



Spring Technical Assistance Retreat

2025 Presenters



Dr. Michelle Aldrich

Dr. Michelle Aldrich is currently the Wyoming State Director of Career & Technical Education and Perkins Funding. She spent 8 years teaching the family resource management strand at the University of Wyoming as adjunct faculty. She has been teaching nutrition at two Wyoming community colleges over the last 26 years in nutrition and education. Dr. Aldrich was a Family & Consumer Science Teacher at Triumph High School in Cheyenne for 15 years, which is the oldest and largest alternative high school in Wyoming with 250 students in grades 9-12. Dr. Aldrich has won national teaching awards in culinary arts, was named the Wyoming Career and Technical Education Teacher of the

Year, and honors that include the 2021 Rising Star Award from Advanced CTE and the 2021 Wyoming Women of Influence in Education.



Stephanie Benboe

Stephanie has over 20 years of experience in the public education field that ranges from primary and intermediate to middle school grades. She earned her B.A. in Education from the University of Wyoming and her M.S. in Reading and Literacy from Walden University. Stephanie's work is rooted in the belief that educating the whole child is essential to life success.

Stephanie was raised in Southeast Wyoming. She enjoys creating, reading, traveling, yoga and hiking. Stephanie is often heard saying, "The state, districts, schools and parents have shared accountability and responsibility for maintaining a strong MTSS system. Successful core instruction is the most important thing you can do in MTSS."



Karen Bierhaus

Karen Bierhaus has worked for the Wyoming Department of Education for 12 years as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program consultant and in the education field more broadly for over 25 years. After receiving her BS degree from the University of Wyoming in secondary science education- Earth and space sciences., she has been involved in informal education including teaching youth at summer camp on Kirtland Air Force, leading a group of Young Astronauts for 6 years, and writing grant proposals. The expanded learning field was a natural fit for her passion for STEM learning and supporting kids in seeking authentic learning experiences. She continues to work with subgrantees to

create and sustain innovative, student-centered afterschool and summer learning programs across the state for pre-K-12 children and youth.



Mark Bowers

Mark is the ESSA grants team supervisor and has been with the WDE since 2016. He started on the CTE team and has also supported the ESSA Title II-A and Title IV-A grants. His educational background is in Career and Technical Education, and calls himself a “recovering post-secondary teacher.” He is originally from northeast Kansas, is a lifetime KC Chiefs fan, and does not care for Taylor Swift’s music.



Mary Bravo

Mary Bravo joined the Wyoming Department of Education as the Title II-A, Title IV-A, and Stronger Connections Grant program manager in 2023. Before stepping into this role, she taught fifth grade for twelve years and was the grant coordinator for a non-profit organization. She is passionate about serving Wyoming school districts and their students in their efforts to provide exceptional learning opportunities. Mary values collaboration and continual learning. She is looking forward to sharing strategies and facilitating conversations between districts to help grant managers across the state learn from each other and fine-tune their practices.

Crystal Canfield

Crystal has been with the Department of Family Services for nearly 20 years and has served as a Social Services Supervisor in Campbell County for the last five. She graduated from the University of Wyoming in 2005 with a bachelor’s degree in Political Science. Before becoming a supervisor, Crystal spent most of her time as a child protection investigator in Campbell County, collaborating closely with community partners with a primary focus on child safety and keeping children safely in their homes. In her free time, Crystal enjoys outdoor activities with her family, such as camping, hiking, golfing, and snowboarding.

Trish Conrad

Trish Conrad has served children and families for the duration of her career, first in the child welfare and juvenile justice system before changing directions and joining Sheridan County School District 2. She has worked in varied roles for the district, including Title I Para, Special Ed Para and building Administrative Assistant in a high performing, school-wide Title I elementary school, before joining the district administrative team. Trish presently serves as the Grants Specialist for the district.



Shannon Cranmore

Shannon Cranmore has been with the Wyoming Department of Education for 21 years. The first 16 of those years were in the Data and Information Division serving as WDE’s EDFacts Coordinator and was responsible for submitting all required data to USED. She then made the transfer to the School Support Division and serves as the State Homeless Coordinator, Title ID Subpart 1 Program Manager and is the State’s Equitable Services Ombudsman. She also serves as a member of the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Special Education and the Early Intervention Council.



Jessica Fancher

Jessica Fancher joined the Wyoming Department of Education in 2018 as the Title I-D, Subpart 2 and Title III-EL & Immigrant Program Manager. She began working for the State of Wyoming in 2010 at the Wyoming Department of Health as a Program Manager in Healthcare Financing overseeing two Medicaid programs and then as the Training Coordinator for the Behavioral Health Division where she developed numerous trainings and facilitated conferences throughout the state. Prior to her work with the State of Wyoming, she worked for over 15 years managing various grants and programs for non-profit organizations in Wyoming and Alaska. She holds a bachelors degree in

Business Management and is currently completing her masters in Business Administration. She is passionate about providing the highest quality of customer service to Wyoming school districts to ensure the best possible outcomes for students.

Kristie Garriffa

Kristie Garriffa began her career in education teaching several elementary grades before becoming an instructional coach and eventually an elementary principal in a school-wide Title I school. Currently, Kristie is the Assistant Superintendent of Sheridan County School District No. 2 where she works primarily in curriculum and assessment, professional development, grants, and community partnerships.



Les Koch

Les has served as the WDEs Title I Director the past six years. He provided conservation education for nearly 20 years in a governmental position prior to working for the WDE. Les enjoys building relationships with district and school personnel. His daughter is set to graduate from college this upcoming May. He enjoys dutch-oven cooking, sailing, sampling red wines, and oddly enough, yard work.



Beth Lougee

The Wyoming Department of Education's Statewide System of Support Program Manager, Beth has over 28 years of experience in public education, ranging from special education teacher and school counselor to principal, director of curriculum, and superintendent. She deeply understands that education, like every other major institution in the world, evolves and changes over time. She has studied and applied the vast and complex frameworks of federal, state, and local laws governing public education in three different states: Wyoming, Alaska, and New Mexico. Beth has extensive experience supporting families and educators in developing the most effective interventions and support systems to help students succeed in school.

Born and raised in Northeast Wyoming, Beth enjoys traveling, reading, and embarking on adventures that allow her to try new things. She is often heard saying, "Education is my passion, and working as a team to help build a future for all students is my goal."



Kay Mobley

Albany County School District #1 Federal Grants System Administrator. Kay has been helping write, administer, and monitor ACSD#1's federal grants for the last four years while also being a member of the district's professional development team. Starting with the 2023-2024 school year, she took on the lead role of being responsible for the management of all of ACSD#1's federal grants though she still gets to facilitate PLC meetings for Laramie High School's Career Tech Ed (CTE) staff. This is Kay's third year presenting at the Wyoming STAR conference.



Deb Montoya

Deb Montoya has been with the Wyoming Department of Education for eight years working in the Special Education Programs Division. She was promoted to the IDEA Senior Fiscal Analyst in April of 2019. In her current capacity, she oversees the Federal IDEA Grant for the State of Wyoming and all of its Subgrantees. She has attended numerous trainings and conferences and works closely with the Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting (CIFR) and the National Center for System Improvement Fiscal Support Team (NCSI FST) to help stay informed of all the current rules and regulations under this program to help better assist all of Wyoming's school districts in meeting

IDEA requirements.



Kimberly Sanford

Kimberly Sanford joined the WDE in November as the Special Education Fiscal Supervisor and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Outreach Supervisor. She spent the previous fourteen years as a special education director and IDEA Part B grant manager in Wyoming. Kim started her career teaching at the elementary and high school levels for eighteen years in Florida and Wyoming. Kim also serves on the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities and the State Rehabilitation Council.



Eric Stremcha

Eric has spent his full 28 year career in Campbell County School District #1. He has served as Junior High Literacy Teacher; Basketball, Football, and Track coach, Elementary Principal, and Title 1 Director and most recently as Director of Student Support Services. He has been married for the past 27 years and has two daughters; one is a junior at the University of Wyoming and the youngest is a senior in High School. In his free time he enjoys golfing and tinkering in the garage.



Jeannie Veytsman

Jeannie Veytsman joined the WDE in 2022 as an ESSER Funds Manager, transitioning to the eGMS Program Manager position in 2023. Jeannie's prior grants management experience includes the Head of Grants Department position at the International Relations Office of Yerevan State University, the Project Manager position at the UN Refugee Agency, and the Program Manager position at the Armenian National Academy of Sciences. Jeannie has taught Corporate Finance at Rutgers University (NJ), Finance at the American University of Armenia, Scientific Writing for Engineers at the Yerevan State University and led International Business recitations at Baruch College Zicklin School of

Business (NY). She holds a Master's degree in Electrical Engineering, an MBA from Fordham University (NY) and has a few years of PhD studies in Finance and Economics at Rutgers U under her belt.

Bonnie Volk

Bonnie has worked for the Department of Family Services for 36 years and has served as the District 6 Manager for the past 15 years. She has a bachelors degree in Psychology and Sociology and a Masters in counseling and guidance. In the prior 21 years she worked as a social worker both child protection and probation, a Social Service Supervisor, and a County Manager. In her off time she enjoys music and long walks with her delightful dog Ozzie!

Cheyenne Wolfley

I'm Cheyanne Wolfley - wife, mother of 5 and Gigi to 3 little boys. I love spending time with my crew. I have been the Grant Coordinator/Director of Instruction Administrative Assistant in Lincoln County School District #2 for just over 5 years. All grants except IDEA go through my office. I'm a nerd when it comes to data, tracking that data, and making my documentation work for me.

Lee Zimmer

Sheridan County School District #1 Curriculum Director. Lee has dedicated 27 years to education, including 22 years teaching mathematics at Big Horn. Currently serving as the Curriculum Director and Federal Grants Manager for Sheridan County School District #1, Lee is passionate about enhancing student learning through curriculum development and instructional best practices. Outside work, Lee enjoys spending time with family, including three children - two in college and one working as an athletic trainer - and two golden retrievers.