

**INSPIRE!
CREATE!
COLLABORATE!**

LIFELONG LEARNING CONFERENCE

JUNE 26, 2026

**STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS**



**STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
STATE UNIVERSITY**

Department of
Education Studies



**LIFELONG
LEARNING
CONFERENCE**

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM

WELCOME TO THE 2026 LIFELONG LEARNING CONFERENCE



Dear Lifelong Learners,

It is with great enthusiasm that I welcome you to the third annual Lifelong Learning Conference hosted by Stephen F. Austin State University's Department of Education Studies.

I am so excited to continue the tradition of hosting educators and learners for presentations, discussions and networking opportunities. The conference committee has worked hard to create an event that will make this possible, and this day promises to grow our collective

educational excellence and professional growth. Thank you to the committee for your efforts in creating this special event!

East Texas is home to some of the most innovative and dedicated educators in the state, and this conference provides a unique opportunity for us all to grow from our shared regional expertise. The knowledge and experiences you bring from your own unique settings can create a rich dialogue that will benefit all participants. Every voice here today, whether a veteran educator, a newly minted teacher or somewhere in between, has something to contribute to our learning.

Thank you for investing your time and energy in this important work. I hope that today's conference will fuel your passion for teaching and learning as we **inspire, create and collaborate** to build brighter futures for all students.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Jannah Nerren". The script is fluid and cursive.

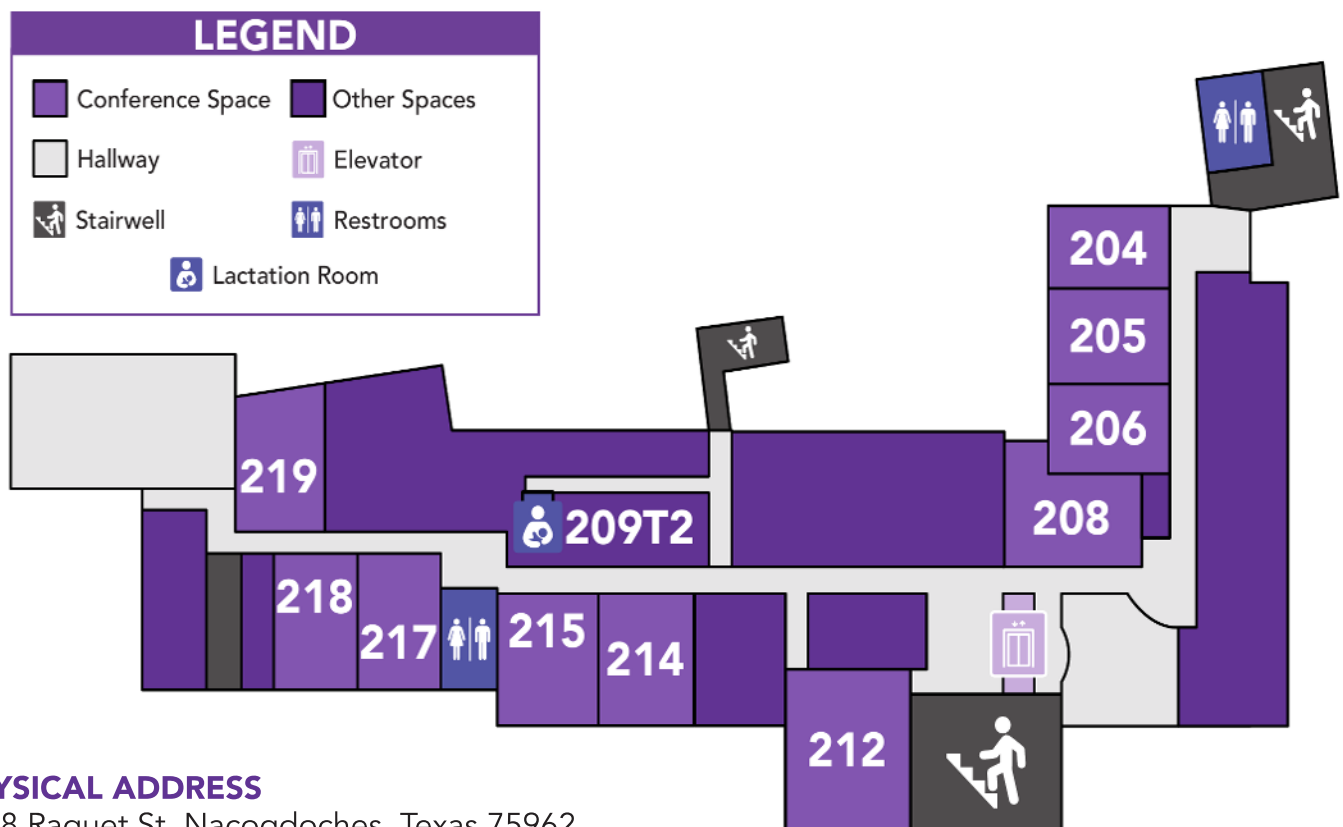
Dr. Jannah Nerren
Professor Emeritus and Past Chair
Department of Education Studies
Stephen F. Austin State University



VENUE INFORMATION



Janice A. Pattillo Early Childhood Research Center Second Floor



PHYSICAL ADDRESS

2428 Raguet St. Nacogdoches, Texas 75962

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STUDIES

• (936) 488-2904 • edstudies@sfasu.edu

KEYNOTE ADDRESS



Samara A. Martinez is a dedicated mariachi educator and director in Humble Independent School District, where she leads the mariachi programs at Humble High School, Humble Middle School and Ross Sterling Middle School. Under her leadership, students have earned consistent division I UIL ratings and advanced to the UIL Mariachi State Competition. Passionate about cultural preservation, musical excellence and student growth, Samara inspires her students to thrive through discipline, collaboration and artistic expression.



SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

WORKSHOPS



Presenters will conduct a 50-minute interactive session on a specific topic that will lead to participants gaining new skills or knowledge by engaging participants in hands-on activities and collaborative discussions.

LUNCHTIME PANEL DISCUSSION



Panelists will participate in an engaging 50-minute conversation with one another and the audience. Panelists should be ready to solicit audience questions.

ORAL PRESENTATION



Presenter will give a 20-minute formal presentation with five minutes for questions at the end of the session.

SEVEN-MINUTE GRAPHIC TALKS



Presenters will facilitate a seven-minute presentation with three minutes for questions. We recommend preparing an image-only slide deck for this rapid-fire session. Presenters will deliver an automatically timed slide presentation of 21 slides (visual, not bullets), each lasting 20 seconds.

CONFERENCE POLICIES

OUR MISSION



The Lifelong Learning Conference strives to create an environment conducive to learning, sharing and networking. All attendees are expected to maintain professionalism in their interactions.

RECORDING POLICY



- We will have a professional photographer on site for the conference and plan to share images with attendees in our conference recap communication.
- If sharing media from the conference on social media or other platforms, ensure that it respects the privacy and consent of those depicted.
- Please tag @sfasu and @sfaedstudies and use the hashtag #LLC2026.

ACCESSIBILITY INFO



- There is ramp access at our main entrance, and a volunteer will be in the lobby to provide access to an elevator, if needed.
- We can offer ASL interpretation upon request.
- An accessible parking map can be found at gosfa.com/accessibleparking.
- A lactation room is available in Room 209T2.
- If additional accessibility needs are required, please email edstudies@sfasu.edu and put "Accessibility Needs - LLC 2026" in the subject line.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION



- The conference can meet seven CPE hours. If you would like a CPE credit, please come by the registration table at the end of the conference to receive your certificate.

CHILDREN AT THE CONFERENCE



- While childcare will not be available, we welcome attendees to bring their children to the conference, provided they are supervised at all times.
- We will provide coloring pages at the registration table for children of attendees.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
9:30 to 9:55 a.m.	Registration	ECRC Lobby
10 to 10:50 a.m.	Welcome Dr. Jannah Nerren, <i>Past Chair of Education Studies</i> Dr. Jordan Barkley, <i>Provost</i> Dr. Heather Olson Beal, <i>Conference Chair</i> Keynote Address Samara A. Martinez, <i>Humble ISD</i>	Room 212

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
11 to 11:50 a.m.	Exploring Student Conceptions of "Westernized" Self-Care: Encouraging a Different Perspective Christy Collins, <i>SFA</i> Michelle Thompson-Janis and Jonelle Battise, <i>Alabama Coushatta Tribe of Texas</i> Avoiding Burnout and Promoting Self-Care Among Teachers, and College Educators Scott Holder, <i>SFA</i>	Room 214
	The Mentor Effect: Strengthening the Host Teacher/Teacher Candidate Relationship Chrissy Pigg, Erica Dillard and Madyson Freeman, <i>SFA</i> Cultural Humility: Creating Culturally Safe Communication Spaces between Educators and Students Brian Hicks, <i>SFA</i>	Room 215
	How to Combat Anti-Fatness and Promote Size Acceptance in Early Childhood Classrooms Flora Farago and Sarah Savoy, <i>SFA</i> Lights, Camera, Persistence: What Independent Filmmaking Teaches About Student Success Herbert Midgley, <i>SFA</i>	Room 217
	Class Size Matters in All Texas Public Education Callie Lopez <i>SFA</i> Targeted Intervention: Meeting Student Needs with Purpose and Precision Ragan Philliber and Olivia Bess, <i>SFA Charter School</i>	Room 218

	What Keeps You Curious? Utilizing Self-Determination Theory as a Personal Audit Tool in Lifelong Learning Shanta Scott and Crystal Robertson, <i>SFA</i>	Room 219
	From Both Sides of the Table: Special Education Teacher-Moms Sharing Strategies for Meaningful Admission, Review and Dismissal Meetings Ami Smith and Mariah Morales, <i>Clear Creek ISD</i>	
	Ethical AI and Humanity-Centered Teaching: Evidence-Based Strategies for Inclusive Classrooms Mohit Prodhan, <i>Texas A&M - Texarkana</i>	Room 208

LUNCH PICK UP

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
11:50 a.m. to 12:10 p.m.	Boxed lunch pickup	Second floor hallway

WORKSHOP SESSION - BLOCK 1

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
12:15 to 1:15 p.m.	Regulate to Educate: Recognizing and Supporting Student Anxiety in the Classroom Angela Henson, <i>Brick Street Counseling</i>	Room 214
	The Resilient Graduate Student: Strategies for Developing Identity and Overcoming Self-Doubt Tiffany Atkins and Pearl Robinson, <i>SFA</i>	Room 215
	The Power of a Hug: Seeing, Grabbing and Holding Students to Increase Engagement and Achievement Lauren Brown, <i>Corrigan-Camden ISD</i>	Room 217
	From the Vault to the Classroom: Designing Escape Rooms as Exam Review Tools for Any Discipline Jennifer Coon, <i>Tyler Junior College</i>	Room 218

	Communication-Driven Collaboration: Working with Special Education Staff to Support Our Students in General Education Colin Anderson and Abby Quinn <i>SFA</i>	Room 204
	Showing, Not Just Telling: Engaging Students (And Teachers!) Through Guided Descriptive Writing Instruction Erin Hill, <i>Blinn College</i>	Room 206
	Beyond Evaluation: Creating TIA Systems that Build Teacher Capacity and Cultures of Achievement Crystal Lane-Cox, <i>Texas Women's University</i>	Room 205
	"No, You Can't Make Me!" Strategies for Reaching Defiant Students Joshua Ruse, <i>Behavior Breakthroughs</i>	Room 208

WORKSHOP SESSION - BLOCK 2

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
1:30-2:30 p.m.	Moving Beyond the Noise: Classrooms Where Students Think, Struggle, and Grow Laurie Jones Curtis, <i>Teach with Character</i>	Room 214
	From Burnout to Balance: Actionable Strategies for Self-Care Cynthia Kilpatrick, <i>SFA</i>	Room 215
	Humans Over Hardware: Robots Can't High Five Chris Lairscey and Jeremy D. Small, <i>Bastrop ISD</i>	Room 217
	Building Bridges: Enhancing Student Success Through Parent Engagement: A How-To for Teachers Nallely Mejia, <i>Nacogdoches ISD</i>	Room 218
	Safe Classrooms, Strong Students: Trauma-Informed Practices for Immigrant Youth Cate Munguia, <i>Better Together Nacogdoches</i>	Room 219
	ASSUME a Sensory Reason School-Based Framework Jordan Smelley, <i>Integral Care</i>	Room 207
2:30 to 4 p.m.	Coffee and snack station	Second floor hall

WORKSHOP SESSION - BLOCK 3

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
2:45-3:45 p.m.	Teaching the Distracted: Practical Strategies for Increasing Engagement in a Time of Distraction Christina Nunnally, SFA	Room 204
	Beyond the Referral: A Blueprint for Compassionate Pedagogy Crystal Odoms, SFA/Burke Mental Health Clinic Kametriss Ewing, Lamar University/Dallas ISD	Room 205
	Favorable Attitudes: Supporting Rural Seniors' Desire to Learn Assistive Technology Dr. Cory Roberts, Panola College	Room 206
	Teaching with Confidence: Supporting Dyslexic Learners in the Classroom Danette Wofford, Nacogdoches ISD	Room 215
	The Question Upgrade Lab: Lift the Question. Lift the Thinking. Jeremy Small, Bastrop ISD	Room 217
	Black Males in K12 Schools: The Perennial Moral Panic Cleo Wadley, Houston City College System	Room 218
	Transparent Assignment Design (TILT): Helping Students Understand the "Why" Behind Their Work Kelsey Wigand, SFA	Room 219

CLOSING REMARKS

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
3:45 to 4 p.m.	Closing Remarks and Door Prizes Dr. Heather Olson Beal, Conference Chair	Room 212

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE



Dr. Heather Olson Beal
Chair



Margaret Patterson
Committee Member



Erica Dillard
Committee member



Dr. Vicki Ezelle-Thomas
Committee member



Dr. Yuan He
Committee member



Alyssa Landreneaux
Committee Member



Dr. Nicole Letchworth
Committee member



Dr. Jannah Nerren
Committee Member



Dr. Amanda Rudolph
Committee member



Dr. Sarah Straub
Committee member



Melissa Hulings
Committee Member



Shunta James
Event Organizer

THANK YOU TO OUR EXHIBITORS!

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Professional Educators**



Jacks Teach



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