



Session Descriptions

Subject to change. More sessions still to come.

Breakout Session I – 11:30 AM-12:20 PM

Acceleration 101: A practical guide to decisions and implementation

Audience: Middle School, Upper School, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Department Chairs, Teachers, School Counselors

Acceleration can take many forms, subject, grade and early entrance into college. Though research confirms acceleration is one of the most effective accommodations, well-meaning schools and parents often hesitate to utilize this option because of the myths surrounding it and fear of harming students. While never a decision to be taken lightly, acceleration is not only beneficial, in some cases it is lifesaving. This interactive talk will clarify common myths, address ways to identify candidate students, provide a realistic profile an acceleration candidate (she may not get straight “A”s), and provide instructions on how to create an effective transition plan.

Presenters: Cam Werley-Gonzales, Assistant Head of School | Alverno Heights Academy, and Sharon Duncan, Gifted Consultant | Gifted Identity

Inspiring Collective Creativity

Audience: Middle School, Upper School, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Department Chairs, Teachers, Communications/Marketing

“A culture of innovation means working hard to give people the right skills, processes, and tools to be creative. It involves everyone, not a single person nor a specific department” (Sir Ken Robinson in *The Pulse of Innovation*). Join Karen Pavliscak and Gretchen Warner of the Archer School for Girls as they lead an interactive examination of the dispositions, conditions, and practices that give rise to a culture of purposeful innovation in a school. This workshop will build in time to reflect on current practices, share ideas with colleagues, and develop practical tools to amplify innovative practices throughout your school culture.

Presenters: Gretchen Warner, Upper School Director, and Karen Pavliscak, Middle School Director | The Archer School for Girls

School Wellness: How to Be More Without Doing More

Audience: Early Childhood, Elementary School, Middle School, Upper School, Heads of School, Administrators, Department Chairs, Admissions/Enrollment, Communications/Marketing, Development/Alumnae Relations, Student Life

We as educators know how central wellness, mindfulness, and balance are for our students. We work diligently to instill an understanding of self-compassion in our students and encourage them to resist finding their self-worth in their external accomplishments. Effectively instilling this sense in our girls, however, requires that the adults in the community model that same reflective approach by practicing self-compassion and finding our sense of self-worth through our core truths. Join executive coach Lorri Palko and Westridge School Assistant Head of School Jemma Kennedy as they lead an exploration of how we can model wellness, balance, and self-compassion.

Presenters: Lorri Palko, Founder | Love Money Purpose LLC, and Jemma Kennedy, Assistant Head of School | Westridge School for Girls

The Strong Female Voice

Audience: Upper School, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Department Chairs, Teachers, School Counselors, Student Life

Girls' schools have long been places that help girls learn to speak out. This session focuses on tried-and-true and new ways that girls' schools help girls' cultivate their voice both in and out of the classroom as well as how we help them maintain their confidence and self-advocacy in a co-ed world. The presenters on this panel will share about specific programs at their schools as a springboard to robust discussion on the topic.

Presenters: Theresa Smith, Assistant Head of Schools, and Melanie Bauman, Director of Counseling & Health Education | The Webb Schools; and Sherrie Singer, Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Instruction, and Holly Hunnewell, English Department Chair, Feminists In Action Club Moderator | Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy

Taking the Temperature of Your School Climate

Audience: Middle School, Upper School, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Department Chairs, Admissions/Enrollment, School Counselors, Student Life

Do your students feel safe? Is your programming effective? Are student voices heard? If you're like us, you think the answers are yes...but how do you know? Understanding the power of data, and being disappointed with the surveys on the market, we began developing a "climate and wellness" survey specific to the all-girls experience. In this session, participants will discuss relevant issues and see how these issues are (or should be) reflected in the survey. More importantly, participants will receive an open invitation to join us in building a reliable, normed survey specific to all-girls schools.

Presenters: Nancy Waters, Upper School Counselor, and Jake Guadnola, Director of the Upper School for Girls | Annie Wright Schools

Teaching Resiliency through Mentors

Audience: Middle School, Upper School, Administrators, Teachers, School Counselors

The Girls Academic Leadership Academy (GALA), Los Angeles' first all-girls public school, partnered with Career Girls, an on-line platform with interviews of over 300 women, mostly women of color in STEM fields. GALA teachers use Career Girls videos within advisory periods to teach lessons that build resiliency in students. The academic counselor uses the videos as reference when leading circles and in one-on-one discussions. Parents are provided mentor guides designed by Career Girls, and dinnertime conversation guides in the weekly parent newsletter. The Principal provides support and leadership, helping to coordinate the work between teachers and Career Girls.

Presenters: Liz Hicks, Principal, and Emilie Hill, Science Department Chair | Girls Academic Leadership Academy; and Linda Calhoun, Founder/Executive Producer | Career Girls

Unleashing the Power of Affinity Groups: How Marlborough Transformed its Diversity Programming in One Year

Audience: Middle School, Upper School, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Department Chairs, Teachers, School Counselors, Student Life

With the proper support and resources, student affinity groups can empower school communities to discuss difficult topics in peer-to-peer settings. In this session, learn how Marlborough transformed its diversity programming and built buy-in among students, faculty, and staff. Participants will learn about Marlborough's three-pronged approach to Equity & Inclusion: an active adult committee that supports students and plans professional growth, increased student participation and leadership in equity & inclusion programming, and a targeted approach to community outreach that motivates students to affect social change. Using our Marlborough case study, think about how your school might transform its own diversity work.

Presenters: Regina Rosi Mitchell, Assistant Director of Middle and Upper School, Elizabeth Vitanza, World Language Department Head/Equity & Inclusion Committee Co-Chair, and Pamela Wright, Community Outreach Program Head/Equity & Inclusion Co-Chair | Marlborough School

Breakout Session II – 1:30-2:20 PM

Emotional First Responders

Audience: Elementary School, Middle School, Upper School, Heads of School/Division Heads, Administrators, Department Chairs, Teachers, Admissions/Enrollment,

Communications/Marketing, Development/Alumnae Relations, School Counselors, Student Life, Extracurricular/Co-academic Programs

Last year, in my role as school counselor, I saw a dramatic increase in the number of students who were in crisis. The students described feelings of acute anxiety, depression and even suicidality. This workshop is focused on strengthening the safety net we provide to students. You will learn:

- Empathic listening
- Validation of the student experience
- Engaged problem-solving

With these skills you will be able to provide additional layers of support for students and discern whether your student will benefit from a higher level of intervention. This will enable you to be trained "first responders".

Presenter: Judy McCleese, School Counselor | Westridge School for Girls

Gender, Power, and Consent: Helping Girls Navigate Adolescent Sexuality

Audience: Middle School, Upper School, Administrators, Department Chairs, Teachers, School Counselors, Student Life

School-based sexuality education programs are typically the sole resource of information for adolescents. Often due to scheduling constraints programs provide information on pregnancy/STI prevention. Refocusing sexuality education to discussions on implications of gender, the role of power, and understanding positive consent better serves adolescents. Specifically, implementing a rights-based curriculum where students learn to understand themselves as sexual beings in a positive environment is crucial to eliminate shame and fear. This session will provide information on the framework and implementation of a rights-based sexuality education curriculum, the importance of this framework to adolescent girls specifically, and ways to involve parents in the school's program.

Presenter: Tiffani Kocsis, High School Assistant Principal | Campbell Hall

LA Girls' Schools #LeanInTogether

Audience: Elementary School, Middle School, Upper School, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Communications/Marketing, Development/Alumnae Relations, Student Life

Imagine a network of schools where support is key, and you have LA Girls' Schools #LeanInTogether. This partnership among Westridge, Archer, Marlborough, and Marymount High School follows the lead of Sheryl Sandberg and LeanIn.org's #LEANINTOGETHER initiative, which works to strengthen female support systems. Its goal is to inspire our students to actively cultivate the relationships and systems of support that empower girls to dream big and achieve

their goals. Attend a panel session where you will hear from representatives from the four schools about their lean in work together.

Presenters: Liz McGregor, Head of School | Westridge School for Girls, and Others TBD

Mini-Memoir: Finding Your Voice Through Story

Audience: Middle School, Department Chairs, Teachers, Extracurricular/Co-academic Programs, Global Programs Coordinator

This session explores the power of memoir to cultivate strong writers and communities of learning and connection. Participants will explore a memoir writing unit that helps Grade 8-12 students find their voice through storytelling and writing that will serve their personal essay writing for university entrance. Participants will write their own mini-memoirs, choosing stations inspired by Nancy Atwell's insights, such as "Beginnings and Endings," "So What?," or "Can You Hear it, See it, Feel it?," to strengthen their writing. Educators will leave with concrete ideas for the classroom and for enhancing experiential learning across the school.

Presenters: Sara Sjerven, English Department Head, and Kara McDonald, Global Programs Coordinator | York House School

Re-Inventing Advisory: Creating Meaningful Relationships Between Adults and Students in Small Group Advisories

Audience: Upper School, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Department Chairs, Teachers, School Counselors, Student Life

The intent of advisory at Castilleja School is to create small communities that insure each student feel valued and have a caring adult who knows her well. What does that mean to "know a student well" and how is that communicated to each student? The 11th Grade Dean and the Director of Counseling and Student Wellness developed a curriculum to provide advisors strategies and interpersonal skills that promote resilience in each student. In this session we will share the challenges and successes of this advisory training program and provide an experiential "lesson" for adults in creating authentic relationships with students.

Presenters: Terese Brennan-Marquez, Director of Counseling and Student Wellness, and Helen Shanks, 11th Grade Dean | Castilleja School

Today's Girls and Tomorrow's Leaders: Preparing Students for their Profession Now by Connecting Alumnae and Women in Leadership to Current Students

Audience: Upper School, Heads of School, Administrators, Teachers, School Counselors, Development/Alumnae Relations

Mentorship is all abuzz in today's world, especially as it relates to helping provide young women with access to the most sought after careers. Come learn how the Academy of Our Lady of Peace reimaged career day into what is now a community wide San Diego event called the

Women's Symposium. Attracting the most nationally recognized and successful women in business, politics, entrepreneurship, STEM, and more, the school is being heralded as a place of synergy for the next generation. This event garners top donors, reconnects alumnae, attracts powerful speakers, leverages prominence as an epicenter of women's thought leadership, and supports Architects of Change at School, a partnership with Shriver Media.

Presenters: Lauren Lek, Head of School, and Jessica Hooper, Assistant Head of School | Academy of Our Lady of Peace

Voices for Justice: The SNJM Youth Forum

Audience: Upper School, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Student Life

The SNJM Youth Forum is a continuing program among our network of SNJM schools. The Forum gathers student representatives from each of our member schools around the world. Students prepare by researching key justice issues of water availability, human trafficking, and migrant/ immigration issues from the point of view of their particular geographic location. This program gives students an immersion experience in leadership, collaboration, service, and social justice that they then share with the rest of the student body in their home schools. This presentation will share our transformative experience and provide ideas to model in giving students a voice for justice.

Presenters: Margaret Averill, Arts Department Chair, and Sophie Reyes, Current Student | Ramona Convent Secondary School

Breakout Session III – 2:35-3:25 PM

Courage, Compassion and Creativity: Beginning a Journey of Growing Mindfulness in the School Community

Audience: Early Childhood, Elementary School, Middle School, Upper School, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Department Chairs, Teachers, Admissions/Enrollment, Communications/Marketing, Development/Alumnae Relations, School Counselors, Student Life

Scientific research continues to offer us substantial findings indicating that regularly engaging in mindfulness practices can have a powerful impact in the classroom, reducing stress and anxiety, developing focus and attention, and growing a compassionate and supportive community. Join a group of teachers at Westridge School as they share the experience of introducing secular mindfulness to their classrooms and their teaching lives. We'll bring some of the current research and lots of resources, and we invite you to join in conversation and a little restorative quiet.

Presenters: Christine Kiphart, English/Human Development/Mindfulness, Madeline Eaton, Lower School Strings, Valerie Trimarchi, Lower School Art, and Regina Wei, Middle/Upper School Mandarin Chinese and Yoga | Westridge School for Girls

Embracing Controversy: How a School Newspaper Engaged the Student Body and Administration

Audience: Middle School, Upper School, Heads of School, Administrators, Department Chairs, Teachers, Extracurricular/Co-academic Programs

Marlborough's school newspaper, the Ultraviolet, expanded its opinion and commentary sections by allowing students to write about controversial topics and started including more letters to the editor and op eds in its print edition. This resulted in greater readership, increased enrollment in journalism classes, and increased presence of the school's journalism program; but more importantly, some previously quiet voices, became louder, debate was sparked around campus and some policies changed.

Presenter: Jena English, Student Publications Advisor | Marlborough School

Formation of Self: A Team Approach to Creating a Four-year Personal Growth and Development Seminar

Audience: Upper School, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Teachers, School Counselors, Student Life

The School Nurse, Counselor, Learning Specialist, and College Counselors will describe their collaborative process in developing this new four-year seminar, Formation of Self. "FOS" focuses on learning, physical health, mental health and college counseling. The power of many voices resonates throughout the program: teachers, students, and administrators helped cultivate relevant themes. The team spent the summer envisioning the design and developing curriculum. Various topics, a scope and sequence, and lesson plans will be shared. The ultimate goal of this seminar is to create a safe space where a girl can explore what it means to be her true self.

Presenters: Ann Bussard, M.A., ATR-BC, LMFT, ET, Learning Specialist, Cathy Cota, RN, PHN, School Nurse, Cristina Perez, LCSW, School Counselor, and Samantha Pieper, M.Ed., Associate Director of College Counseling | Mayfield Senior School

Girls Finding Their Voices: Assault Prevention and Assertiveness Training for Middle and High School Students

Audience: Middle School, Upper School, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Teachers, School Counselors, Student Life, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Teachers, School Counselors, Student Life

Empowering girls with personal safety, harassment prevention, and assertiveness training results in better awareness of personal boundaries, clear communication about those

boundaries, and fewer incidents of harassment and assault for participants. Learn how to choose a contractor; how to determine whether the proposed curriculum is age-appropriate; how best to integrate such programming into your school's existing curriculum; and what type of programming leads to a campus of confident students with effective communication skills. This workshop is facilitated by a interpersonal communication and self-defense expert with 25 years of experience training private school students.

Presenters: Lauren Roselle, Owner, and Meredith Gold, Lead Instructor | Esteem; and Gigi Bizar, Middle School History & Human Development | Westridge School for Girls

Going Beyond Tolerance: Forming Voices of Religious Identity on Campus

Audience: Middle School, Upper School, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Department Chairs, Teachers, Admissions/Enrollment, Communications/Marketing, School Counselors, Student Life

While educators today speak fluently regarding diversity and inclusion and the “big eight”, many are less prepared to foster and engage in true interfaith dialogue with students. This session will teach the difference between terms like interfaith and interreligious, ecumenical dialogue and religious pluralism. The session will use case studies to illustrate teaching tolerance and how to create a non-threatening and trust-based environment so students can feel free to express their most cherished beliefs. Participants will receive guidelines for conducting interreligious dialogue and a better understanding of how religious diversity is experienced as a major factor in identity.

Presenters: Jacqueline Landry, Head of School, and Rebecca Bostic, Director of Spiritual Life | Marymount High School

The Many Voices of Crisis: Students, Parents, and You

Audience: Elementary School, Middle School, Upper School, Heads of School, Teachers, School Counselors, CFOs/Business Managers

The impact of a crisis varies based on the events as they unfold, and the ability to scale one's response to match the incident and those affected is critical to having the organization be able to recover and return to their work and central mission. Through our presentation, we will identify the timeline of a disaster and discuss methods of preparation, response, and recovery that can be implemented with a clear timeline and intentional steps. Bringing attention to the community and potential impact will enable each attendee to envision their campus more closely as we move through each stage of an event and bring forward first-hand experiences amongst each member of a school community.

Presenters: Chris Joffe, Chief Executive Officer, and Zach Menser, Director of Business Development | Joffe Emergency Services; and Janet Lyon, Director of Operations | The Archer School for Girls

Transforming Intercultural Celebrations: Moving from Food, Flags, and Festivals to Collaborative Deep-Dive

Audience: Middle School, Upper School, Heads of School, Division Heads, Administrators, Department Chairs, Teachers, School Counselors, Student Life

Seeking to better embody its school mission and IB imperative, Annie Wright Upper School for Girls transformed its former International Week – well-intended but poorly attended – into a powerful symposium mobilizing students, faculty, and community experts in a meaningful, student-driven inquiry process. Workshop participants will hear AWS successes and struggles, enjoy student testimonials, peruse past symposium themes and offerings, explore their own adaptations, and depart with a toolkit for further planning and design. Explore how your school, too, can craft a transformative experience that shares and celebrates culture, encourages complex questions and diverging voices, fosters community and intercultural understanding, and empowers students to be explorers, collaborators, and facilitators!

Presenters: Emily Stokes, Spanish Teacher and 9th Grade Dean, and Annie Green, Upper School for Girls Dean of Students/Theatre Teacher | Annie Wright Schools Upper School for Girls