



Independent Schools  
Association of the Southwest

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## 2025 ISAST Conference

Thursday, October 23 – Friday, October 24  
The Drury Plaza, Arlington, TX

### October 23

October 23 | 8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Coffee and check-in

October 23 | 9:00 – 9:15 a.m.

#### Welcome

Introductions and Explanation of Problem-Solving Session

October 23 | 9:15 – 10:30 a.m.

#### From Tech to Trusted School Leader: AI, Influence, and the Future of Schools

Everyone is talking about AI—but few are connecting it to the daily realities of school leadership or to the classroom experience. This session will cut through the noise to show how both operational or educational technology leaders can use AI as a bridge to partner with division heads, academic leaders, teachers, and boards. You will walk away with concrete examples, conversation starters, and strategies to position yourself as more than a tech expert: as a school leader.

*Vinnie Vrotny, The Kinkaid School*

October 23 | 10:30 – 10:45 a.m.

Break



October 23 | 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.

**Vetting Classroom Apps: Balancing Innovation, Safety, and Impact**

This session explores effective processes for evaluating educational apps before adoption. We'll look at criteria for data privacy (including age-based compliance), instructional alignment, usability, cost and licensing, long-term value, and ongoing support, giving technology leaders practical frameworks to ensure tools enhance learning while protecting students and supporting teachers.

*Paul Tidmore, The Parish Episcopal School*

OR

**Leveraging Software to Support Learning Differences**

Discover how emerging technologies can help schools better meet the needs of students with learning differences. This session highlights tools that enhance accessibility, personalize instruction, and promote student independence.

*Tina Larson, The Shelton School*

October 23 | 11:45 – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch sponsored by

**INFINITY** PRO™



October 23 | 1:00 – 2:15 p.m.

**Deepfake Defense for Tech Leaders**

This is an interactive session designed to equip independent school technology directors with the knowledge and tools needed to protect their communities from AI-powered misinformation and deepfake threats. Participants will explore the psychology behind these attacks through hands-on activities where they'll identify manipulation techniques in realistic scenarios and learn practical frameworks like SIFT and OODA to resist psychological manipulation. The session teaches inoculation theory as a strategy for building mental resilience against deceptive tactics throughout their institutions. Through



collaborative planning exercises, tech leaders will assess their current vulnerabilities and develop concrete action plans for policy updates, cultural shifts, and educational initiatives tailored to their schools.

*Evan Harris, Founder & President, Pathos Consulting Group*

October 23 | 2:15 – 2:45 p.m.

Break

October 23 | 2:45 – 3:45 p.m.

**Unconference**

At the beginning of the session all participants will brainstorm together about topics they wish to discuss. Each topic will be assigned to a table, and participants may attend as many discussions as they wish during this block. There will be time at the end for sharing insights from the discussions with the entire group.

October 23 | 3:45 – 4:00 p.m.

Break

October 23 | 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

**Problem-Solving Session**

This hour is set aside to answer the specific questions you have for your colleagues that may not fit neatly into any particular session at the conference. Throughout the day, attendees will post questions on a board in the meeting space. During this session, the group will answer those questions. We will be looking to the experts in our midst for guidance and assistance.

October 23 | 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

**Reception at The Drury Plaza**

Evening Reception at The Drury Plaza



## October 24

October 24 | 6:00 – 8:30 a.m.

Complimentary hot breakfast for guests of The Drury Plaza.

October 24 | 8:00 – 8:30 a.m.

Morning coffee for those not staying at The Drury Plaza.

October 24 | 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

### **Creating Your School's Cybersecurity Initiative**

Learn how to design and implement a comprehensive cybersecurity plan tailored to your school. This session covers best practices for protecting data, training faculty and staff, and building a sustainable security culture that safeguards both operations and learning environments.

*Jeremy King, Casady School*

October 24 | 9:30 – 10:00 a.m.

Break and hotel check-out

October 24 | 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

### **Managing Back to School, Tariffs, and Your Budget**

As students and educators returned to school this fall, the one thing that is affecting everyone is tariffs. The rising cost of goods and services across the technology department in addition to departments across the school has everyone feeling the pinch. In addition, families are bearing the increasing costs of back-to-school supplies, ingredients for lunches, and sporting equipment among other expenses. Add to that severe cuts to the supplemental nutritional assistance program (SNAP) which has an additional effect on families who qualify for financial aid. This informative session with guest speakers from [Educational Collaborators](#) and [STS Education](#) will discuss the challenges of market volatility, manufacturing shifts, and geopolitical impacts technology providers are facing. Learn strategies for managing increasing costs to your technology budget and your school.

*Daisy Steele and Michael Carson, Educational Collaborators*

*Brandon Birch, STS Education*

October 24 | 11:00 a.m.

Conference Adjourns

## Guest Speakers

### Michael Carson



Michael Carson has been in the field of education for 15 years and has served as assistant director of technology at Sidwell Friends School in Washington, DC and Director of Technology Innovation at McLean School in Potomac, Maryland. Michael currently serves Director of Sales for Educational Collaborators, a national consulting firm specializing in Independent School Ed Tech. Michael enjoys helping schools discover their potential for sustainable growth and development in technology, professional development and design thinking. In his spare time he enjoys yoga, singing, and improv comedy.

### Evan Harris



Evan Harris is the founder and president of Pathos Consulting Group, where he helps independent schools develop real-world policies and incident response plans to address emerging digital threats, including deepfake sexual abuse and sextortion. With over a decade of experience as an English teacher and administrator, he holds a master's in private school leadership from Teachers College and has furthered his studies as a Technology Ethics Fellow at Stanford's Human-Centered AI Institute. Evan has collaborated with the general counsel of NAIS, the Texas State Senate, and the Office of the First Lady on initiatives to strengthen school safety and student protection in the age of AI.

### Daisy Steele



Daisy Steele has been a Senior Collaborator at Educational Collaborators since 2021. She most recently served in the role of Director of Technology at Catlin Gabel School in Portland, Oregon, since 2014 and was at the school 22 years. Recently retired from Catlin Gabel, Daisy has served in several technology roles since arriving at the school in 2002. Prior to Catlin Gabel, Daisy worked for the Salem-Keizer School district in an educational technology support role. She has also provided technology direction, training, and support to numerous other schools and organizations. She is an active member of the Association of Technology Leaders in Independent Schools and participated in the inaugural Leadership Institute cohort. Daisy grew up in Okinawa, Japan and enjoys paddle boarding, creating art, and hanging out with her family.