

# Fall 2025 Conference Overview

## REGISTER NOW!

### **PARKING:**

[Fulton and Seward Parking Lots](#)  
[Walking Directions to Eberhard Center](#)

- 7:30 – 8:15 AM **Registration**
- 8:15 – 9:10 AM **Breakout Session A**
- 9:10 – 9:30 AM **Break**
- 9:30 – 10:25 AM **Breakout Session B**

**10:45 – 11:45 AM**

**Sustaining the AP Fire:  
Just-In-Time Strategies for Mid-October**

**Keynote Speaker: Dave Stuart Jr.**

12:00 – 12:45 PM **Lunch (provided)**

12:45 – 2:15 PM **Subject Area Roundtable: Instructional Planning Report Analysis**

Focus on Best Practices:

The afternoon session is PLC work session per AP subject. This will be moderated by a current AP teacher and involve time to...

- Bring, Share, and Discuss all teachers AP Instructional Planning Reports (bring yours printed out).
- Share specific formative and summative Best Practices to improve identified challenges with other AP Teachers.
- Build relationships with like-minded subject area experts, sharing examples of lesson strategies, timelines, etc.
- Discuss current and future changes to your specific AP subject area.

## The AP Best Practices Conference Welcomes

Dave Stuart Jr.

AP World History Teacher  
Author  
Education Consultant

Keynote Address

Sustaining the AP Fire:  
Just-In-Time Strategies  
for Mid-October



FOR AP TEACHERS. BY AP TEACHERS.

**OCTOBER 20th, 2025**  
**GVSU L.V. Eberhard Center**

Subject Specific Collaboration and Breakout Sessions

Register  
Here:



In partnership with:



## Fall 2025 BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### Breakout Session A

8:15 – 9:10 AM

#### **[1A] Access to Advanced Placement (All AP Courses Welcome) Room 710** **No Buzzwords - Let's Keep Calling It What It is: Service to OUR Students**

***Presenter: Paul DeAngelis***

***Regional Director - Equal Opportunity Schools***

This session will provide attendees with actionable strategies and the latest research on cultivating a sense of belonging for students enrolled in advanced courses. Attendees will leave with practical tools to advance equity and inclusion — without relying on contested terminology. Recent research demonstrates that a strong sense of belonging directly correlates with improved academic performance, persistence, and well-being for students — especially those historically underrepresented in advanced coursework. Classrooms must remain places where ALL students can ask, “Do I belong here?” and hear, resoundingly, “Yes!”

#### **[2A] AP Literature Room 310** **Shifting the Focus from Grades to Growth: Writing Conferences for the AP Classroom**

***Presenters: Jennifer Swisher-Carroll***

***AP Literature and Composition Teacher at Edwardsburg Public Schools***

AP students care deeply about their grades, so much so that writing growth often takes a backseat to “But how can I get an A?” In this session, I will share how I use a constant conferencing process and peer revision to shift that away from “the A” to “How can I make my writing stronger?” This process allows an instructor to individualize instruction for each student, celebrate what each student does well, and work toward strengthening and refining writing. Participants will also have opportunities to discuss what writing strategies and approaches work well in their classrooms.

#### **[3A] AP Calculus (but friendly for Precalculus) Room 316** **Making Calculus Click: Classroom Resources that Drive Engagement**

***Presenter: Nick Schweitzer***

***AP Calculus Teacher at Hamilton Public Schools***

Calculus doesn't have to be a mystery! In this session, we'll explore a range of practical resources designed to ignite curiosity and boost engagement in your Calculus classroom while helping students connect the dots. You'll leave with a toolbox of ready-to-implement resources and strategies to make Calculus click for every student. A device is not required, but one is encouraged. The strategies presented can be adapted for other AP courses, especially Precalculus.

#### **[4A] AP Pre-Calculus Room 317**

In partnership with:



## **Debate Math**

***Presenter: Chris Tyler***

***AP PreCalculus Teacher at Waverly High School***

This session will explore Chris Luzniak's framework for using debate in the mathematics classroom and how it can help your AP students solidify their justification skills. Participants will learn a structure to teach students how to deliver an argument and work toward delivering sound reasoning, as well as a listening exercise that will help students build their skills in synthesizing and summarizing information.

## **[5A] AP Statistics Room 414**

### **AP Stats 2.0: What's Changing for 2026-2027?**

***Presenter: Sarah Johnson***

***AP Statistics Teacher at Grand Blanc High School***

The AP Statistics course is getting a makeover for the 2026–2027 school year! Gone are some old favorites like geometric distributions and chi-square goodness-of-fit tests, making room for a sharper focus on the statistical problem-solving process: asking questions, designing studies, analyzing data, and drawing conclusions. This session will highlight the key curriculum updates, explore how assessments are evolving, and give teachers practical tips to navigate the new framework with confidence, and maybe even a little fun. Get ready to help students tackle stats like pros, not just crunch numbers!

## **[6A] AP Biology (friendly for any AP course seeking PBL ideas) Room 418** **Make it all PBL**

***Presenter: Chad VanHouten***

***AP Biology Teacher at East Kentwood High School***

There is a focus within the College board to move courses towards Project/Placed Based Learning. We see this with Environmental Science, Statistics, History, Government and Human Geography. More courses are likely to follow this trend as we prepare students for careers that require the PBL skill set. In this course, we discuss how to make your **entire course** Project Based Learning. It can't just be a project you do occasionally, but needs to become a way of thinking. How do we do "notes" in a PBL way? What labs lend themselves to a PBL format. Is there a template that can be used to make anything PBL? Come join us and learn how we can all transform our classrooms into an inquiry led, student focused, project based course!

## **[7A] AP Studio Art Room (Part 1 of 2) Room 716**

### **Developing a Strong Inquiry: how to guide students in developing their sustained investigation**

***Presenter: Le Tran***

***AP Art Teacher at Kentwood Public Schools***

Morning session presentation:

1. Developing a Strong Inquiry: how to guide students in developing their sustained investigation.

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2. Documenting Process: teach students what to document & why they should document during the process stage.
3. Create a Cohesive Portfolio: what is the connection between materials and methods.

Afternoon hands-on workshop:

Introduction to materials, techniques, and resources for the AP Studio Art teachers

## **[8A] AP Seminar Room 312**

### **Performance Tasks and End-of-Course Exam Preparation in AP Seminar**

***Presenter: Alex Hower***

***AP Seminar Teacher at Northview Public Schools***

This session will focus specifically on the Performance Tasks (PT #1 + PT #2) and End of Course Exams (EOC A + B). What are some ways to plan and prepare students for submitting to the digital portfolio? How do we include all students in a mixed classroom of test-takers and non-test-takers? What are the specific skills needed for each task and exam? Buckle up, those questions and more will be addressed!

## **[9A] AP Physics (open to all AP Classes) Room 417**

### **Can AP Classes Actually be Fun?**

***Presenter: Jim VanderWeide***

***AP Physics Teacher at Hudsonville High School***

Many AP classes are difficult courses and tend to add to the anxiety and stress levels of the students, and maybe even the teachers. In this session, we will learn and share some ways to add humor and fun to your AP class to make it more enjoyable for the students and less stressful for everyone.

## **[10A] AP Environmental Science Room 419**

### **Writing Like a Scholar (APES Edition)**

***Presenter: Jordan Discinger-Smedes***

***AP Environmental Science Teacher at Grand River Preparatory High School***

Mantras, mini-FRQs, self-scoring, oh my! Come learn how you can build your APES scholars' FRQ writing skills WITHOUT adding more grading to YOUR workload. Transfer ownership of grading, giving feedback, and correcting mistakes to students so they can get more writing practice and give each other useful feedback. Participants will leave this session with 99 daily mini-FRQs (with answer keys), templates for peer grading and group FRQ writing, and a clear game plan for giving their students more FRQ practice and feedback.

## **[11A] AP Psychology Room 416**

### **If you like it, then you should make a lab out of it: Incorporating the science practices into all of your daily lessons**

***Presenter: Dana Melone***

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### ***AP Psychology Teacher at Cedar Rapids Kennedy High School***

The title is sung to the tune of all the single ladies and the goal is to help you incorporate the science practices into your daily lesson. This session will focus on taking all of the things you are already doing and adding application, research methods, and data calculation (the science practices). We will engage in hands-on examples as well as providing time for you to think about ways to incorporate this into your own classroom.

### **[12A] AP US History (All Social Sciences Welcome) Room 514** **Blending Writing, Debate, and Civic Engagement into APUSH**

***Presenter: Matt Vriesman***

***AP U.S. History Teacher at Kentwood Public Schools***

In this session I will share a new APUSH essay format that I have added to my course that both strengthens students skills assessed on the AP test but also reinforces to students that our purpose goes beyond a single standardized test, these are the very skills they need as active stakeholders in our democracy. For era 7, my students choose a specific policy in regards to imperialism, feminism, economics, or immigration, and write a persuasive essay in which they claim why the policy (or lack of appropriate policy) moved the nation closer to or further from its founding values. With multiple drafts, feedback, and revision, students strengthen their arguments before defending them in a pop-up debate. The same format is later applied to a current policy issue of their choice in Period 9 (& beyond). The process not only builds stronger AP writers but also reinforces critical thinking, argumentation, and civic literacy. I'll share scaffolding strategies, student samples, and best practices for blending writing, debate, and civic engagement into APUSH.

### **[13A] AP Spanish Language and Culture Room 510** **Spanish in Action: Designing Authentic Experiences for Students**

***Presenter: Jorge España***

***AP Spanish Teacher at West Aurora High School***

This workshop will explore strategies to help AP Spanish Language and Culture students apply their skills in authentic contexts outside the classroom. Participants will learn how to design opportunities such as the Career Expo, the Alianza Hispana Dance, college campus and museum visits. The session will emphasize meaningful communication and cultural connections that build confidence and fluency. Attendees will leave with practical resources, sample activities, and adaptable frameworks to encourage students to continue using Spanish in real-world situations, enriching their preparation for the AP exam and beyond.

### **[14A] AP US Government and Politics Room 511** **Building Bridge: Linkage Institutions/Unpacking FRQ #1**

***Presenter: Brian Stevens***

***AP Government Teacher at Coldwater High School***

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This session focuses when linkage institutions should be presented in AP Government and analyzing FRQ #1, the lowest scoring 2025 FRQ.

**[15A] AP Computer Science Principles Room 614**  
**Giving Voice and Choice to Student Projects**

***Presenter: Danielle Heft***

***AP Computer Science Teacher at Greenville Public Schools***

Individualizing student assessments allows the CSP teacher to give voice and choice in projects while incorporating the AP Rubric throughout the year. Come learn how to awaken your students' creativity with projects they choose without sacrificing the computer science principles they need to be successful.

**[16A] AP World History Room 512**  
**Discussing the OER Project**

***Presenter: Mark Thrall***

***AP World History Teacher at Northview Public Schools***

This session will explore resources from the OER project (<https://www.oerproject.com/>) and some ideas on how to implement skill building activities along with historical content into the classroom to prepare students for the AP exam.

**[17A] AP Chemistry Room 420**  
**The Buffer Zone: Demystifying Solutions Through Particle Models**

***Presenter: Chris Buczek***

***AP Chemistry Teacher at the Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities***

Using an innovative approach originally developed by Jeanette Stewart (Marist School, Atlanta), discover how particulate modeling and visualization can transform your teaching of buffer solutions. Learn how these adapted strategies and hands-on activities help students understand buffer mechanics, calculate pH values, and interpret molecular-level representations. The session includes analysis of recent AP Chemistry exam questions and practical approaches for preparing students for buffer-related problems. Through implementation in my own classroom, I've found this method particularly effective in helping students master one of AP Chemistry's most challenging topics.

**[18A] AP Language and Composition Room 314**  
**Fresh Assessments for AP Language Students in Today's World**

***Presenter: Janelle Miles***

***AP Language and Composition Teacher at Northview Public Schools***

Sure, attention spans have shifted—but students still crave engaging, challenging, and just learning experiences. In this session, I'll share lesson plans that have stayed verdant, lively, and effective across my 15 years teaching AP English Language and Composition and 25+ years in Michigan's public schools: the

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Creative Definition Essay, community-building book talks, Two-Page-Spreads, Accountable Talk, and the Grit Essay.

**[19A] AP US History (Government and World also Welcome) Room 415**  
**Supplementing AP Government and AP US History With Local Resources**

***Presenter: Randy Cotts***

***High School Outreach Coordinator at the Haustening Center for Presidential Studies - GVSU***

Need to supplement your AP U.S. Government and AP U.S. History courses with dynamic, local resources? This session will provide an overview of the Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies at Grand Valley State University, an ideal partner for West Michigan educators. As a free resource hub for teachers and students, the Center offers access to events with leading scholars—such as David Brooks, Heather Gerken, and Jeffrey Rosen—that support AP Government, including the Civic Connection requirement. For APUSH, programs like Garrett Graff's *Why WWII Still Matters* and Brooke Barbier's *King Hancock* connect directly to course themes. Attendees will also discover curated, classroom-ready materials from the Center's extensive archive.

**Breakout Session B**

**9:30 – 10:25 AM**

**[1B] AP General Session (All AP Courses Welcome) Room 710**  
***What's NEW with AP - Courses and Updates***

***Presenter: Dennis Beste***

***Director, K-12 State and District Partnerships with The College Board***

The College Board wants to keep you informed about new courses and updates on the AP program. Come join us to learn more, ask questions and take back valuable information to your schools. In our session, we'll discuss the new courses starting in 2026-27, we'll share updated data on the AP program and answer any questions you may have.

**[2B] AP Literature and Composition Room 310**  
**Green Desire: Finding Meaning and Joy in Shakespeare's Plants**

***Presenter: Sheridan Steelman***

***Literature Teacher at GVSU***

Pick up your gardening tools as we dig through a variety of plants and lore in Shakespeare's plays and sonnets. The purpose of this presentation is to illuminate how plant lore provides cultural knowledge. Attendees will learn the "vertues" of Shakespeare's plants as well as the motives of his characters through a 16th-century lens. Some plants and herbs are given away by characters, such as Perdita in *A Winter's Tale* when she gifts rue, gillyvors, and marjoram. Other plants are magical or even mysterious, such as the pansy in

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Midsummer or nightshade in Romeo and Juliet. Participants will engage in strategies for teaching “green style,” such as visual text analysis, paired readings, and nature writing. Most importantly, strategies for incorporating documents and plant lore into existing lesson plans will be the mainstay of the presentation.

**[3B] AP Calculus Room 316**

**From Intuition to Understanding: An EFFL Approach to Teaching Calculus**

***Presenter: Sarah Stecher***

***AP Calculus Consultant at Math Medic***

In this session, we will explore new ways to unpack key Calculus concepts using Experience First, Formalize Later (EFFL) lessons. By building on student intuition to develop concepts, we can help students move beyond memorizing and mimicking to arrive at deep, flexible understanding. In this session participants will get to experience an EFFL lesson as a learner, and dialogue with colleagues about best practices for opening up Calculus concepts to all.

**[4B] AP Pre-Calculus Room 317**

**Spiraling All Year Long**

***Presenter: Bri Leamon***

***AP PreCalculus Teacher at East Kentwood High School***

Ever wonder how to make AP Exam prep less stressful? Make kids feel confident with spiraling content all year long. In this session we will talk through review activities and ways in which my classroom is constantly reviewing content throughout the entire school year. This will include items like group FRQ's, mini-tests, exit tickets and other review activities. This gives students the ability to be confident in the content, allowing exam review time to focus on the nitty-gritty of the exam itself.

**[5B] AP Statistics Room 414**

**Teaching Inference Like a Rock Star**

***Presenter: Sarah Johnson***

***AP Statistics Teacher at Grand Blanc High School***

Inference is one of the most challenging yet critical units in AP Statistics, and student success often depends on mastering the art of selecting and applying the correct procedure. This session will equip AP Statistics teachers with practical strategies and resources to help students navigate inference with confidence. Participants will explore engaging activities, decision-making tools, and classroom-tested approaches designed to demystify inference and boost exam performance. Walk away with a toolkit of resources to make your students feel like rock stars when tackling inference on the AP exam.

**[6B] AP Biology Room 418**

**How to Tackle FRQ's with Sentence Stems and Word Banks**

***Presenter: Erika Ullrey***

***AP Biology Teacher at Grandville High School***

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How do you AP Biology students tackle Free Response Questions? Come learn some of the things that I do... we practice free response questions with sentence stems and word banks, I have students work on free response questions in rotating stations, I have students not just grade each other but also peer edit free response questions, and after each test students are allowed to make corrections to their free response questions. In this session we will show teachers examples of sentence stems and word banks we have used for various FRQ's, give teachers some free response questions and have them try to come up with their own sentence stems and word banks. Show teachers my free response stations method then give them time to develop their own. Then share my free responses test correction process and discuss how teachers could apply this method to their own teaching.

### **[7B] AP Studio Art Room (Part 2 of 2) Room 716**

#### **Create a Cohesive Portfolio: what is the connection between materials and methods.**

***Presenter: Le Tran***

***AP Art Teacher at Kentwood Public Schools***

Morning session presentation:

1. Developing a Strong Inquiry: how to guide students in developing their sustained investigation.
2. Documenting Process: teach students what to document & why they should document during the process stage.
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Afternoon hands-on workshop:

Introduction to materials, techniques, and resources for the AP Studio Art teachers

### **[8B] AP Seminar Room 312**

***Presenter:***

***AP Seminar Teacher***

### **[9B] AP Physics (Open to ALL AP Courses) Room 417**

#### **Can Grading in an AP Class Take Less Time?**

***Presenter: Jim Vander Weide***

***AP Physics Teacher at Hudsonville Public Schools***

I don't know about you, but grading in any class is not fun, and it takes up way too much of my time. Join me in this session to learn and share ways to make grading easier and less time-consuming. We will discuss the grading of homework, labs, tests, and anything else that participants need to discuss.

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## **[10B] AP Environmental Science Room 419**

### **Accessibility in APES**

***Presenter: Karina White***

***AP Environmental Science Teacher at Jenison Public Schools***

APES is often the first AP taken by students, and so it is important that we are able to build a solid foundation for those students as they move on from our class to other APs or colleges. I'll bring some of my ideas, but would love your input too on how to help students with less "rigorous class" experience to have a great experience in APES. Whether it's a great way to scaffold lab reports or a fun study technique, let's talk about how to get more students in the door to stay and grow.

## **[11B] AP Psychology Room 416**

### **Preparing for Exams in AP Psychology**

***Presenter: Kathleen Small***

***AP Psychology Teacher at Bloomfield Hills***

Explore the various ways we can support students in preparing for exams throughout the school year. We'll dive into effective study strategies, AP Classroom tools, and in-class activities designed to boost student performance on MCQs and FRQs. There will also be time for collaboration, where we can continue discussing strategies to enhance student success and exchange valuable resources.

## **[12B] AP US History Room 514**

### **Enhancing Both Citizenship and Writing Skills in AP U.S. History**

***Presenter: Matt Vriesman***

***AP U.S. History Teacher at Kentwood Public Schools***

In this session, participants will be introduced to a new writing assignment and rubric designed to both break down the writing process and add greater meaning to student work. As AP History teachers, our goals extend beyond high performance on a single standardized test, we play a vital role in strengthening our communities and supporting democracy. The assignment begins by asking students to identify the most crucial values expressed in core American identity documents. Next, students select a major policy decision from Unit 7 (1898–1945) and construct a persuasive argument about whether that decision aligns with America's founding values. The assignment is revisited at the end of the year with a more recent policy debate, giving students the chance to apply their skills in a contemporary context. Crucially, students also learn about how to listen to each other and how to disagree in a constructive way, skills that are absolutely essential in a democracy. This process deepens the purpose of writing by connecting it to real-world civic questions, while also strengthening students' ability to craft persuasive historical arguments. The assignment meets the requirements of the LEQ, and after implementing it, my students showed dramatic growth in their ability to demonstrate reasoning skills on more traditional AP essays.

## **[13B] AP Spanish Room 510**

### **From Start to Finish: Covering and Reviewing the AP Spanish Literature and Culture Works**

***Presenter: Jorge España***

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### ***AP Spanish Teacher at West Aurora High School***

This session will focus on effective strategies for guiding students through the AP Spanish Literature and Culture required reading list. Participants will explore practical methods to review previously studied works while ensuring coverage of the complete list in meaningful and engaging ways. The workshop will highlight approaches to integrate themes, contexts, and literary analysis, helping students make connections across texts and time periods. Attendees will leave with sample activities, and resources designed to maximize student understanding and preparation for the AP exam.

### **[14B] AP US Government and Politics Room 511** **Score Higher: A Collaborative Look at Getting Better AP Government Scores** ***Presenter: Brian Stevens*** ***AP Government Teacher at Coldwater High School***

This session will focus on sharing strategies from both the presenter AND participants that leads to better AP Government scores. With years of experience in helping students achieve strong scores, we will focus on strategies we know work to move scores higher.

### **[15B] AP Computer Science Room 614** **A Deep Dive into the Computer Science Principles Rubric with a CSP Reader** ***Presenter: Danielle Heft*** ***AP Computer Science Teacher at Greenville Public Schools***

Exactly like the title mentions, this is a time for attendees to look at the CSP Rubric and go into details about the catches and nuances that exist. The goal is to learn from a reader where students miss points and bring back strategies to increase performance in the classrooms and on assessments.

### **[16B] AP World History Room 512** **“The Race Around the World”: Engaging, Fun, and Interactive Lesson Ideas to Get Your Students Out of Their Seats While Thinking Critically About Historical Topics** ***Presenter: Teresa McCrumb*** ***AP World History Teacher at West Ottawa***

This session will focus on sharing some of my most engaging and interactive summary lessons and simulations. When I ask my students at the end of the year what they enjoyed most, they always mention the Anatomy Project, the Amazing Trade Race, and the debates. Come learn about some fun ways to keep AP World History active and increase Critical Thinking Skills!

### **[17B] AP Chemistry (this session applies to all AP Sciences) Room 420** **Instructional strategies for teaching thermodynamics, especially entropy**

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**Presenter: Alice Putti**

**AP Chemistry Teacher at Jenison High School**

Traditionally students struggle with Unit 9 questions on the AP chemistry exam. This session will focus on strategies for teaching thermodynamics, especially entropy. Session participants will learn what responses cost students' points on the exam and how to help students earn the maximum number of points.

**[18B] AP Language and Composition Room 314**  
**Performance Tasks and End-of-Course Exam Preparation in AP Seminar**

**Presenter: Janelle Miles**

**AP Language and Composition Teacher at Northview Public Schools**

This session will focus specifically on the Performance Tasks (PT #1 + PT #2) and End of Course Exams (EOC A + B). What are some ways to plan and prepare students for submitting to the digital portfolio? How do we include all students in a mixed classroom of test-takers and non-test-takers? What are the specific skills needed for each task and exam? Buckle up, those questions and more will be addressed!

**[19B] AP All Subjects Welcome Room 415**

**Presenter:**

**AP Teachers at**

**Afternoon Professional Learning Communities by subject area**  
**12:45-2:15**

The Afternoon PLCs are roundtable work sessions. **NEW THIS YEAR, we have added the Bring your Instructional Planning Report. Attendees are given the opportunity to share specific strategies and questions that model the rigor of each subject in areas highlighted by their IRP.** Attendees are invited to bring strategies to share with their subject area professional learning community. With two PLC leaders, it is also possible to split the group by experience levels. This allows veteran AP Teachers to discuss topics relevant to their course, while teachers new to the AP Course can focus on strategy and content building.

**Professional Learning Communities for:**

**Room 310 - English Literature:**

**Room 417 - Physics:**

In partnership with:



**Room 512 - World History:**

**Room 316 - Calculus:**

**Room 317 - Precalculus:**

**Room 314 - English Language:**

**Room 416 - Psychology:**

**Room 418 - Biology:**

**Room 419 - Environmental Science**

**Room 510 - Spanish (Foreign Languages):**

**Room 614 - Computer Science:**

**Room 415 - Economics:**

**Room 420 - Chemistry:**

**Room 710 - Coordinators Counselors & Principals:**

**Room 312 - Seminar:**

In partnership with:



**Room 716 - Art:**

**Room 514 - US History**

**Room 515 - African American Studies:**

**Room 414 - Statistics**

**Room 511 - Government:**

In partnership with:

