



Wednesday, April 10, 2019 Preconference Schedule

1:00-4:00 pm – Afternoon Preconference Session



Nature-Based Learning for Young Children: Anytime, Anywhere, on Any Budget

The connection with nature is as important as it is wonderful. During this session we will discuss the benefits of nature-based learning in every domain of education. We will discuss barriers programs face when implementing nature experiences and participants will have the opportunity to share ideas, develop curriculum that works for their program, and find resources to support nature-based learning.

Sheila Williams Ridge, MA

Sheila Williams Ridge, MA, has a BA in biology from University of Minnesota and an MA in education from Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota. She is the director of the Shirley G. Moore Lab School at the University of MN and an instructor for the Institute of Child Development. She is also an adjunct professor for Hamline University in St. Paul, MN. Sheila serves on the governing boards for the Natural Start Alliance, the Minneapolis Nature Preschool, and the Friends School of Minnesota. Sheila and her husband have four adult daughters and live in Roseville, MN.

5:30-6:30 pm – Registration and Light Refreshments

6:30-8:00 pm – Evening Pre-Conference Presentation



Dream Big, Live Colorfully, Lead Boldly: Developing your Best Self at School and at Home

Today's educators have pressures that can become barriers to maintaining wellness in all aspects of life. In this session (can be keynote and breakout) we will explore ways in work and life to set your own goals and priorities in the different quadrants of balance (positional, personal, professional and passion). We will learn ways to manage processes more effectively so you can be present in the moment, diffuse difficult situations with families, staff and parents so you can leave at school, and rekindle your own passions so your students and staff can see the real you.

Today's educators need to find ways to thrive, not just survive in the busy pace of leading, learning and living a life. As a principal, wife, mom, daughter, student, and teacher, Jessica has a passion to learn and share ideas that will provide educators with strategies to lead at home and at school. Come prepared to make a commitment for change, and find ways to make it happen.

Jessica Cabeen

Jessica currently serves as the principal of Ellis Middle School in Austin, Minnesota. Prior to this role she was the Principal of the "Happiest Place in Southeastern Minnesota", the Woodson Kindergarten Center. She has been an assistant middle school principal, a special education supervisor, and special education teacher. She started her career as a Music Therapist and worked with adults with disabilities and adolescents in residential settings in Iowa and Illinois. She holds a Bachelor Degree in Music Therapy from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, a Masters in Special Education from the University of Saint Thomas, and her administrative licenses from Hamline University.

Jessica was awarded the NAESP/VINCI Digital Leader of Early Learning Award in 2016 and in 2017 was named the Minnesota National Distinguished Principal. Jessica is active on social media (@JessicaCabeen) and co-moderates #ECEChat as well as engages with other educators looking to make all things possible for our young learners, and learners that are young at heart.

She has written two books: *Hacking Early Learning* and *Balance Like a Pirate* (releasing in July of 2018). She has been the principal facilitator for the Minnesota PreK-3 Principal Leadership Series for the past four years and is a facilitator of the Minnesota Principal Academy. She speaks at regional and national conferences on topics such as family engagement, early learning, and unconventional leadership.