Thursday Keynotes

Kate Stack, a high school junior, is the creator of the Epi-Spot, an interactive stuffed animal she programmed that teaches others how to use an epinephrine auto-injector, and the founder of Glenview’s Got STEAM, an outreach program for middle school girls. She was selected as a Society of Women Engineers Global Innovator Award recipient.

Brandon Pittser and Ethan Cyko, of Filament Games, work at the intersection of education and the video game industry, specializing in facilitating authentic learning with playful digital experiences. In this presentation, Pittser and Cayko will discuss the unconventional paths that led them to the educational video game industry, their roles, and the variety of disciplines involved in game development. Additionally, they’ll offer advice for students and educators on the many viable paths that aspiring professionals can take into gaming and entertainment careers.

Friday Teacher Panel

Christopher Brunson is the Magnet Teaching Specialist and Instructional Coach at Franklin STEAM Academy in Champaign, IL. He earned his B.A. in education from Eastern Illinois University and M.Ed. in Educational Policy, Organization, and Leadership from the University of Illinois. He sponsored the Illinois Math and Science Academy Fusion program for 3 years and has been the Science department chair at FSA for 5 years. Chris has been in education for a total of 6 years. He has a passion for hands-on learning and interdisciplinary teaching.

Denise Flemming is a Teacher on Special Assignment for Technology and Instructional Coach for the DeKalb School District. Her experiences include teaching 1st and 4th grade, teaching K-6 computer skills, working as Technology Director for a small school district, TOSA for Tech and Instructional Coaching. Additional career experiences include mentoring the DeKalb High School Robotics Team, supporting one-to-one technology in DeKalb, coordinating the Students Involved with Technology Conference, coordinating Ed Camps for DeKalb teachers and grant writing for technology/STEM resources.

Katie Jalove started teaching at Stanton School in Fox Lake District 114 at the beginning of this school year. Prior to teaching in a middle school, she taught Kindergarten in Vernon Hills. She earned her bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from Illinois State University, with endorsements in Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Language Arts.
Zanne Newman is the Magnet Site Coordinator for Franklin STEAM Academy in Champaign, IL. She has a B.A. in History from Wellesley College and an M.Ed from the University of Illinois in Elementary and Middle School Education. She has taught both elementary and middle school grade levels but is really a fourth grade teacher at heart. She spent three years teaching fourth and fifth grade in a project-based learning, Emilio Reggio inspired lab school and 11 years teaching in public schools, both self-contained gifted and regular education. Zanne has run a STEM lab, coached Lego Robotics teams, and coached track and field.

Jeff Sefcik has been the principal of Stanton School in Fox Lake District 114 since 2010. Prior to being a school administrator, he spent three years teaching Social Studies at Wauconda Middle School and 10 years teaching and coaching at Driscoll Catholic High School in Addison, Illinois. Jeff earned his bachelor’s degree in Psychology from the University of South Carolina and his master’s degree in Educational Leadership from Aurora University.