



St. Johns County School District
Annual Professional Learning Conference

September 25, 2026

Secondary ELA, IR, and ILCs

Location: Toco Creek High School



Welcome and Opening Keynote

The Write Life: Finding the Joy in Teaching and Writing

Dr. Rebecca Harper, Author and Professor of Language and Literacy in the College of Education and Human Development at Augusta University

8:00-11:00

Location: Auditorium

Lunch

11:00-12:30

Choose Your Own Adventure

12:30-3:30

Various Locations

Track 1: *myPerspectives* Training

12:30-3:30

Full afternoon;

Open to all English 1-4 teachers, VE Co-Teachers, and ILCs

Track 2: Choice Sessions

Session 1: 12:30-1:25

Session 2: 1:30-2:25

Session 3: 2:35-3:30

Audience: All

**see back*

Track 1: *myPerspectives* Training

Description	Audience and Room	RSVP
Hey English 1-4 Teachers and ILCs! Let's explore myPerspectives Florida and its interactive program components. We'll dig into the program goals, design, routines, and print and digital resources. Through interactive experiences, you will practice using program resources and planning tools, which will help you better use the amazing suite of resources available to you through our myPerspectives adoption.	Audience: High School: English 1-4 Teachers, VE, ILCs, Admin Location Media Center	Please RSVP to indicate your intent to attend: RSVP to Track 1: myPerspectives Program Launch – Fill out form

Track 2: Choice Sessions

Session and Audience	Audience	Location	Presenter
Choice Session 1: 12:30-1:25			
Curiosity in Action: Creating Powerful A-Ha Moments in the Classroom	All	4-011	Della Thompson, ELA Teacher at PBMS
Finding Your People: Cross-Curricular Collaboration Through PBL	Geared toward Electives/Islands, but all (6-12) are welcome	4-008	Holly Bourquin, English Elective Teacher at NHS
From Breaking Barriers to Breakthroughs: Differentiating for Students with Autism	All	4-049	SJCSD ESE Specialist
Read 180 CODE: Getting Started Q & A	IR 6-12, ILCs, Admins	4-045	HMH Trainer
Rigorous by Design: AP Strategies for Standard Classes	9-12, VE, ILCs, Admins	4-009	Tiffany Kemp & Kathryn Clark, ILC and English Dept. Chair at BTHS (respectively)
Sprints & Marathons: From Quick Writes to Multi-Part Compositions in All Genres	All	2-017	Dr. Rebecca Harper, Author and Professor of Language and Literacy in the College of Education and Human Development at Augusta University
StudySync 101	ELA 6-8, VE, ILCs, Admins	4-046	Kim Reed, McGraw-Hill
Choice Session 2: 1:30-2:25			
Combining Voices: Merging Literacy & the Arts	All	2-017	Dr. Rebecca Harper, Author and Professor of Language and Literacy in the College of Education and Human Development at Augusta University
From Breaking Barriers to Breakthroughs: Differentiating for Students with Autism	All	4-049	SJCSD ESE Specialist
If You Can Write It, You Can Read It: Cracking the Expository Code	All	4-011	Katie Ludwig and Della Thompson, ELA Teachers at PBMS
Read 180: Getting Started Q & A	IR 6-12, ILCs, Admins	4-045	Read 180 Trainer from HMH
Rhetorical Rules: Shifting Grammar from Correction to Craft	All	4-041	Cheryl Goodman, English Dept. Chair at NHS
Rigorous by Design: AP Strategies for Standard Classes	9-12 Classroom, VE, ILCs, Admins	4-009	Tiffany Kemp & Kathryn Clark, ILC and English Dept. Chair at BTHS (respectively)
StudySync Advanced	ELA 6-8, VE, ILCs, Admin	4-046	Kim Reed, McGraw-Hill
Choice Session 3: 2:35-3:30			
Engaging Students in Friendly Controversy	All	4-041	Sandra Strauss, AP English teacher at NHS
From Breaking Barriers to Breakthroughs: Differentiating for Students with Autism	All	4-049	SJCSD ESE Specialist
Pardon the Interruption: Using ESPN to Teach Writing	All	2-017	Dr. Rebecca Harper, Author and Professor of Language and Literacy in the College of Education and Human Development at Augusta University
Read 180: Getting Started Q & A	IR 6-12, ILCs, Admins	4-045	Read 180 Trainer from HMH
Spinning Plates: Differentiating Tier 2 Instruction	All	4-011	Elise Falstreux & Katie Ludwig, ELA Teachers at PBMS
StudySync Advanced	ELA 6-8, VE, ILCs, Admin	4-046	Kim Reed, McGraw-Hill
The Adolescent Brain: Syntax and Questioning	All	4-008	Kylie Benetsky, Secondary ILC

Track 2: Choice Sessions

Session 1: 12:30-1:25		
Course Title and Presenter	Course Description	Audience and Room Number
Curiosity in Action: Creating Powerful A-Ha Moments in the Classroom <i>Della Thompson, ELA Teacher at PBMS</i>	This session equips teachers with practical strategies for using discovery learning to increase student engagement, critical thinking, and deeper comprehension. Through hands-on lessons, participants will explore how carefully sequenced learning experiences can lead students to uncover meaning, analyze author's craft, and make evidence-based connections independently. Teachers will leave with adaptable instructional techniques that promote inquiry, discussion, and meaningful "a-ha" moments across a variety of texts and grade levels.	Audience: All Room: 4-011
Finding Your People: Cross-Curricular Collaboration Through PBL <i>Holly Bourquin, English Elective Teacher at NHS</i>	Are you an island at your school (no one to PLC with) or an academic elective teacher? This session is for you! We'll explore how Project Based Learning (PBL) creates opportunities to collaborate with colleagues outside your subject area, turning PBL into a PLC! Along the way, we'll dig into a question a lot of island teachers ask: Can PBL generate data that's genuinely comparable to a more traditional classroom? You'll leave with a practical framework for aligning project-based assessment to formative and summative expectations, whether you're working solo or alongside a mismatched team. We'll also explore tech tools already in your arsenal like Adobe Express and MagicSchool and how these can help streamline PBL. Don't have access to tech? No worries! We will also talk about strategies for running strong PBL units when tech access isn't a given.	Audience: Geared toward Electives/Islands, but all (6-12) are welcome Room: 4-008

From Breaking Barriers to Breakthroughs: Differentiating for Students with Autism <i>SJCSD ESE Specialist</i>	Students with autism often face unique challenges that can impact their engagement, learning, and independence in the classroom. This interactive session will explore practical strategies for identifying and removing barriers to learning through purposeful differentiation and effective scaffolding. Participants will learn how to support communication and executive functioning, increase student participation, and promote meaningful access to grade-level content. Through real-world examples, educators will leave with actionable tools to create more inclusive learning environments and foster greater success for students with autism.	Audience: All Room: 4-049
Read 180 CODE: Getting Started Q & A <i>HMH Trainer</i>	This session is for those IR teachers and ILCs who support the Read 180 CODE program. The session will be facilitated by a Read 180 representative from HMH. This session will be repeated.	Audience: IR 6-12, ILCs, Admins Room: 4-045
Rigorous by Design: AP Strategies for Standard Classes <i>Tiffany Kemp & Kathryn Clark, ILC and English Dept. Chair at BTHS (Respectively)</i>	AP classrooms are often full of the kinds of thinking, discussion, reading, and writing moves we want for all students, but those strategies do not have to stay in AP. In this session, teachers will explore adaptable AP-inspired practices that increase rigor in standard-level classrooms through small, intentional instructional shifts. Rather than adding more work, these strategies focus on increasing the quality of student thinking through purposeful questioning, annotation, writing scaffolds, discussion protocols, and fast, high-impact literacy moves. Participants will walk away with practical tools they can implement immediately to create more engaging, academically challenging classrooms that remain accessible and supportive for all learners. <i>*This session will be repeated.</i>	Audience: 9-12, VE, ILCs, Admins Room: 4-009

Sprints & Marathons: From Quick Writes to Multi-Part Compositions in All Genres <i>Dr. Rebecca Harper, Author and Professor of Language and Literacy in the College of Education and Human Development at Augusta University</i>	Part of becoming a skilled writer involves mastery of multiple genres and composition of writing products that vary in structure and content. For many, developing a specific strategy based on the demands of the writing task is difficult and some students attempt to attack multiple writing tasks in the same manner. However, depending on the topic, genre, and composition complexity and length, the way in which writers approach different writing tasks varies. In this session, we will focus on the use of quick writes (sprints) to build student confidence and experience before progressing to extended compositions (marathons) that require stamina.	Audience: All Room: 2-017
StudySync 101 <i>Kim Reed, McGraw-Hill</i>	Are you new to StudySync? Then this session is for you! This session is for teachers who are getting started with StudySync.	Audience: ELA 6-8, VE, ILCs, Admins Room: 4-046
Session 2: 1:30-2:25		
Course Title and Presenter	Course Description	Audience and Room Number
Combining Voices: Merging Literacy & the Arts <i>Dr. Rebecca Harper, Author and Professor of Language and Literacy in the College of Education and Human Development at Augusta University</i>	Connecting the arts with literacy can offer students unique opportunities to critique, investigate, and create, all while refining crucial reading and writing skills. In this session, we will focus on ways in which art, such as sculpture, painting, illustration, and graphic design, can be used as a catalyst for writing and how creative expression takes on multiple forms beyond the written word.	Audience: All Room: 2-017

From Breaking Barriers to Breakthroughs: Differentiating for Students with Autism <i>SJCSD ESE Specialist</i>	Students with autism often face unique challenges that can impact their engagement, learning, and independence in the classroom. This interactive session will explore practical strategies for identifying and removing barriers to learning through purposeful differentiation and effective scaffolding. Participants will learn how to support communication and executive functioning, increase student participation, and promote meaningful access to grade-level content. Through real-world examples, educators will leave with actionable tools to create more inclusive learning environments and foster greater success for students with autism.	Audience: All Room: 4-049
If You Can Write It, You Can Read It: Cracking the Expository Code <i>Katie Ludwig and Della Thompson, ELA Teachers at PBMS</i>	Flip the script on literacy instruction by teaching students to think like authors. In this interactive session, you'll learn how to leverage expository writing architecture—text structure, transitional logic, POV, and author's purpose—to instantly boost informational text comprehension across all reading levels. Stop teaching reading and writing in silos. Join us to unlock the dual-power of structural literacy!	Audience: All Room: 4-011
Read 180: Getting Started Q & A <i>HMH Trainer</i>	This is an informal session designed for you, by you. You will have the opportunity to speak with a representative from Read 180 to ask questions that support your instruction now that you've been using the Read 180 system for a few weeks. <i>*This session will be repeated.</i>	Audience: IR 6-12, ILCs, Admins Room: 4-045
Rhetorical Rules: Shifting Grammar from Correction to Craft <i>Cheryl Goodman, English Department Chair at NHS</i>	What if grammar wasn't about right and wrong, but about rhetorical choice? This session shows teachers how to shift grammar instruction from error-hunting to craft-building, giving students the tools to write with intention.	Audience: All Room: 4-041

Rigorous by Design: AP Strategies for Standard Classes <i>Tiffany Kemp & Kathryn Clark, ILC and English Dept. Chair at BTHS</i>	AP classrooms are often full of the kinds of thinking, discussion, reading, and writing moves we want for all students, but those strategies do not have to stay in AP. In this session, teachers will explore adaptable AP-inspired practices that increase rigor in standard-level classrooms through small, intentional instructional shifts. Rather than adding more work, these strategies focus on increasing the quality of student thinking through purposeful questioning, annotation, writing scaffolds, discussion protocols, and fast, high-impact literacy moves. Participants will walk away with practical tools they can implement immediately to create more engaging, academically challenging classrooms that remain accessible and supportive for all learners. <i>*This is a repeated session.</i>	Audience: 9-12, VE, ILCs, Admins Room: 4-009
StudySync Advanced <i>Kim Reed, McGraw-Hill Trainer</i>	This session is for teachers who are comfortable with the StudySync platform and would like ways to work with this resource more effectively. <i>*This session will be repeated.</i>	Audience: ELA 6-8, VE, ILCs, Admin Room: 4-046

Session 3: 2:35-3:30

Course Title and Presenter	Course Description	Audience and Room Number
Engaging Students in Friendly Controversy <i>Sandra Strauss, AP English teacher at NHS</i>	In this hands-on workshop, led by a skilled AP trainer and in-house expert, teachers will take away activities (kinesthetic, spoken, and written) which they can utilize in their classrooms to engage students in civil discourse or "friendly controversy." This workshop will focus on engagement along with critical thinking and is geared towards the topics of current events, controversial issues, argumentation, rhetoric, and civics. All grade level teachers are welcome, and activities can be adapted to use within other subject areas.	Audience: All Room: 4-041
From Breaking Barriers to Breakthroughs: Differentiating for Students with Autism <i>SJCSD ESE Specialist</i>	Students with autism often face unique challenges that can impact their engagement, learning, and independence in the classroom. This interactive session will explore practical strategies for identifying and removing barriers to learning through purposeful differentiation and effective scaffolding. Participants will learn how to support communication and executive functioning, increase student participation, and promote meaningful access to grade-level content. Through real-world examples, educators will leave with actionable tools to create more inclusive learning environments and foster greater success for students with autism.	Audience: All Room: 4-049
Pardon the Interruption: Using ESPN to Teach Writing <i>Dr. Rebecca Harper, Author and Professor of Language and Literacy in the College of Education and Human Development at Augusta University</i>	Motivating students to write is often difficult for many teachers, but what if teachers and students knew that ESPN could be used to teach writing? From using the Top Ten Plays to teach transition sentences to sports programming that teaches argumentative writing, this session will provide participants with a unique and novel way to teach writing using sports and athletics for engagement.	Audience: All Room: 2-017

Read 180: Getting Started Q & A <i>HMH Trainer</i>	This is an informal session designed for you, by you. You will have the opportunity to speak with a representative from Read 180 to ask questions that support your instruction now that you've been using the Read 180 system for a few weeks. <i>*This is a repeated session.</i>	Audience: IR 6-12, ILCs, Admins Room: 4-045
Spinning Plates: Differentiating Tier 2 Instruction <i>Elise Falstreux & Katie Ludwig, ELA Teachers at PBMS</i>	Imagine walking into your classroom with 25 students. Of those students, 15 require accommodations, five have Code B designations, three are receiving Tier 3 interventions, and only two are reading on grade level. Faced with these diverse learning needs, where do you begin? Today's classrooms require teachers to balance multiple responsibilities while ensuring every student receives the support they need to succeed. In this session, we will explore practical and effective Tier 2 strategies that can help you meet students' needs, manage instructional demands, and confidently navigate the realities of today's classroom.	Audience: All Room: Room: 4-011
StudySync Advanced <i>Kim Reed, McGraw-Hill Trainer</i>	This session is for teachers who are comfortable with the StudySync platform and would like ways to work with this resource more effectively. <i>*This is a repeated session.</i>	Audience: ELA 6-8, VE, ILCs, Admin Room: Room: 4-046
The Adolescent Brain: Syntax and Questioning <i>Kylie Benetsky, Secondary ILC</i>	Ever wonder why complex sentences leave middle and high schoolers staring blankly, or why their questioning skills stop at the surface level? The secret isn't in their focus—it's in their neurobiology. Unlock the inner workings of the teenage mind to discover how targeted syntax instruction and strategic inquiry actually reframe how adolescents process language, reason through texts, and conquer high-stakes assessments.	Audience: All Room: 4-008