

## UASSP Summer Conference Keynote Speaker Bios



### **Sandy Zimmerman**

Sandy is an award-winning teacher, coach, athlete, and inspirational speaker whose story reminds us that no dream is out of reach. She was a teacher and coach for 23 years. Sandy is best known to millions as a 10-time competitor on NBC's hit show *American Ninja Warrior*, where she made history by becoming the first mom ever to finish the course and hit the buzzer.

Sandy has taken her message of strength and perseverance to audiences on *The Kelly Clarkson Show*, CNN, E! News, *The Huffington Post*, and *Women's Health*. In 2022, Sandy was inducted into the National Physical Education Teacher Hall of Fame. She's also a TEDx speaker, a national judo champion, and a former Gonzaga University basketball player who still coaches today with the Spokane Warriors.

Through her book *Get Out of the Car* and her motivational talks around the country, Sandy inspires people of all ages to break through excuses and push past obstacles to achieve what once seemed impossible.



### **J Lynn Jones**

J. Lynn Jones is a veteran of education. His career has spanned more than four decades as a teacher, principal, district level administrator, and trainer. For more than 30 years he has also been successful as a professional speaker, trainer and facilitator delivering training in 47 of the 50 United States, Canada, and Mexico. J. Lynn is known for his work with *Crucial Learning* sharing *Crucial Conversations*, *Crucial Accountability*, *Crucial Influence*, *Getting Things Done* and *The Power of Habit* to a variety of organizations including manufacturing, health care, banking and education. He has also trained *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, *The FISH Philosophy* and *Customer Loyalty*.

J. Lynn was named as Utah's National Distinguished Principal, Special Education Director of the Year and received the National Milken Award. He also served as the President of the Utah Association of Elementary School Principals.



### **Brad Cohen**

If you've ever wondered what impact you as an educator have on the students you teach, Brad Cohen, a teacher with Tourette Syndrome, will bring you to the *Front of the Class*. This "First Class Teacher of the Year" award winner came from the depths of abuse and was determined to rise above it all to become an inspiration to others.

Brad's book, *Front of the Class: How Tourette Syndrome Made Me the Teacher I Never Had*, focuses on having a positive attitude and how all it takes is for ONE person to believe in a child in order for them to be successful. The book was made into a movie of the same name. His story shows that just because a person has a disability, they can still follow their dreams.



### **Tim Clue**

Tim is an award-winning writer, educator, innovator and comic. Tim is a latecomer to the title of creator, developer and owner of *FunnyPolling*. He performed for George W. Bush and opened for Jerry Seinfeld. You may have heard his comedy on XM/Sirius Satellite Radio. His play *Leaving Iowa* was nominated for Best New Play in the country and is performed nationwide.

Before he was an educator, speaker, playwright, innovator, or father—Tim was a left-handed, undiagnosed, hyperactive dyslexic rug rat. He sees a need to help us all rethink team focus as connection, conversation and engagement. Be ready to experience his mission, his methods and a little madness.



## UASSP Summer Conference “ED” Talk Speaker Bios



### **JR Brandon**

Dr. Brandon is an administrator in Nebo School District. He is currently assigned as an Assistant Principal at Mapleton Junior High. Dr. Brandon first worked for Nebo School District as a paraeducator in a Special Education Class supporting students with behavioral and academic challenges. After completing his Bachelor’s Degree at Utah Valley University, he was hired as a Special Education Teacher in Nebo School District, teaching at Salem Junior High and Spanish Fork High. While at Spanish Fork High, he coached Football and Track and Field. Dr. Brandon earned a Master’s Degree in School Counseling from the University of Western Alabama and worked as a School Counselor at Salem Hills. He then completed an administration certificate from Utah Valley University and a Doctorate Degree in Educational Leadership from the University of the Cumberlands. He has spent the past five years as an administrator at Mapleton Junior High and was recently appointed as an Assistant Principal at Spanish Fork High School, effective July 1, 2026.



### **Kevin Andersen**

Kevin Andersen earned his bachelor’s degree from Utah State University and a master’s from Grand Canyon University. With 30 years in education, he has taught health, PE, ESL and CTE. Kevin spent 23 years as head basketball coach, four years as a head softball coach, and also served as an assistant football coach. For the past 10 years, he has been the athletic director at Mountain Crest High School. Kevin and his wife recently celebrated their 34th anniversary; they have six children and four grandchildren.



### **Quinn Kellis**

Quinn Kellis, Ed.D., currently serves as the School Support and Improvement Coordinator at the Utah State Board of Education. In addition to leading the school improvement and education technology teams, Dr. Kellis is also responsible for Educator Evaluations, School Leadership Development and chairs the Utah Coalition of Education Leaders. He is a former superintendent, principal and high school English teacher. Dr. Kellis is passionate about supporting school administrators and coaching aspiring principals.



### **Julie Luab**

Julie Luab is an AP and CE Chemistry teacher at Davis High School and an adjunct professor at Weber State University. With over 15 years of experience, she helps educators reduce overload, reclaim time and increase instructional clarity through practical systems thinking. As the founder of Lean Think and a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, Julie equips schools with sustainable approaches to teacher focus, well-being, and classroom effectiveness.



### **Sam Beeson**

Sam is the author of six books for children/teens. The San Antonio Free Press chose Sam’s book A Rare Nativity as their holiday book of the year in 2015. For several years, Sam was a monthly contributor to KSL Television’s Studio 5 with Brooke Walker. Sam has just finished his 29th year as an English teacher at American Fork High School. Although he unintentionally produces plenty of verbal and written gaffes, Sam loves grammar and punctuation. Sam is an amazing leader and mentor for teenagers and adults in the community.

