

Kansas Exemplary Educators Network (KEEN)
State Education Conference

Hotel Topeka at City Center, Maner Conference Center
1717 SW Topeka Boulevard, Topeka, Kansas

February 20-21, 2025

Conference Theme

“ZEST: Building fresh habits and teaching with tang.”

Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025

Maner Conference Center

Foyer

Shawnee Room

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Conference Registration

Sunflower Ballroom

11:30 a.m. – 1:10 p.m. Opening General Session

11:30 a.m. – 12:10 p.m. Conference Welcome and Lunch

Denise Kahler, Director
Communications and Recognition Programs
Kansas State Department of Education

12:10 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Keynote General Session TBD

1:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. Break

Maner Conference Center – Breakout Rooms

1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. Concurrent Share Sessions (*Six sessions offered*)

A. AI Meets Zestful Teaching, Dyane Smokorowski, Wichita
 USD 259

B. Creating a “Because” Culture in Your Math Classroom

Through Interactive Conversations, Brad Nicks, Abilene USD 435

- C. Literacy Adventures: Adding Flavor to Your Reading Curriculum, Jennifer Farr, Geary County USD 475
- D. Makerspace Classroom: A Recipe for Integrated Learning & Engagement, Erin Pittenger, Rock Creek USD 323
- E. Hosting a Pre-Service Teacher: Zest via Mentorship, Kirsten Nelson, Washburn University, Topeka
- F. Zesty Zingers: Cross Curricular Quick Wins, Michelle Tapko, Shawnee Mission USD 512

Sunflower Ballroom

2:25 p.m. – 3:25 p.m.

General Session

ENERGIZER

Taylor Bussinger and Amy Hillman, Olathe USD 233

3:40 p.m. – 4:40 p.m.

Concurrent Share Sessions (Six sessions offered)

- A. Playing to Your Strengths – Making Magic Happen in the Classroom, Rochelle Mann, Goddard USD 265
- B. The Perfect Trifecta: Relationship + Community + Fun = An Irre Zest Able Classroom, Melissa Haney, Goddard USD 265
- C. Beat the Boredom: Energize Your Classroom with Drumming! Fonda Telthorst, Piper USD 203
- D. Adding Zest to Professional Learning through Kansas Leads, Dyane Smokorowski, Wichita USD 259
- E. The “Not-So-Secret Sauce” Creating a Culture of Care, Jonathan Belsan, Wichita USD 259
- F. Learning in Harmony, Brandi Martinez-McWilliams, Maegen Stucky, Nicholas Griggs, McPherson USD 418

Friday, Feb. 21, 2025

Agenda

Foyer

Shawnee Room

7:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. Breakfast Buffet

Shawnee Room

8:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. A Community Conversation

Dr. Randy Watson, Commissioner of Education
Kansas State Department of Education

Dr. Ben Proctor, Deputy Commissioner
Division of Learning Services
Kansas State Department of Education

Sunflower Ballroom

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Luncheon and Awards Program Honoring the 2024 Milken Educator
and 2025 Kansas Horizon Award Educators

<p>Sponsored by the Kansas State Department of Education <i>Fiscal Year 2025 Discretionary Funds</i></p>
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