

2026 Lagniappe Educators Conference Program ~ Speakers and Strands

Conference Dates: June 2 and 3, 2026 ~ **Conference Times:** 8:15 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.

Conference Location: ESA, 721 E. Kaliste Saloom Road, Lafayette, LA 70508

Conference Schedule: Attend the same session on Tuesday, June 2, and Wednesday, June 3, 2026, ~ Receive six full hours of in-depth learning.

Strand One 8:30 am to 11:30 am	Tuesday, June 2, and Wednesday, June 3, 2026	Strand Two 12:30 am to 3:30 pm	Tuesday, June 2, and Wednesday, June 3, 2026
<p align="center">Thomas P. Hebert, Ph.D.</p>	<p align="center">Gifted Kids Facing Life with Compassion and Resilience Gifted kids have a need to develop self-understanding and learn how to face the challenges of adolescence with self-assurance and determination. Educators can help them reach that understanding and develop confidence through effective classroom instruction. This seminar closely examines the social and emotional issues facing gifted kids and the role that empathy, compassion and resilience play in their lives. The seminar also offers educators a variety of time-tested instructional methods to support the emotional well-being of their students.</p>	<p align="center">Jann Leppien, Ph.D.</p>	<p align="center">Teaching to Big Ideas: Curricular Design Strategies for Promoting Deeper Learning Challenge, engagement, and student agency are at the heart of deeper instruction. The way we design or frame our instructional units around compelling ideas or BIG IDEAS enhances this challenge and provides students with learning opportunities to engage in meaning-making tasks that can ignite an intellectual curiosity to wrestle with these complex ideas. In this strand, we will explore organizing curriculum and instruction around a strong conceptual focus and explore instructional strategies and techniques for elevating intellectual thinking processes as we design curriculum in ways that remove the ceiling from learning and result in higher expectations, access to more advanced content, and provide a greater scope of academic growth and engagement for all students.</p>
<p align="center">Marcia B. Imbeau, Ph.D.</p>	<p align="center">Quality Differentiation for Advanced Learners: Essential Elements to Consider Meeting the needs of all learners, including those who are advanced, is every teacher’s responsibility. Successful teachers see differentiated instruction as critically important in helping them meet the needs of their diverse learners. These highly effective teachers believe differentiation to be a “principle-guided method to approach teaching and learning and is implemented in the context of a classroom system that contains five interdependent elements: learning environment, curriculum, assessment, instruction, and leading and managing flexible routines” (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2023, p.35). This strand will examine each of these five elements that make up the system of differentiation using varied examples/ideas, strategies, and tips with opportunities for K-12 teachers to craft lesson/unit ideas they can use in their classrooms.</p>	<p align="center">Rachel McAnallen, Ph.D.</p>	<p align="center">Paper Plate Geometry Geometry is an important component of a student’s geometric education goals beginning in kindergarten through high school. To understand geometry, one must put their hands in motion to comprehend concepts intellectually as well as tactilely. The content and instructional strategies of this workshop are geared towards teachers of grades kindergarten through high school geometry and are appropriate for students at all levels of proficiency. All teachers – elementary, gifted and talented, special education, middle school, and high school – are invited to attend. Participants will build math models using paper plates, a straightedge, and tape. If the participant brings a sense of curiosity, patience, and a sense of humor to this workshop, they will leave with several models in hand each day.</p>