AISCA Teachers' Convention   CALGARY 2026

Better, Together:
Teaching in the Age of AI

Best Western Premier Calgary Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre

1316-33 Street NE, Calgary, Alberta

Keynote

Mairéad Pratschke

The Consortium

AISCA
Association of Independent Schools & Colleges in Alberta

FEBRUARY 13, 2026

AISCA Teachers' Convention 2026 AGENDA - Calgary

8:00-9:00	Registration and Trade Show Opens
9:00-9:15	Opening & Welcome
9:15-10:30	KEYNOTE: **The New Hybrid: Teaching Practice as Design for the Age of AI - Dr. Mairéad Pratschke**
10:30-11:00	Wellness Break
11:00-12:00	Concurrent Sessions A
12:00-1:15	Lunch Break
1:15-2:15	Concurrent Sessions B
2:15-2:30	Transition
2:30-3:30	Concurrent Sessions C

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM — Concurrent Breakout Sessions A

Regulation Detectives: Understanding Behaviour as Communication through Co-Regulation & Accessible Language Supports Elementary **Jade Lewis Ocean Matyjanka**	**More Than Just Student Growth: The Educator Side of SEL** All levels, Leaders **Rebecca Moschopedis Breanne Spence**	**Read to Learn: Evidence-Based Strategies for High School Students** High School **Kim McLean**	**Designing Cross Curricular Projects for Diverse Learners** Elementary & Middle **Karla Powell Richelle Christie Shelby Chohan Lauren Marshall**	**Same Classroom, Different Needs: How to Adapt Without Holding Students Back** All levels **Curtis Slater**	**Executive Function in the Age of AI** Middle & High **Sophie Bresciani**	**Utilizing an LLM for Report Card Comments** All levels **Sarah Chernoff**	**Fluency Meets Confidence: Using Public Speaking to Build Real-World Literacy in Middle School** Elementary & Middle **Carla Cameron**

1:15 PM – 2:15 PM — Concurrent Breakout Sessions B

Boosting Brains and Hearts: The Power of Social Emotional Learning in the Classroom Elementary **Colleen Drybrough**	**Learning Without Walls: Bringing Education to Life Outdoors** All levels **Suzy Potts**	**From Frustration to Collaboration: Leading Faculty Teams with Purpose and Impact** All levels, Leaders **Natasha Bathgate**	**AI for Assistive Learning** All levels **Charity Helman**	**Reading and Writing for High School Students: A Strategic Approach** Middle & High **Karri Johnson Tienneke Calder**	**Practical Strategies That Work for Neurodiverse and Neurotypical Learners** Elementary **Yolande Daley Lauren Schiwy**	**Communication Complexity in the Classroom: Where Do I Start?** Elementary, ECS **Niah Colburn Barrie Gardner**	**Building Thinking Classrooms in the Humanities** Middle & High **Sophie Bresciani**

2:30 PM – 3:30 PM — Concurrent Breakout Sessions C

Foundational Relationship Building: The Power of the Class Circle Meeting All levels **Demetra Mylonas Maureen Kelly-Gibson**	**From Fear to Freedom: Embracing Risky Play in Schools** All levels **Suzy Potts**	**Beyond Copy-Paste: Using AI for Deep, Meaningful Lesson Design** All levels **Daniel Weeks**	**Making Social Studies Come Alive: Engaging Projects that Inspire Curiosity and Connection** Middle **Gurpreet Rangi**	**Supporting EAL Learners in the Classroom** Elementary **Rachel Marsden**	**From Chaos to Clarity: Streamlining School Systems with Google Tools** Administrators **Holly Kay**	**Trauma Engaged Classroom: 6 TIPS for Successful Interactions** Elementary, Early Intervention **Carrie Edwards Patricia Cardillo**	**Universal AAC Classroom Supports** All levels **Megan Angerman Sara Wilhelm**

KEYNOTE: Dr. Mairéad Pratschke

The New Hybrid: Teaching Practice as Design for the Age of AI

Research shows that students around the world have integrated generative AI into learning. From homework to brainstorming, they are using AI as a partner for learning and support. But while students have forged ahead, they have done so without formal guidance, leaving them vulnerable to over-reliance and other forms of unintentional misuse that can undermine critical thinking and deep learning.

AI is now ubiquitous, and education is on the front line of this shift. But how can we ensure that AI strengthens learning rather than replacing it? In this keynote, Mairéad will discuss the new hybrid, a new human-AI partnership model defined by collaboration with AI but aligned to the values of education, and lay out a pathway for educators to rethink their teaching practices so that students continue to learn deeply while using AI.

Jade Lewis & Ocean Matyjanka

Regulation Detectives: Understanding Behaviour as Communication through Co-Regulation and Accessible Language Supports

Elementary

When students communicate through behavior—whether withdrawal, refusal, yelling, or running—it is not "misbehavior," but communication.

Participants will learn how to get curious instead of reactive, use minimal and attuned language during dysregulation, and provide co-regulation through presence, pacing, and shared regulation strategies. We will explore how to use both low-tech communication supports (coreboards, visuals, flipbooks) and high-tech AAC devices to create communication access and model communication. Through an interactive "Regulation Detective" problem-solving game, participants will practice analyzing behavior clues, forming communication hypotheses, and selecting supportive responses that emphasize connection, safety, and understanding.

Rebecca Moschopedis & Breanne Spence

More Than Just Student Growth: The Educator Side of SEL

All levels

As many of us in the education field are aware, there are many benefits to implementing social emotional learning (SEL) programs in classrooms for students. What is often overlooked, is how implementing SEL programs can also support teachers wellbeing and mental health too.

Gain a broader understanding of the importance of SEL curriculums and their overall impact. Explore the benefits of implementing SEL programs, common barriers, and practical strategies for overcoming them. Learn how investing in SEL programs strengthens student outcomes and builds resilient, empowered educators. Perfect for teachers, leaders and support staff!

Kim McLean

Read to Learn: Evidence-Based Strategies for High School Students

High school teachers are tasked with delivering dense, subject-specific curriculum content—often within tight timelines that leave little room for explicit reading instruction. Yet, many students enter high school struggling with independent reading proficiency.
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify key challenges that high school students with reading difficulties face in content-area learning.

- Implement evidence-based strategies to support decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension.

- Develop practical classroom approaches that promote independent reading and deeper understanding.

Karla Powell, Richelle Christie, Shelby Chohan & Lauren Marshall

Designing Cross Curricular Projects for Diverse Learners

Elementary & Middle School

In this session, presenters will share how cross-curricular projects can be designed to meet the learning needs of students with and without learning disabilities. Participants will explore strategies for long-range planning and scaffolding that support student engagement and success. The session will highlight ways to foster creativity and develop critical thinking skills through hands-on, integrated learning experiences.

Sarah Chernoff

Utilizing an LLM for Report Card Comments

All levels

A session on how to maximize and safely/ethically utilize an LLM AI to help you with your report card comments. I can show teachers and administrators how to use AI to help draft, refine, and edit report card comments while maintaining one's own language, style, and tone. We will also have a discussion of ethics, privacy, and confidentiality, as well as how to make sure one is not breaching any student/family privacy while using AI for report card comments.

Curtis Slater

Same Classroom, Different Needs: How to Adapt Without Holding Students Back

All levels

Every classroom includes a wide range of learners with unique strengths, challenges, and ways of engaging in the world. Effective inclusion isn't about doing more for some students, it's about making thoughtful instructional decisions that allow everyone to learn, participate, and grow.

In this session, we'll unpack three key support strategies, accommodation, modification, and personalization, and explore how each can open doors to belonging and meaningful learning. We'll also examine the potential pitfalls, including how well-intended changes can sometimes reduce challenge, limit independence, or unintentionally hold students back.

Sophie Bresciani

Executive Function in the Age of AI

Middle & High

Students with ADHD, autism, or specific learning disorders often struggle with planning, organization, and self-regulation, skills that AI can either erode or empower, depending on how we use it. This session explores how educators can intentionally leverage AI tools to scaffold executive function rather than replace it. Participants will learn classroom-tested strategies that build metacognition, time management, and working memory through guided reflection, digital organization, and low-stakes experimentation. By positioning AI as a thinking partner, educators can help students strengthen independence, confidence, and authentic learning in the modern classroom.

Carla Cameron

Fluency Meets Confidence: Using Public Speaking to Build Real-World Literacy in Middle School

Elementary & Middle School

In this session, participants will explore how FUSE (Fluency & Understanding through Student Engagement) integrates evidence-based fluency strategies—like repeated and choral reading—with motivational frameworks from Dweck and Guthrie to promote autonomy and engagement.

Attendees will leave with practical tools to implement systematic, student-centered fluency instruction that aligns with the Science of Reading and supports diverse learners, including those with dyslexia and other reading differences.

Colleen Drybrough

Boosting Brains and Hearts: The Power of Social Emotional Learning in the Classroom

Elementary

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) transforms classrooms by strengthening emotional regulation, connection, and cognition. This session explores current research on SEL and its powerful impact on emotional well-being, behaviour, and academic growth. Discover practical, evidence-informed strategies to help students build emotional awareness, resilience, and positive relationships. Through hands-on examples and ready-to-use routines, you'll learn how to seamlessly integrate SEL into any subject area. Leave with tools to create a supportive, connected learning environment where every student can thrive—because when we nurture hearts, we strengthen minds.

Suzy Potts

Learning Without Walls: Bringing Education to Life Outdoors

All levels

Participants will discover practical strategies for weaving outdoor experiences into any subject area, from language arts and science to math and the arts. We'll examine the core elements of effective outdoor learning, explore how to adapt activities for different age groups and settings, and discuss ways to assess learning outcomes beyond traditional measures.

The session will also focus on building parent support for outdoor learning initiatives — helping families understand the academic, emotional, and social benefits of taking learning outside.

Natasha Bathgate

From Frustration to Collaboration: Leading Faculty Teams with Purpose and Impact

All levels, Leaders

Do your PLC or department meetings sometimes go sideways? Do you ever feel like you're pushing uphill to get your team engaged or onboard with change? You're not alone and it doesn't have to be that way!

This session is designed for faculty team leaders; PLC coordinators, department heads, and anyone guiding teacher teams who want to strengthen collaboration and lead with greater confidence and connection.

Together, we'll explore what it takes to move from frustration to flow. Through interactive discussion and practical tools, you will:

- Clarify how you want to be known as a leader.
- Create a clear picture of how you want your team to function.
- Identify the key factors that build effective, collaborative teams.
- Learn and share strategies for running purposeful, productive meetings.
- Discuss common (and often tricky!) team scenarios, and how to respond effectively.

You'll leave with concrete strategies and renewed energy to help your team thrive, even when challenges arise.

Charity Helman

AI for Assistive Learning

All levels

Unlock the game-changing potential of the AI tools you already have! This dynamic, demo-focused session reveals how built-in Artificial Intelligence is revolutionizing accessibility. You will learn about how to leverage AI tools such as Magicschool, Google's Notebook LM, and SnorkL into powerful, non-judgmental learning assistants, empowering every student to level up their independence and academic success.

Karri Johnson & Tienneke Calder

Reading and Writing for High School Students: A Strategic Approach

Middle & High School

This session will equip educators with practical strategies to simultaneously enhance high school students' reading comprehension and writing sophistication. Participants will explore vocabulary-building techniques rooted in morphology and etymology to strengthen language development, comprehension, and written expression, including spelling. The session will also highlight research-based methods to improve text accessibility and deepen students' insight and perspective. Finally, targeted strategies will be shared to help students move beyond summarization toward more analytical and interpretive writing.

Yolande Daley & Lauren Schiwy

Practical Strategies That Work for Neurodiverse and Neurotypical Learners

Elementary

Predictable structure is essential for reducing anxiety and fostering success in diverse classrooms. In this session, participants will explore three practical strategies that support all learners. We'll examine ways to simplify daily routines and expectations to enhance focus, promote independence, and create calm, learning environments. Teachers will discover proactive tools and sensory-based strategies that help all students self-regulate and remain engaged throughout the day. Participants will leave with ready-to-use examples they can implement immediately within their classrooms.

Niah Colburn & Barrie Gardner

Communication Complexity in the Classroom: Where Do I Start?

Elementary, ECS

In this session, two Speech-Language Pathologists will explore the wide range of communication profiles seen in today's classrooms including students who are English Language Learners, those with complex communication needs (e.g., non-speaking or minimally verbal students, expressive and receptive language delays, articulation or fluency differences, and neurodiverse communication styles), as well as students with hearing loss. Perfect for teachers, EA's and specialist support staff.

Sophie Bresciani

Building Thinking Classrooms in the Humanities

Middle & High School

How can humanities classrooms move beyond memorization to foster deep, critical thinking? This session explores strategies for designing lessons that actively engage students in inquiry, discussion, and problem-solving. Participants will learn practical approaches for structuring humanities lessons in junior and senior high classes that encourage student autonomy, collaboration, and reflective thinking, while integrating technology and supporting diverse learning needs.

Demetra Mylonas & Maureen Kelly-Gibson
Foundational Relationship Building: The Power of the Class Circle Meeting
All levels
Circle Meetings are a foundational wellness practice that help build trust, belonging, and emotional safety in the classroom. They create a space for voice and connection and also set the stage for social-emotional learning and deeper future conversation.

This session will run as a Circle Meeting, while we talk about the why, the what, and the how of class circle meetings. Participants will leave with applicable resources in hand, while having learned and practiced the wonderful attributes of running class circle meetings. Further, we will discuss how circles can be integrated into our regular school routine, through community, academic and restorative circles.

Suzy Potts
From Fear to Freedom: Embracing Risky Play in Schools
All levels
Children need risk to grow — not reckless danger, but meaningful challenges that build confidence, resilience, and problem-solving skills. This session explores risky play: what it is, why it matters, and how educators can safely and confidently incorporate it into daily learning.

Participants will learn information on how to start their school's journey with risky play, from rethinking playground rules to designing developmentally appropriate opportunities for risk-taking across ages. We'll explore the data and research supporting risky play, including its impact on emotional regulation, focus, and social competence.

Daniel Weeks
Beyond Copy-Paste: Using AI for Deep, Meaningful Lesson Design
All levels
Harness the power of Generative AI to create meaningful, curriculum-aligned lessons and units without sacrificing your valuable time. This session moves beyond basic prompts and explores how to use tools like ChatGPT and Gemini as a true collaborative partner. You'll learn practical strategies to brainstorm rich activities, differentiate for all learners, and refine AI-generated content into high-quality, "classroom-ready" plans.

This is a hands-on, "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) session. Please bring a laptop, iPad, or Chromebook to participate.

Recommended: A beginning-level familiarity with at least one AI tool (like ChatGPT or Gemini) is recommended.

Gurpreet Rangi
Making Social Studies Come Alive: Engaging Projects that Inspire Curiosity and Connection
Middle School
How can we move beyond textbook learning to help middle school students truly experience social studies? In this interactive workshop, educators will explore strategies for designing authentic, inquiry-based projects that connect historical and contemporary issues, encourage student voice, and promote critical thinking.

Participants will leave with adaptable project ideas, planning tools, and assessment approaches that can be immediately applied in their classrooms to make social studies more engaging and meaningful for today's learners.

Rachel Marsden
Supporting EAL Learners in the Classroom
Elementary
In this session a variety of accessible strategies for mainstream elementary school teachers (Grades 1-6) will be presented to support all 4 skill areas. Many of these strategies are supportive to all learners, but allow us to consider them through the lens of social and curriculum based language learning.

Holly Kay
From Chaos to Clarity: Streamlining School Systems with Google Tools
Administrators
Practical organizational tools for school administrators. Checklists, dashboards, calendar tools and databases to offload your brain so you can stave off burn out. Walk away with actual templates to use in your school and help support your teachers and your school processes to move forward with confidence.

Carrie Edwards & Patricia Cardillo
Trauma Engaged Classroom: 6 TIPS for Successful Interactions
Elementary, Early Intervention
In this session, we will share trauma informed teaching practices related to the 6 R's in an educational setting.

Megan Angerman & Sara Wilhelm
Universal AAC Classroom Supports
All levels
This session will provide evidence and practical uses of AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) in the classroom to support diverse learners. Using universal tools can support a variety of students (e.g., learning disorders, English language learners, speech and language disorders) with language development, thus enhancing academic learning. AAC as a universal tool supports vocabulary development, use of grammar and sentence structure, can support phonetic awareness and reading and writing skills. Attendees will have an opportunity to see and use these supports and make practical applications to their own classrooms.