthening effective literacy instruction
 - *providing useful feedback
 - *supporting school-wide vision/offering ”at-the-elbow” support

- *Participants will interact about and reflect upon possible applications in their schools and in their roles.

- *Copies of materials and examples of coaching tools will be provided.

Creating a Self Sustaining School: The Journeys of Two Different Schools

-Trena Speirs

Change is the one constant in our school systems today. How can we maintain our focus on student achievement and growth, while balancing the many demands—such as CCSS, RTI, and teacher evaluation-- that are placed upon us as leaders and teachers? It can't be left to just one person, idea, or program. When individuals leave, when new requirements are added, when ideas don't come to fruition, when programs change, the true work and purpose of the school can change too. This can often leave the remaining staff feeling defeated or unclear about their work, less joyful in their teaching, and ultimately can lead to a plateau in student learning.

When there are purposeful systems and structures put into place, relationships and trust can be built amongst all staff members. Together, these lead to higher level professional development for teachers and more meaningful time spent throughout the day for everyone. The mission and vision are breathing throughout the school, reflected in the actions and words of both the children and the staff. When the pillars of a self sustaining school are in place, people and ideas, programs and initiatives

can all come and go. What will remain will be a school that can withstand the many, many outside distractions and keep their focus on learning for students and teachers!

In this session, Trena Speirs will discuss and demonstrate how she has led two schools, one that has become self-sustaining and, another, where—as new principal-- she has just begun the process.

Topics will include, but are not limited to:

- The principal's role in ongoing, professional learning communities
- Ensuring more effective reading and writing practices, schoolwide
- Building professional trust
- Developing a strong leadership and learning community
- Organizing an effective leadership team