

SUN WEST

TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Convention - May 15, 2026



Schedule

9:00 Welcome

Land Acknowledgement & O'Canada

9:10| Greetings from SWSD Director, Darryl Seguin

9:20| Greetings from SWTA President, Jesse Siemens

9:30| From Where We've Come Trivia Game

9:45| Keynote Speaker: Dwayne Matthews

10:45 Break

Please bring your own re-fillable water bottle

Snacks provided

11:00| Break-Out Sessions

12:00 Lunch Supported by SWTA

1:00| Break-Out Sessions

2:00 Break

Please bring your own re-fillable water bottle

Snacks provided

2:15| Break-Out Sessions

3:00| Wrap Up, Feedback & Door Prize

Keynote Presentation

Dwayne Matthews



“The most impactful role on the advancement of humanity is the *role of the teacher* and one of the *most profound* global innovations is the *innovation school*.”

— Dwayne Matthews

SUNWEST

LOOK AT US NOW

Unlocking Stranded Brilliance in the Age of AI

How rural educators become the architects of what comes next

KEYNOTE DESCRIPTION

Rural educators have always done more with less. While large systems hesitate, small regions—where teachers already personalize, improvise, and know every student by name—are the ones best positioned to shape what learning becomes in the age of accelerated environments.

Look at how far you have come, and look at who your students and your profession can become now that the rules have changed. AI has shifted the world from cognitive scarcity to cognitive abundance. Information is everywhere. What is rare is attention, agency, and orientation. Burnout, screen time pressure, and student mental health are symptoms of a world whose operating system has not been updated.

Using the HumanOS framework, Dwayne gives educators a practical vocabulary and a set of classroom-ready shifts:

- **Cognitive Sovereignty** – for themselves and their students, including real safety and boundaries with technology
- **AI Fluency** – AI as a thinking partner and future careers partner, not a threat
- **Mode Shift** – the burnout antidote they can use Monday morning

The closing idea is the one they take home: every classroom holds stranded brilliance, and rural educators are uniquely positioned to unlock it at scale.

WHAT YOUR TEACHERS WILL LEAVE WITH

- Renewed energy and a hopeful, clear-eyed picture of education's future alongside AI
- Practical AI fluency: how to use AI as a thinking partner without surrendering judgment or integrity
- A simple framework for agency and cognitive sovereignty, including healthy boundaries with technology
- The Mode Shift protocol – a concrete tool for noticing reactive patterns and choosing a better response under pressure
- The Stranded Brilliance lens – a new way to see every learner in the room, especially those who may have been overlooked

WHY THIS FITS SUN WEST

The talk is built around the goals named in your brief: hope and inspiration for the year ahead, confidence about the future of education, teaching students to use technology with agency and real boundaries, and honest acknowledgement of burnout and student mental health—paired with a forward-looking framework.

Your theme, “From Where We’ve Come: Look at Us Now,” is woven from open to close. The opening honors the history of rural education. The closing hands it back to the room: look at us now, and look at what only we can do from here.

ABOUT DWAYNE MATTHEWS

International keynote speaker, future strategist, and author of HumanOS: The Critical Update. XPRIZE Education Advisor. Has spoken to audiences from 54 countries at the United Nations and briefed the Canadian Prime Minister on the future of education.

Session Descriptions

Convention Sessions

SWTA Merch

Brenna Orton, Busy Bee Creations

Elementary teacher and creator of many handmade & personalized items, Brenna is our new supplier of Sun West Teachers' Association merchandise. Visit Busy Bee Creations' table for samples, sizing, unlimited ideas and placing your online order. Sun West teachers are proud to support and sport SWTA SWAG!

Yoga

Kelli Kahovec

Gentle yoga is essentially what sounds like—a gentler style of yoga practice. In this class we will combine gentle yoga poses with breathing exercises and restorative postures to stretch and strengthen the body, reduce stress and calm the mind. We will move at a slower pace, with less intense positions, and include extended time for meditation, yogic breath work, and relaxation. Modifications are made to help people of all fitness levels enjoy the benefits of yoga without putting themselves at risk for injuries. No yoga experience is required.

Continue the discussion Q &A with Dwayne Matthews

Please review the keynote information above for more details.

We think many of you will be ready for a second dose of Dwayne Matthews in a question-and-answer-style.

Ag in the Classroom

Greg Torwalt

Food Connects Us all to Agriculture (K-8): AITC-SK will provide an overview of their elementary & middle years hands-on, cross-curricular programs and resources that are free for teachers to order. The session will provide insight into how AITC-SK offers to get students excited about learning as they explore where their food comes from.

Food Connects Us all to Agriculture (9-12): AITC-SK will provide an overview of their middle years & high school hands-on, cross-curricular programs and resources that are free for teachers to order. The session will provide insight into how AITC-SK offers get students excited about learning as they explore where their food comes from.

Grade 1 Team Teaching

Stacey Becker & Katrina Robertson

Two teachers, one classroom, endless possibilities. This session dives into the magic of co-teaching-where collaboration meets creativity and student success gets a serious boost. Discover how sharing the load can double the impact.

(and maybe even the fun)!

Session Descriptions

Convention Sessions

Emotions, Behaviors, and Regulation. Oh my!

Adam Naismith & Raelene Altrogge

Adam and Rae are excited to share strategies about regulation with you. They are part of the SOAR Program at Westberry Elementary School. SOAR is a specialized classroom that helps school-wide and focuses on regulation, social emotional learning, neuro-affirming practices, and trauma-informed

The Hazards That Follow: Navigating Mental Health and Advocacy

Mitchel Hope

Join 306 Peep Consulting for a compelling and insightful presentation designed to resonate with educators and professionals alike. In this engaging one-hour session, presenter Mitchel Hope shares his personal journey through the mental health system, highlighting the roadblocks he encountered while advocating for his own well-being.

Through honest reflection and practical insight, Mitchel explores the critical importance of self-advocacy, emphasizing a powerful truth: no one understands your mind and body better than you do. While his experiences stem from a first responder background, the challenges he addresses—navigating mental health struggles and overcoming systemic barriers—are universal and deeply relevant across all professions, including education.

With over 23 years of experience in public education and recognition through multiple federal and provincial awards, Mitchel brings a unique, non-clinical perspective grounded in real-life experience. His approach is relatable, thought-provoking, and designed to leave attendees with meaningful takeaways they can apply both personally and professionally.

This presentation provides a meaningful opportunity to deepen your understanding of the impacts of mental health, empower you to advocate for both you and others, and gain insights that extend beyond the classroom into your everyday life at home.

Assessment in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Jade Ballek

This session explores how artificial intelligence is reshaping assessment in Grades 7–12, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges it introduces for teaching and learning.

Participants will examine practical strategies to design meaningful, student-centered assessments that leverage AI responsibly while preserving academic integrity and deeper thinking.

Session Descriptions

Convention Sessions

STEAM Learning

Adina Coles

Join classroom teacher Adina Coles as she shares hands-on STEAM resources developed with support from the Teachers Innovation and Support Fund that ignites curiosity and creativity in middle years and high school learners. Participants will explore practical tools, ready-to-use activities, and cross-curricular strategies that make science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics engaging and accessible. Leave this session inspired and equipped with fresh ideas to bring STEAM learning to life in your own classroom.

Sun Life - Retirement & Financial Planning

Mike Spicer

As a former teacher with extensive knowledge of the STF Benefits and Pension, Mike can provide teachers with strategies to make the most of their money before and during retirement. With a focus on tax efficiency, we will explore the gaps in the current retirement plan for teachers and share concepts to help teachers retire comfortably while maintaining their current lifestyle. As a financial advisor with Sun Life, Mike works with his clients to provide solutions to enhance their current financial plan.

Safe School Environments

STF Senior Administrator, Dan Poirer

Teachers have a right to a healthy and safe workplace, free of violence and harassment. Learn about the rights and responsibilities regarding safety in the workplace, trends in education, and how a safe school environment is a shared responsibility. This session will also look at several scenarios and discuss how to address difficult situations in the workplace. Outcomes • Develop an understanding of rights and responsibilities regarding safety in the workplace. • Examine trends around violence and harassment in the workplace. • Strategies for addressing violence and harassment in the workplace.

All things Microsoft & A.I.

Terry Epp & Doug Klassen will share information and be your guide based upon your needs, questions and interest.

Session Descriptions

Convention Sessions

The Outdoor Classroom

Nichole Ness-Bredy

We all remember how nice it was to get out of the classroom and go on a field trip in nature with our class. It turns out, however, that the residual memories aren't just because we got to shake things up for a day. Outdoor education serves as a powerful tool for holistic development and learning, benefiting mental and physical health, increasing environmental awareness, fostering social skills, and even aiding knowledge retention.

Bring your sense of adventure outdoors as we explore K-9 outdoor packs and experiences. This picture scavenger hunt will explore various hands-on activities addressing curricula from math, science, social, FNMI connections, and ELA.

Be prepared to head outdoors, bring out your inner kid and play!

Winner of the scavenger hunt will have their name entered to receive their own outdoor pack

Igniting the Spark

Kristen Simonson and The Sage Creek Prairie School

High School & Elementary Sessions

Come outside for a session on creating a spark—both figuratively and literally! Using the framework of fire-lighting, we'll discuss what benefits outdoor learning can bring to your classroom, no matter what the age of your students. We'll talk about literacy, math, chemistry, physics, biology and history all while trying our hand at creating fire using a variety of methods.

Dakota Dunes

Portable Dome Experience: Exploring the Night Sky

Step inside our immersive portable dome for a 10-minute journey through the stars. Designed for small groups (10–15 participants), this experience brings the solar system, constellations, and Indigenous sky stories to life through a guided, interactive presentation.

Perfect for educators interested in integrating science, storytelling, and cultural perspectives into their classrooms, each session offers a unique blend of astronomy and Indigenous knowledge, aligned with engaging, curriculum-friendly learning. Join us for a quick but impactful exploration of the universe—no prior knowledge required.

Football Coaches 'Safe Contact' Course Certification

9:30-12:00

This is a special session for members who planned to certify or re-certify for the 'Safe Contact' course

Session Descriptions

Convention Sessions

Explore Twinkl ~ LessonPix ~ ClassroomScreen

Ashley Greschner & Amelia Oostenbrink

CLASSROOMSCREEN is packed with widgets for teachers: timers, group makers, interactive polls and much more,

TWINKL: Prepare yourself for any lesson with our exciting range of Canada teaching resources. Our teacher-made resources cover every stage from preschool through to Grade 8, all of which can be easily downloaded and printed for use in lessons. Featuring PowerPoints, worksheets, craft activities and games, we are sure to have the perfect addition to your lesson plan. Topics covered include mathematics, social studies, English language arts and more.

LESSONPIX: Provides a platform for teachers, therapists and parents to create customized learning materials for their classroom and teaching needs.

Manage your classroom in a fun and engaging way.

ZUMBA

Caroline & Melanie

Come and move your body to music with this high energy Zumba dance class! The instructors will be in full 80s gear... so why not you too?

'Finding the Secret Path'

Brie Phillips

(two sessions in length)

Witness Gord Downie's urgent mission to share Chanie Wenjak's story, aiming to educate Canadians about the dark history of the residential school system and encourage reconciliation. The film features behind-the-scenes footage of Downie creating the Secret Path album and graphic novel, emotional rehearsals, and his final rehearsals and performances of the project. Be moved by history, truth, art and the music of renowned Canadian singer, songwriter and poet best known as the lead of The Tragically Hip. Attending both sessions includes the full documentary, brief follow-up discussion and chance to review curricular resources.

Legacy Schools is a free national initiative to engage, empower and connect students & educators to further reconciliation through awareness, education and action. By signing up you'll receive free tools & resources to help teach not only about Canada's dark history, but also the richness, diversity, & strength of Indigenous cultures in all subject areas.

Simply Satisfied Catering

by Kelly Skappak

Lunch Menu

Your choice of homemade soup:

Three Sisters Soup

(corn, bean and squash)

The "Three Sisters" are the main indigenous crops—corn, beans, and squash—traditionally interplanted together by Native American groups, acting as a sustainable agricultural system where they mutually support each other's growth. Nutritionally, they provide a balanced diet, while ecologically, they enhance soil health and water retention without chemicals.

Bison Soup

(with veggies & pasta)

The bison was essential to Indigenous peoples in Canada—especially the Plains Nations such as the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, and Sioux. It provided food, clothing, shelter, and tools.

The bison symbolizes abundance, strength, and resilience, and is seen in many Indigenous traditions as a sacred being that connects the physical and spiritual worlds. It is considered a gift from the Creator, reminding us of our responsibility to live in balance with nature. Every part of the bison was used. For centuries, bison sustained Indigenous food systems and shaped diets, ceremonies, and economies.

Turkey soup

(with wild rice & veggies)

Wild rice, or manoomin ("the good berry"), is a sacred staple food deeply tied to Anishinaabe culture, spiritual identity, and Treaty 6 food sovereignty. In 2022, it remained crucial for maintaining cultural continuity, exercising traditional harvesting rights, and supporting Indigenous-led economic resilience against ecological threats. Manoomin is considered a gift from the Creator and is core to migration stories and ceremonies.

Harvesting is a direct exercise of Indigenous sovereignty, strengthening connections to the land, traditional knowledge, and food self-determination.

+ Bannock with butter or margarine

+ Coleslaw

+ Saskatoon Berry Crisp