



NASJE 2026 Annual Conference

Athens, Georgia

September 27-30, 2026 | UGA Center for Continuing Education Conference & Hotel

Education in Service of Justice & Liberty

★ Plenary / Featured	Breakout A	Breakout B	Breakout C	Meals / Breaks / Other
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Sunday, September 27, 2026

Time	Session Title	Speaker(s)
3:00 – 4:00 PM	Past Presidents' Meeting	
3:30 – 5:00 PM	New Professionals Meet & Greet	Organized by New Professionals Committee (NPC)
New members are invited to join the New Professionals Committee (NPC) Meet & Greet for a casual opportunity to connect with colleagues before the conference begins. Meet fellow judicial educators, learn more about the Association, and start building relationships in an informal setting. All attendees are welcome to participate and help welcome newer members. Grab a beverage, enjoy a relaxed atmosphere, and connect with colleagues before the conference gets underway.		
4:00 – 5:00 PM	State Directors' Meeting	
5:30 – 7:00 PM ★ Welcome Reception – Conference Begins!		
Begin the conference by connecting with the colleagues who share your commitment to advancing judicial branch education. The Welcome Reception is an opportunity to reunite with familiar faces, welcome first-time attendees, and engage with professionals from across the country who are shaping education for judges, court staff, and justice system partners. Enjoy light hors d'oeuvres in a relaxed setting as conversations begin that often continue throughout the conference and beyond. Whether you're exchanging ideas, exploring new approaches to judicial education, or reconnecting with colleagues, the Welcome Reception is the perfect way to begin the conference.		
7:30 – 10:00 PM	★ Exploring Justice in Films & Poetry	Lee Ann Barnhardt, ND; Joseph Sawyer, IL
This session equips judicial educators with practical approaches for using short films and poetry to examine justice, fairness, and bias within the judicial branch. Through curated visual and literary works, participants will explore how narrative and language expose assumptions, broaden perspective, and deepen reflection on judicial decision-making. The session also models techniques for integrating these materials into educational programs to foster engaging, thoughtful dialogue. Learning Objectives: - Assess how short films and poetry illuminate issues of fairness, perspective, and bias in judicial contexts. - Integrate multimedia and literary tools into judicial education to enhance engagement and critical reflection.		

Monday, September 28, 2026

Time	Track	Session Title	Speaker(s)
8:00 – 9:00 AM		Breakfast	
9:00 AM – 10:30 AM	Plenary	★ Georgia on My Mind: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Justice, and Civil Rights Today	Carol Anderson, PhD., Robert W. Woodruff Professor of African American Studies, Emory University; Giam Nguyen, J.D., Judicial & Legal Education Director & Scholar, Williams Institute; Michael Roosevelt, Principal Consultant, Maat Consulting Services
This interactive session invites judicial educators to reflect deeply on the enduring legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and its continuing relevance to justice, civil rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Drawing upon the history of the Civil Rights Movement and its unfinished work, participants will examine how Dr. King's vision challenges us to consider not only how justice is administered, but also how it is taught, modeled, and sustained through judicial education. The keynote presentation by Carol Anderson, PhD., Professor of History, Emory University, will provide historical and contemporary perspectives on the evolving relationship between justice, equality, and the courts. Participants will explore the role judicial educators play in preparing judges and court professionals to navigate increasingly complex legal, ethical, and societal issues while maintaining public trust in the judiciary. The presentation will encourage participants to consider how judicial education can cultivate fairness, impartiality, cultural responsiveness, and ethical leadership without compromising judicial independence. Learning Objectives Upon completion of this session, participants will be able to: - Examine the continuing influence of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision on justice, civil rights, and judicial education - Reflect on the role of judicial educators in promoting fairness, impartiality, ethical leadership, and public confidence in the courts			
10:30 – 10:45 AM — Break			
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM BREAKOUT Sessions			
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM	Breakout A	Georgia Still on My Mind: Reflective Journaling for Judicial Educators	Lee Ann Barnhardt, Director of Education, ND Courts; Giam Nguyen, J.D., Judicial & Legal Education Director & Scholar for the Williams Institute; Michael Roosevelt, Principal Consultant, Maat Consulting Services; Joseph Sawyer, Interim Director, Supreme Court of IL Judicial College
Building on the “Georgia on My Mind” plenary, participants will engage in a facilitated reflective journaling workshop that transforms learning into personal and professional action. Reflective journaling is increasingly recognized as an effective adult learning strategy that promotes self-awareness, critical thinking, ethical reflection, and continuous professional growth. Through guided writing, facilitated dialogue, and collaborative learning, participants will examine the ways in which the principles articulated by Dr. King—including justice, dignity, courage, compassion, and service—can strengthen judicial education and support lifelong learning within the courts. Participants will reflect on their own experiences as educators, identify opportunities to enhance learning environments, and develop concrete strategies for incorporating reflective practice into curriculum design, faculty development, leadership training, and judicial education programs. By connecting historical understanding with contemporary practice, participants will leave with practical tools that support deeper engagement, meaningful dialogue, and thoughtful decision-making in judicial education. Learning Objectives Upon completion of this session, participants will be able to: - Apply reflective journaling as an evidence-informed instructional strategy that enhances adult learning, critical reflection, and professional development. - Develop practical approaches for integrating reflective learning activities into judicial education programs, faculty development, and leadership training. - Create an individual action plan identifying one or more strategies to strengthen reflective practice within their own educational work.			

Monday, September 28, 2026

Time	Track	Session Title	Speaker(s)
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM	Breakout B	Leadership KSAs & the Benefits of Asking Questions	<i>Janet Cornell, Consultant</i>
One of the marks of a court leader is the ability to be open to new information and analyze issues critically. Communicating, listening, and using new insights all help a court leader and an organization to improve practices. Asking questions invites this process. Questions and inquiry allow leaders, regardless of job position, to fulfill court leader roles, in areas such as communicating, innovating, or problem-solving. These roles and questions position court leaders to make decisions and implement operational enhancements or changes. This session will identify why leaders should use questions and share examples of questions and question approaches. Using interaction and Q and A during the session, attendees will have an opportunity to identify their own list of queries to use.			
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM	Breakout C	Level Up Learning: Gamification Strategies for Engaging Judicial Education	<i>Aaron Burdick, IL</i>
Transform your presentation with the power of gamification. In an era characterized by digital innovation and evolving educational paradigms, gamification offers a dynamic approach to achieving our learning objectives. Participants will delve into the techniques of effective gamification and how to include gamification in future curriculum development. As a result of this course, participants will be able to: - Recall effective gamification techniques; and - Apply gamification strategies to enhance learner engagement.			
12:00 – 1:00 PM ★ Sponsors' Lunch			
1:00 – 2:15 PM BREAKOUT Sessions			
1:00 PM – 2:15 PM	Breakout A	Pitch Perfect Education: The Pitch, Priority, & Production of a Dedicated Week of Focused Education	<i>Janice Calvi-Ruimerman, CT</i>
In our line of work, we may not see the need for intensive weeklong curricula development as a priority. In fact, we may be very comfortable with providing a variety of courses annually, or standardized curricula monthly, or “one-offs” based on need, cost, and availability. However, we have found that certain topics, trends, and priorities need more, more focus, more importance, more time, and more dedication. Through weeklong initiatives, we establish a commitment to a particular subject matter and prioritize its value thereby creating the importance of continuous learning and professional development purposely dedicated to a specialized topic.			
1:00 PM – 2:15 PM	Breakout B	Critical Thinking, Curiosity, & Charisma in the Age of AI	<i>Jamie Giani, Third Branch Solutions</i>
As artificial intelligence reshapes how we work, learn, and communicate, judicial educators face a critical question: how do we maintain and strengthen uniquely human capabilities in an AI-augmented world? This interactive workshop guides participants through hands-on exercises exploring the intersection of technology and human excellence, demonstrating how critical thinking, genuine curiosity, and authentic charisma become more—not less—essential as AI tools proliferate. Through small group activities, live AI evaluations using frameworks like Occam's Razor and Brandolini's Law, and peer discussion, participants will practice evaluating AI outputs critically, asking better questions, and cultivating interpersonal skills that no algorithm can replicate. Attendees will leave with practical tools to harness AI's strengths while developing the distinctly human capabilities that drive meaningful education, leadership, and connection.			
1:00 PM – 2:15 PM	Breakout C	The Planning Circle, Needs Assessment, and Development of Goals	<i>Joseph Sawyer, IL; William Brunson, Esq., Consultant</i>
This session introduces the Planning Circle as a practical framework for designing effective educational programs. Participants will distinguish between individual courses and broader curricula; identify educational needs by examining gaps between current and desired knowledge or skills; and explore several needs-assessment models, including surveys, key informants, community forums, critical incidents, and social indicators. The session also explains how needs assessment findings inform overall course goals and measurable learning objectives. Through discussion and examples, participants will gain a clear, usable process for planning learner-centered programs that respond to real needs and support meaningful outcomes. After this 75-minute session, participants will be able to: (1) Differentiate between a “curriculum” and a “course”; (2) Identify effective methods for conducting needs assessments; and (3) Differentiate between goals and learning objectives.			
2:15 – 2:30 PM — Break			

MONDAY, September 29, 2026

Time	Track	Session Title	Speaker(s)
2:30-3:45 PM BREAKOUT Sessions			
2:30 PM-3:45 PM	<i>Breakout A</i>	How to Get Better at Your Job: Creative Professional Development for the Judicial Branch Educator	<i>Dot Keil, OH; Amanda Clark, MI</i>
The session centers on professional development tailored specifically for judicial branch educators, highlighting their specialized skills and roles. Participants will reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement using a new self-assessment tool based on the NASJE Core Competencies and engage in collaborative activities to create a repository of creative, low-cost, and high-impact professional development resources that extend beyond traditional methods. Attendees should be prepared to use a device that can access the internet during this workshop!			
2:30 PM-3:45 PM	<i>Breakout B</i>	Nebraska Judicial Leadership Academy: Helping Judges Address Emerging Issues Systemically	<i>Kelli Wood, NB</i>
When designing a leadership academy for judges in Nebraska, our goal was to help the judges think beyond their own jurisdiction and broaden their perspective. Participants will learn how the academy was designed, and experience how we taught systems thinking, and elements of project planning to help them to think more broadly about their role as leaders and address emerging issues in the courts.			
2:30 PM-3:45 PM	<i>Breakout C</i>	Adult Learning Theory: Distinguishing How Adults Learn & Learning Objectives - Focusing Educational Presentations	<i>Joseph Sawyer, IL; William Brunson, Esq., Consultant</i>
Adult learners bring a lifetime of experience to every educational setting, and good faculty know how to meet them there. Unlike children, who readily absorb new information, adults filter everything through prior experience. Dr. Malcolm Knowles's research confirms that children and adults learn differently, requiring faculty to design programs that honor those differences. Adult learners are self-directed and engage most deeply with content that connects to their needs and interests. Effective presentations depend equally on well-crafted learning objectives (e.g., learner-centered, observable, and measurable) that keep instruction focused and outcomes achievable. Most instructors can accomplish only one to three objectives per hour of instruction. After this 75-minute session, participants will be able to: (1) identify the characteristics of adult learners; (2) discuss strategies for motivating them; and (3) write appropriate learning objectives for their educational sessions they oversee.			
3:45 – 4:00 PM — Break			
4:00 – 5:30 PM	<i>Plenary</i>	★ Keynote-Lead Simply: Model. Connect. Involve.	<i>Holly Hoffman, Survivor</i>
Leadership isn't reserved for CEOs or managers, it's something we demonstrate every day in our workplaces, communities, and personal lives. In this engaging keynote, Holly Hoffman explores how effective leadership comes down to three simple actions: modeling the behaviors we want to see, connecting with others, and involving them in the process. Drawing on her unique experiences and practical insights, Holly shows that while the ways we lead may evolve, the fundamentals remain the same. Attendees will leave inspired to strengthen their leadership skills, build stronger relationships, and renew their passion for leading with purpose.			
6:00 – 8:30 PM ★ NASJE Sponsored Social			
Join your fellow conference attendees for an evening of conversation, culture, and connection at the Georgia Museum of Art, the official state museum of art and one of the Southeast's premier art museums. The Association will host a special social reception featuring a selection of hors d'oeuvres, providing a relaxed setting to reconnect with colleagues, meet new friends, and continue the conversations sparked during the conference. Complimentary shuttle service will be available between the conference venue and the museum throughout the evening, though those who prefer may also enjoy the approximately 15-minute walk. After enjoying refreshments, take time to explore the museum's galleries at your own pace. Home to nearly 20,000 works of art, the Georgia Museum of Art features an impressive collection spanning American, European, and Asian art, along with rotating special exhibitions that offer something new with every visit. Whether you're an art enthusiast or simply looking for a memorable evening in Athens, this reception promises a unique blend of networking, inspiration, and Southern hospitality.			

Tuesday, September 29, 2026

Time	Track	Session Title	Speaker(s)
7:30 – 8:30 AM		Breakfast	
8:30 – 9:45 AM	Breakout A	Rethinking Neglect: Considering the Impact of Poverty Bias in the Courts	<i>Princess Darnell, Darnell Adaptive Consulting</i>
This session will explore the distinction between poverty related barriers and neglect, while considering how implicit and explicit assumptions shape perceptions of compliance, credibility, accountability, and parenting of court users. This session will examine the realities many court users face, including food deserts, housing insecurity, and wage disparities that directly affect access to the courts and compliance with court requirements. Participants will be encouraged to reconsider common narratives surrounding responsibility and choice, particularly when behaviors associated with survival are misinterpreted through a middle-class lens. The session will provide strategies for recognizing poverty bias, increasing contextual understanding, and promoting procedural fairness, dignity, and equitable treatment at every point of contact within the justice system.			
8:30 – 9:45 AM	Breakout B	ANCHOR-Training in the Attention Economy	<i>Jamie Giani, Third Branch Solutions</i>
Every app, platform, and notification competes for the same finite resource: attention. Yet most judicial education still assumes focus is guaranteed. This interactive session introduces the ANCHOR framework—a practical, attention-first approach where you'll learn to Anchor attention immediately, Name the specific need you're addressing, Create intentionally for cognitive load, Humanize your delivery, Operationalize content into reusable assets, and Reinforce learning beyond the session. Attendees will engage with the presenter (via live polling, Q&A, and live feedback) as the training materials are developed in real time live on stage using Claude AI, Canva, and other modern tools. This program is, then, a session (on training in the attention economy) within a session (about using modern tools, including gen AI). Attendees will leave with a complete framework, an audit checklist they'll watch being created, and practical tools to transform their training.			
8:30 – 9:45 AM	Breakout C	Learning Activities - Making Learning Interactive	<i>William Brunson, Esq., Consultant</i>
Why do so many presenters rely exclusively on the lecture method when we know from research that retention rates are negligible? Why don't presenters use other learning activities such as small groups, case studies, debates, learning games, among other creative methods. The best presenters know they need to design effective learning activities that specifically help the learners achieve the learning objectives. Learning objectives define what the students will learn. The learning activities define how the students will achieve those learning objectives. After this session, the participants will be able to: (1) describe why the lecture method is used to exclusion of other methods; (2) help faculty choose learning activities that are suitable for the topics they intend to teach (e.g., debates, small and large group discussions, role plays, learning games, etc.); and (3) summarize how to design learning activities that accomplish their learning objectives.			
9:45 – 10:00 AM — Break			
10:00 AM – 10:15 AM	<i>Plenary</i>	★ Georgia Judiciary Welcome;	
10:15 AM – 12:00 PM	<i>Plenary</i>	★ OPEN SPACES: Participant-centered Learning Experience	<i>Stephanie Hemmert, Federal Judicial Center</i>
OPEN SPACES: What are your current work challenges? What questions do you have for your NASJE peers? What experience can you share with your NASJE peers? "Open Space Technology" is a learning approach started by Harrison Owen over 40 years ago that brings people together who have common challenges and share information and experiences with one another. This year we're bringing the concept to NASJE for you to experience! You, the participants, "choose your own adventure". The plenary session will set the stage, review the three ground rules, discuss the principle of the Law of Mobility, and, with inviting anyone to identify discussion topics, will create the real-time, participant-driven agenda. A core belief behind Open Space is that the people who care most about a topic are the best people to discuss it. You get to decide which discussions you join! When you gain what you need from one discussion and/or have shared your experience, we encourage you to attend another discussion, even if the one you are in is still going on. There is no limit to the number of discussions you may attend in a round. We're excited to get started!			

Tuesday, September 29, 2026

Time	Track	Session Title	Speaker(s)
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM		Members Lunch/Business Meeting	
Remarks from 2026 President Christine Christopherson; Karen Thorsen Award Presentation; Committee Report-outs; Voting;			
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Plenary	★ Experiential Learning Opportunity: Security and the Courts	Stan Cooper, Director of Judicial Protective Services for the Supreme Court & Court of Appeals; Jeffrey L. Clark, UGA Chief of Police; John Heinen, UGA Director of Emergency Preparedness; James E. Williamson, UGA Strategic Initiatives; Adam David Fouche, UGA Associate Vice President, Environmental Safety, Risk & Resiliency;
Step behind the scenes at Sanford Stadium for a one-of-a-kind ELO training experience. Conference attendees will receive unprecedented behind-the-scenes access to areas rarely seen by the public while exploring operational and security protocols used to manage one of the nation's premier athletic venues. Participants will gain practical ideas and strategies that translate directly to judicial security, emergency preparedness, and training programs used within courts and at home. This session will: • Highlight the importance of judicial education in the national security space • Include a visit to a University of Georgia athletic venue as a practical learning experience • Conclude with a discussion on cybersecurity, followed by an interactive exchange where attendees share their state's challenges, experiences, and learning opportunities			
		Dinner on Your Own	
Take advantage of the free evening to explore the city's vibrant downtown, known for its outstanding restaurants, live music, and Southern hospitality. You'll find plenty of options, just a short walk or ride away. Be sure to check the Conference App for restaurant recommendations, local attractions, and invitations from NASJE Committees hosting informal dinners or gatherings throughout the evening.			

Wednesday, September 30, 2026

Time	Track	Session Title	Speaker(s)
8:00 – 9:00 AM		Breakfast	
9:00 – 9:15 AM	<i>Plenary</i>	★ Closing Remarks/Swearing In	
Swearing in of 2027 NASJE Officers & Board; 2027 NASJE - Indiana Invitation; Closing Remarks: 2026 and 2027 NASJE Presidents			
9:15 – 10:30 AM	<i>Plenary</i>	★ Unsabotage Your Organization	<i>Jamie Giani, Third Branch Solutions</i>
What if your most frustrating meeting followed a playbook written 80 years ago? In 1944, the Office of the Secret Service published the Simple Sabotage Field Manual, teaching operatives how to destroy productivity from within—insist on committees, make long speeches, haggle over wording, and reopen settled decisions. This dynamic plenary reveals how WWII sabotage tactics have become embedded in modern workplace culture, using compelling examples, AI demonstrations, and audience participation to expose hidden inefficiencies. Judicial education units face unique vulnerability: necessary procedural rigor can mask destructive patterns. Attendees will leave with concrete diagnostic tools and practical antidotes to build organizational resilience and turn self-sabotage into meaningful progress.			
10:30 – 10:45 AM — Break			
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM	<i>Breakout A</i>	The Art & Adages to Creating a Learning Organization	<i>Janice Calvi-Ruimerman, CT</i>
"The adage that knowledge is power applies with great vigor to the world of the courts." Establishing a Judicial Branch as a learning organization by prioritizing education and creating a foundation in continuous education will result in established career paths, leadership tracks, motivated success, and empowered employees through knowledge, collaboration and a shared vision of court management at the center of it all. Investing time and resources in our education will directly affect the public's trust and confidence. The result will be that the people of the State will be more effectively served by court personnel who reap the benefit of focused and improved employees who have been exposed to education focused on court competencies.			
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM	<i>Breakout B</i>	Communicating Effectively	<i>Aaron Burdick, IL</i>
Clear communication is the backbone of effective judicial education. Whether engaging with faculty or committee members, judicial educators need this skill set to perform at a high level. Using engaging learning activities, participants will explore effective communication techniques that deepen these working relationships. As a result of this course, participants will be able to: • Identify common barriers to effective communication; and • Explain how clear communication increases collaboration.			
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM	<i>Breakout C</i>	The Social Determinants of Health & the Judiciary: Intervening with Fines & Fees	<i>Lisa Foster, Salus Populi; Alisa Lincoln, Salus Populi</i>
This session brings together an innovative judicial education program (JEP) - the Salus Populi Project - and the Fines and Fees Justice Center to describe a course, including an interactive game, designed to increase judges' understanding of the social determinants of health (SDOH) and highlight specific strategies judges can employ to address fines and fees, (both criminal and civil) as a social driver of health, safety, and access to justice. In this session, we will explore 1) the development, implementation and evaluation of the first judicial education program (JEP) on the social determinants of health (SDOH); 2) the extent and impact of fines and fees on people involved with the judicial system and the ways that monetary sanctions shape the relationships among poverty, health, community safety and well-being.; 3) discuss strategies that judges can employ to mitigate the impact of fines and fees on population health.; 4) engage participants in evaluating a new interactive game for judges and other justice system stakeholders.			