



2025 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE AGENDA

Monday, September 22

- 5:00 pm **Check-in starts** - Ruttger's front desk
- 7:30-9:00 pm **President's Reception - Bear Pine Bar and lobby**
*Jumpstart your conference experience by joining us for the President's Reception! This event is a fantastic opportunity to socialize, connect and network with fellow private and independent school leaders, presenters and sponsors. First-time attendees are highly encouraged to attend. **Drink tickets and snack mix provided.***

Tuesday, September 23 - Day 1 Sessions

- 7:00-8:00 am Breakfast (Ruby's Dining Room)
- 8:00 am Conference check-in (Isle of Pines/Bird Island Conference Rooms)
- 8:10-8:35 am Welcome, introductions
- 8:35-9:05 am **Legislative Update: 2025 Programs and Policies Affecting Nonpublic Schools**
Tim Benz, President, MINNDEPENDENT
- 9:05-9:10 am Sponsor Spotlight: Langer Construction
- 9:10-9:30 am Networking Break/Visit Sponsors
- 9:30-9:35 am Sponsor Spotlight: Thrivent
- 9:35-10:50 am
- 10:50-10:55 am Sponsor Spotlight: Slow Road Photo
- 10:55-11:00 am Networking Break/Visit Sponsors
- 11:00-11:05 am Sponsor Spotlight: FACTS
- 11:05-12:20 pm **SESSION 2: Purposeful Convergence: Intentional Recruiting, Onboarding and Coaching to Cultivate Strong Culture and Mission-Alignment in New Staff, Ben Tierney, Owner & Chief Consultant, Tierney Consulting**



12:20-12:25	Sponsor Spotlight: Enquiry Tracker
12:25-1:25 pm	Lunch and free time
1:25-1:30 pm	Sponsor Spotlight: Canopy IT Solutions
1:30-2:45 pm	Session 3: Stopping the Drift: Addressing the Teacher Attrition Challenge, <i>Cathy Tooley, Founder and CEO of Tools for Success</i>
2:45-2:50 pm	Sponsor Spotlight: Renaissance
2:50-2:55 pm	Day 1 Wrap Up
2:55–3:10 pm	Networking Break/Visit Sponsors
3:10-5:30 pm	Free Time - complimentary pontoon ride, reduced price golf, pickleball (weather permitting)
5:30-6:30 pm	Sponsor Reception - Bear Pine Bar and Lobby <i>Appetizers and drink tickets provided</i>
6:30 pm	Dinner (Ruby's Dining Room)
7:30 pm	Bonfire and Social Time

Wednesday, September 24 - Day 2 Sessions

7:00-8:00 am	Breakfast (Ruby's Dining Room)
8:00 am	Welcome
8:15-8:20 am	Sponsor Spotlight: Cogna
8:20-9:35 am	Session 4: AI-Ready Schools Start with AI-Ready Leaders, <i>Marcee Harris, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Teaching Channel & Sarah Murphy, Evaluation Manager & Professional Learning Specialist, Teaching Channel</i>
9:35-9:55 am	Networking Break/Visit Sponsors
9:55-11:10 am	Session 5: Parents Are Customers! Implications and Applications for this Paradigm Shift, <i>Ryan Ermeling, President & CEO, Parent Pulse</i>
11:10-11:30 am	Conclusion/Reflections/Adjourn



Presenter Bios:

Session 1: Advocacy and the Road Ahead for Non-Public Schools

John Elizandro, Senior Principal and Jill Sims, Principal, Park Street Public

The 2025 legislative session had a dire outlook for essential services to nonpublic students and families. Fortunately, the outcome was successful, but the future remains uncertain. This session will summarize actions and learnings gained from this year's legislative efforts and highlight opportunities for school communities in the future.

What You'll Learn in This Workshop

- How school leaders can engage in local advocacy
- How to activate and motivate your school communities for action
- Provide specific ways to build relationships and elected officials in your school community



SESSION 2: Purposeful Convergence: Intentional Recruiting, Onboarding and Coaching to Cultivate Strong Culture and Mission-Alignment in New Staff, Ben Tierney, Owner & Chief Consultant, Tierney Consulting

As the educator landscape evolves, and new career pathways emerge, it's more critical than ever to not only recruit talented staff but to successfully integrate them into a healthy school culture centered on your unique mission. This session provides tools, strategies, and a framework for nurturing a mission-centered environment where new educators become integral members of a mission-based culture that permeates every corner of your school.





Session 3: Stopping the Drift: Addressing the Teacher Attrition Challenge

Teacher attrition is at an all-time high, leaving schools scrambling to retain skilled, passionate educators. With record-breaking teacher shortages in districts across the country, it's never been more critical to understand why educators are leaving—and how we can keep them in the classroom.

The Reality of Teacher Turnover:

- Nearly 50% of teachers leave within their first five years, citing burnout, lack of support, and limited career growth opportunities. (National Center for Education Statistics)
- Schools with high teacher turnover see declines in student achievement, particularly in low-income communities. (Learning Policy Institute)
- Retention strategies can cut turnover in half when schools provide better mentorship, professional growth, and work-life balance. (American Educational Research Journal)

What You'll Learn in This Workshop

- ✦ Identify Root Causes – Explore the top five reasons teachers leave, including burnout, lack of support, and limited career advancement.
- ✦ Retention Strategies That Work – Learn proven approaches to create a culture of support, improve job satisfaction, and foster long-term teacher commitment.
- ✦ Prioritizing Professional Growth – Discover how career pathways, mentorship, and leadership development can keep educators engaged.
- ✦ Develop a Retention Plan – Walk away with a structured framework to implement sustainable strategies that reduce attrition and build a thriving teaching community.

Why Attend?

- By participating in this session, you'll gain data-backed insights and actionable solutions to create a sustainable, supportive, and empowering environment for teachers—leading to stronger schools and improved student outcomes.

Cathy Tooley

Founder & CEO, Tools for Success

Cathy Tooley is the heart and soul behind Tools for Success, a company she created with the expertise of an accomplished K-12 educator and administrator. She holds a Bachelor's in Education and dual degrees in Spanish and English Education from Marian College, as well as a Master of Education and Principal Licensure from Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis.

In 2014, Cathy founded Tools for Success, a professional development organization, to empower teachers, engage administrators and equip leaders. She is the author of "The Education System Is Broken: Strategies to Rebuilding Hope, Lives, and Futures," offering insights into educational reform.





Session 4: AI-Ready Schools Start with AI-Ready Leaders

Behind every AI-ready classroom is an AI-ready leader! This session will help school and district leaders navigate the opportunities and complexities of AI. You'll examine the current state of AI in education and collaborate to plan for training, policy, and responsible use. Leave with practical next steps to lead AI integration with confidence.

Sarah Murphy

Evaluation & Professional Learning Specialist, Teaching Channel



Sarah is an Evaluation Manager and Professional Learning Specialist for Teaching Channel, the leading provider of online continuing education courses for PreK-12th grade teachers' professional development. A former elementary classroom teacher, Sarah now manages the instructor team and creates courses and other content for Teaching Channel.

Marcee Harris

VP of Academics, Teaching Channel



Marcee Harris is VP of Academics at Teaching Channel where she leads an amazing team of curriculum developers that provide timely, relevant, and applicable online professional learning for teachers. As a tech-savvy former elementary teacher, Marcee is particularly excited about sharing ways to enhance and extend learning with thoughtful technology integration.



Session 5: Parents Are Customers! Implications and Applications for this Paradigm Shift,

Ryan Ermeling, President & CEO, Parent Pulse

Most private and independent schools consider parents an important part of their mission. But how often are they viewed as “customers?” Understanding their needs, wants, and hopes can lead to better strategic alignment, more effective leadership, and higher retention rates. During this session, we’ll help you identify your tendencies when it comes to navigating feedback, provide practical (and unique) ways to capture feedback from your parents, and explore the important dynamics of the “feedback loop.”



Ryan Ermeling is a recognized leader in K-12 education, known for pioneering innovative strategies to effectively capture and leverage parent feedback. Since founding ParentPulse in 2022, Ryan has collaborated with nearly 300 private and independent schools, providing expert guidance to educational organizations striving to engage stakeholders and foster stronger school communities. His insights on the evolving expectations and dynamics of school parents have been shared with more than 30 professional groups over the past three years.

Ryan and his wife, Lyndsay, a musician and experienced educator, live in Gilbert, Arizona, and are proud parents of three daughters.