



## 2021 TRETC Bios

### Keynote Speaker

#### **Jaime Casap, Retired Chief Education Evangelist at Google**

This year, we are pleased to announce Jaime Casap as this year's keynote speaker. Jaime Casap served as the Chief Education Evangelist at Google for more than 14 years and was the second member of the Google for Education team. In that time, Jaime launched Google's GSuite tools into higher education and K12. He also launched Chromebooks into education and was the creator of the Google for Education Transformation Framework, a holistic approach to education transformation.

Now Jaime is partnering and collaborating with higher education institutions, school systems, and businesses around the world, helping them build transformational policies and practices to elevate education and bring equity, diversity, and inclusion into their policies and practices.

Jaime serves as an advisor to dozens of organizations focused on learning, skill development, and the future of work. He is the coauthor of "Our First Talk About Poverty," as a way to talk to children about poverty. He is currently working on his next book, which will focus on his journey from the ghetto to Google, and what it takes to be successful.

He speaks on education, digitalization, diversity and inclusion, generation z, and the future of work at events around the world. You can follow and reach him on Twitter at @jcasap and watch his YouTube career advice videos at www.youtube.com/jaimecasap.

### High-Impact STEAM Activities for Online and In-Person Learning

#### **Melissa Unger, K-2 STEAM Teacher, South Fayette Township School District**

As the STEAM teacher at South Fayette Elementary, Melissa Unger teaches K-2 students the beginnings of computer programming and helps them to design, build, and bring their ideas to life as they experiment, invent, and use technology. A life-long maker, Melissa's elementary STEAM curriculum intertwines art and science and challenges students to think critically while using their imaginations to construct new realities. Melissa leads out-of-school computer programming clubs for upper elementary students, family nights for the community, and STEAM professional development through South Fayette's Summer Institute, as well as serves as a teacher leader for Harvard University's Project Zero Thinking and Learning in the Maker-Centered Classroom online course.

## **Anna Blake, Elementary Technology Integrator, Elizabeth Forward School District**

Anna Blake is an Elementary Technology Integrator teaching Computational Thinking and Computer Science at Elizabeth Forward School District in Elizabeth, PA. Anna teaches over 400 children the fundamentals of computational thinking and computer science with applications like Swift Playgrounds to robotics like BeeBots and Parrot drones. In the summer, Anna teaches multiple Summer Enrichment camps like Maker Academy, that focus on extending hands-on learning from making and designing t-shirts to programming robotics. Anna has presented at Sonoma County Remake Summit, TRET, PETE&C, STEAM Summit at AIU3 and ISTE19 about computational thinking and making in the elementary school setting.

### **1:1 Robotics and Remote Robots, Two Tools for Hybrid and Virtual Environments**

#### **Tom Lauwers, Founder and CEO, BirdBrain Technologies**

Tom is the Founder and CEO at BirdBrain Technologies. He seeks to design educational tools that catalyze positive computer science and maker learning experiences in the classroom. Tom received a Ph.D in robotics in 2010 from Carnegie Mellon University in part for his work designing the Finch Robot and Hummingbird Robotics Kit. Tom resides in Pittsburgh's Squirrel Hill neighborhood with his wife, two kids, cat, and a small army of robots. He would be an invaluable ally in the event of a robot uprising.

#### **Melinda O'Neill, Learning Commons Coordinator, Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School**

Melinda is the Learning Commons Coordinator at Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School. Her most important professional goal is to introduce computer science to girls at all ages & all skill levels by teaching them to code, and using the Hummingbird Robotics Kit in summer camps, after school activities, and high school classes. Melinda received a MS in Instructional Technology from St. Joseph's University in 2005. She lives in nearby North Wales with her husband, two children, and her beloved dog.

### **What tools are in your Threat Arsenal?**

#### **Vince Humes, Director of Innovative Technology, Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit**

Dr. Humes has been involved with educational technology for over 30 years. His experience includes being a technology coordinator for a suburban district of 7,000 students, coordinating campus and residential networking for higher education, and directing all aspects of technology for an Educational Service Agency. He is a frequent presenter at regional, state, and national conferences. He is also active in the Consortium for School Networking serving as a Board member, Co-Chair of the Smart Education Networks By Design (SEND) committee, a member of the Driving K-12 Innovation Advisory Board, a member of the Emerging Technologies committee, and a Thought Partner for the Early Career K-12 CTO Academy.

**Bill Wiedenheft, Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit, Edinboro, PA**

Mr. Wiedenheft is the Supervisor of Innovative Technology Solutions at the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit where he is responsible for a staff of six technology professionals. The staff Bill manages is responsible for systems, networking, mobility, desktops, laptops, application development, and security systems.

**Students' Perspectives on EdTech Today - This is What Works For Us**

**Theresa Richards, Outreach Program Manager/Girls of Steel Mentor, Carnegie Mellon University**

Since 2010 Terry has been a mentor for the Girls of Steel Robotics Program and since 2012 she has been the Outreach Program Manager at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU). In 2015, 2017, and 2020 Terry received a National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) Educator Award. Experience with girls in all-girl environments, where all the leaders are girls, has provided a platform for her to observe effective ways to develop young leaders in STEM. Terry has a B.S. in Chemistry (Simmons College) and a Ph.D. in Biological Sciences/Biochemistry (CMU).

**The Power of a PLN**

**Samantha Fecich, Professor of Education, Grove City College**

Dr. Samantha Fecich is a professor of Education at Grove City College in Grove City, Pa. She is the author of the EduMagic series, titled "EduMagic a Guide for PreService Teachers" and "EduMagic Shine on A Guide for New Teachers". Dr. Fecich is also host of the EduMagic Podcast and an educational speaker, specializing in topics related to student teaching, educational technology, and digital presence.

**VEXcode VR: Coding Tool for Virtual and In-Person Teaching**

**Anna Blake, Elementary Technology Integrator, Elizabeth Forward School District**

Anna Blake is an Elementary Technology Integrator teaching Computational Thinking and Computer Science at Elizabeth Forward School District in Elizabeth, PA. Anna teaches over 400 children the fundamentals of computational thinking and computer science with applications like Swift Playgrounds to robotics like BeeBots and Parrot drones. In the summer, Anna teaches multiple Summer Enrichment camps like Maker Academy, that focus on extending hands-on learning from making and designing t-shirts to programming robotics. Anna has presented at Sonoma County Remake Summit, TRET, PETE&C, STEAM Summit at AIU3 and ISTE19 about computational thinking and making in the elementary school setting.

## The Remote Math and Science Classroom: Using Technology When Teaching STEM

### **Teresa Engler, Dynamic Learning Project K-12 Instructional Technology Coach, McGuffey School District**

Teresa is a K-12 Instructional Technology Coach in the McGuffey School District. She is a Dynamic Learning Project Certified Coach, a Google Certified Coach, and a Google Certified Trainer. Teresa spent her 30-year career as a classroom teacher in the East Stroudsburg Area School District and in the McGuffey School District. Her certifications included BS Elementary K-6, MS Elementary, K-12 Reading Specialist, Instructional Leadership Principal K-12, and Science 7-9. Teresa has presented at various conferences and workshops around the country including PETE&C 2019 and ISTE 2019.

### **The Robot Doctor - Inspiring Math Learners Through Robotics**

#### **Rachel Burcin, Director of Global Partnerships, RobotWits, LLC**

Rachel develops education and research initiatives that connect educators and communities to robotics and AI. As lead for partnerships at RobotWits, Rachel worked with the team to translate robotics into an accessible educational series broadcast on TV and available to stream or download for free, called the Robot Doctor. Rachel also serves as co-director of the RI Summer Scholars Program and global programs manager at [Carnegie Mellon's Robotics Institute](#). She has developed educational programming solutions for the [U.S. Department of State](#), the [United Nations \(UN\)](#), [UNESCO Associated Schools Program](#), and the [UNESCO International Bureau of Education](#) and worked with major industrial partners in multiple areas. Rachel holds a master's degree from Carnegie Mellon University's [Heinz College of Public Policy & Management](#), bachelor's degree from the University of Pittsburgh in economics (including study abroad and work experience in Slovakia), and has been awarded fellowships in education – including EPFL Global Fellow, [Pennsylvania Education Fellow](#), and [Coro Pittsburgh Leader in Learning](#).

### **The Theory of Virtuality Culture and Re-Imagining School for a New World**

#### **Camille D.Ed., Assistant Professor, Edinboro University**

Camille Dempsey, D.Ed. is an Assistant Professor at Edinboro University where she teaches educational technology and PA STEM Endorsement courses. She currently serves as the Higher Education Representative for the PA Educational Communications and Technology Association Board. Camille most recently received the PAECT State Higher Education "Educational Technology Impact Award," for her paper, The spirit of the times: Virtuality culture and technology-mediated human presence. Her educational background includes an Ed.D. in Instructional Technology from Duquesne University and an M.A. from Teachers College, Columbia University.

## The Power of Self-Regulated Learning During Covid 19 Closures

### **Traci Eshelman Ramey, Education Consultant, Liberty University**

Traci Eshelman Ramey, a Liberty University PhD candidate in Instructional Technology and Design, has been designing K-12 curriculum and lessons for 15 years and has extensive experience in global language learning. She has designed and delivered training to business and industry and the education professions for 25 years. Ms. Eshelman has experience teaching nine languages and has traveled and worked in 40 countries. Her background is in instructional design and educational technology and has spoken at ISTE (2019) and TASET at Harvard (2017) on the impact of digital game-based learning and effectively integrating technology into learning. She currently works for an educational technology firm that delivers digital game- and story-based learning solutions to K-12 school districts and provides professional development on using best practices and pedagogy to apply these solutions in the classroom.

### **Transitioning CS/STEAM Learning from the Physical to the Virtual World**

#### **Victoria Lojek, STEAM Teacher, South Fayette School District**

Victoria Lojek teaches grades 3-5 STEAM at South Fayette Intermediate School. In addition to her STEAM role, Victoria sponsors the Girls Who Code Club and the Robotics Club. Victoria also serves as the project coordinator for the PA Smart Grant.

Victoria holds a Master's Degree from Duquesne University in Instructional Technology. She is Pennsylvania certified in Early Childhood Prek-4, Special Education Prek-8, Middle Level 4-8 (all subjects 4-6 & mathematics 7-8), BCIT PK-12, Instructional Technology Specialist PK-12, and Online Instruction Program K-12. Victoria obtained her Bachelor's Degree from Washington & Jefferson College in Early Childhood Education.

#### **Samantha Edkins, STEAM Teacher, South Fayette School District**

Samantha Edkins teaches grades 3-5 STEAM at South Fayette Intermediate School. Prior to her arrival at South Fayette, Samantha taught a variety of grade levels and subjects in Virginia, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania. Samantha obtained her Bachelor's Degree from Virginia Tech in Psychology and English. She holds a Master's Degree from Marymount University in Elementary Education PreK-6. She is a Level 1 and Level 2 Google Certified Trainer. Samantha was awarded Teacher of the Year in 2016 for her innovative and collaborative lessons while teaching middle school English on Hilton Head Island. Samantha believes in "doing what you love and loving what you do" and is so happy to say that her role in education fulfills that! As a lifelong learner, she continues to reflect on her experiences, methodologies, and projects as she collaborates with other passionate educators. Her highest priority is to instill the true joy of learning in her students and colleagues.

## Redesigning Your Lessons with the 5 E's and Book Creator

### **Jayson St.Croix, Technology Integration Specialist, Watertown City School District**

I am a certified 7-12 NYS math teacher. I have taught 7th grade, 8th grade, and Algebra I in the Watertown City School District since 2001. Since 2018 I have been on special assignment serving as one of two Technology Integration Specialists in our district. I am a Google Level 1 Educator, Apple Educator, Book Creator Certified Author & Ambassador, Adobe Creative Educator, Kami Certified Educator, Edpuzzle Certified Educator, and am awaiting the results of my portfolio submission for the ISTE certification. I currently serve as the Membership Chair for the Out of State Board PAECT.

## Creating Innovative PBL Environments to Enhance Student Learning

### **Gina Ligouri, Teacher, Montour School District**

Gina Ligouri is an educator, innovator and author. She has earned numerous teaching accolades and credentials and was most recently named Pennsylvania's Technology Innovator of the Year. She currently chairs the English department at Montour High School in addition to teaching literature courses. Gina's academic achievements include degrees from Carlow University, Robert Morris University and Duquesne University.

### **Pam Diianni, Library Media Specialist & Technology Integrator, Montour High School**

Pam Dilanni is currently the library media specialist and technology integrator at Montour High School. I have been teaching for 18 years. I have a science background and certifications and have taught physical sciences, astronomy, and environmental science. I earned my Masters degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Pittsburgh and technology coach certification at Robert Morris University. I currently teach the STEM portion of the honors and regular integrated class and a CHS Environmental Sustainability course. PBL is a teaching passion and something that I strongly believe students should be given an opportunity to take part in before they graduate.

### **Kara Olshenske, 10th Grade History, Integrated Studies, and Honors Integrated Studies, Montour High School**

Kara Olshenske is a twenty-four year veteran teacher of French and history. Currently at Montour High School, she teaches tenth grade history, Integrated Studies, and Honors Integrated Studies. Kara graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She is a past World Language department chair and is a member of the district's crisis management team.



## Fostering Meaningful Instructional Coaching in your District

### **Teresa Engler, Dynamic Learning Project K-12 Instructional Technology Coach, McGuffey School District**

Teresa is a K-12 Instructional Technology Coach in the McGuffey School District. She is a Dynamic Learning Project Certified Coach, a Google Certified Coach, and a Google Certified Trainer. Teresa spent her 30-year career as a classroom teacher in the East Stroudsburg Area School District and in the McGuffey School District. Her certifications included BS Elementary K-6, MS Elementary, K-12 Reading Specialist, Instructional Leadership Principal K-12, and Science 7-9. Teresa has presented at various conferences and workshops around the country including PETE&C 2019 and ISTE 2019.

## TechWorks: Bridging Industry with the K-12 Arena

### **Debbie Reynold, M.Ed., Director, TechWorks, Commonwealth Charter Academy**

Debbie is the Director of TechWorks, with the Commonwealth Charter Academy - Pennsylvania's largest public K-12 charter school. In her new role, she will be working to expand and further develop programs and student engagement opportunities, and to create partnerships that connect the tech industry in Pittsburgh with K-12 education. The TechWorks at CCA facility in Pittsburgh will offer students hands-on learning opportunities in several areas, including information technology, computer programming, drones, e-sports, STEM, AR/VR/AI and robotics. Previously, Debbie served as a Middle School STEM Specialist for the Baldwin Whitehall School District in Pittsburgh PA. Last year, Debbie served as the first-ever Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow placed in the DoD, where she worked at the Naval Surface Warfare Center - Carderock Division in the STEM and Outreach Office. Debbie is a veteran teacher of over 25 years and has taught in Texas, Florida and Pennsylvania. Debbie is on the board of the PA Science Teachers Association, she is a Keystone Technology Innovator and serves on the SW Region of PAECT. She is an inaugural member of the Space Educator Crew at Space Center Houston and is on the Starliner team. She is also a NASA JPL Solar System Ambassador, a Teacher Liaison through the Space Foundation, a Honeywell Educator at Space Camp recipient and a NASA/TSG Liftoff and AirCamp alumni. She has spent 2018 and 2019 summers teaching STEM in China at a summer camp. She was selected at the Middle Level Educator of the year for the Carnegie Science Awards in 2019 and the PAECT Educator of the Year in 2020.

## Fostering Connectedness and Promoting SEL

### **Rachelle DenePoth, Spanish and STEAM teacher, Consultant, Riverview**

Rachelle Dene Poth is an edtech consultant, presenter, attorney, author, and teacher. Rachelle teaches Spanish and STEAM: What's nExT in Emerging Technology at Riverview Junior Senior High School in Oakmont, PA. Rachelle has a Juris Doctor degree from Duquesne University School of Law and a Master's in Instructional Technology. She is a Consultant and Speaker, owner of ThriveinEDU LLC Consulting. She serves as the past-president of the ISTE Teacher

Education Network and serves on the Leadership team of the Mobile Learning Network. At ISTE19, she received the Making IT Happen Award and a Presidential Gold Award for volunteer service to education. She is also a Buncee Ambassador, Nearpod PioNear and Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert.

Rachelle is the author of four books, 'In Other Words: Quotes That Push Our Thinking,' "Unconventional Ways to Thrive in EDU" (EduMatch) and "The Future is Now: Looking Back to Move Ahead," Rachelle Dene's latest book is with ISTE "Chart A New Course: A Guide to Teaching Essential Skills for Tomorrow's World." Rachelle is a blogger for Getting Smart, Defined Learning, District Administration, NEO LMS, and the STEM Informer with Newsweek. Follow Rachelle on Twitter @Rdene915 and on Instagram @Rdene915. Rachelle has a podcast, ThriveinEDU available at <https://anchor.fm/rdene915>. Her books are available at [bit.ly/Pothbooks](http://bit.ly/Pothbooks)

