


MERCY EDUCATION CONFERENCE

October 13-14, 2021
Virtual Event



Mercy Education
Educación de la Misericordia

Courageous Action. Selfless Spirit.™
Acción valiente. Espíritu altruista.™



The past 18 months have been extraordinary. We have learned so much and responded with excellence, incorporating new ways of learning. Our teachers have met the needs of students in mind, body and spirit.

The 2021 Mercy Education Conference offers a time for renewal and reflection. Through the lens of the five Mercy Critical Concerns – Earth, immigration, nonviolence, racism and women – the conference holistically addresses why we do what we do as Mercy educators.

2021 MERCY EDUCATION CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Kimberly Baxter
Associate Director of Programs and Services, Mercy Education

Whitney Faires
Vice Principal, Mount St. Mary Catholic High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Anne Knapke-Committee Chairperson
Principal-Gwynedd Mercy Academy Elementary, Spring House, Pennsylvania

Holly McCoy
Vice Principal-Mercy High School, Omaha, Nebraska

Maria Mutidjo
Dean of School Culture and Communication, Convent of Mercy “Alpha” Academy, Kingston, Jamaica

Nell Stetser
Associate Director for Online Learning, Mercy Education



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13

6-8 pm ET

Introduction, Prayer

Keynote: Living Mercy, Living Hope

Sister Áine O'Connor, RSM - Institute Leadership Team

We will explore together how our current realities awaken us to our vital relatedness within the community of life and to our collective purpose. We will look at living mercy and living hope today for the flourishing of life for all.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14

11 - 11:15 am ET

Welcome and Prayer

11:15 am -

12:15 pm ET

Educating the iGen

Amie Konwinski, Smart Gen Society

In this session, we will take a deep dive into the digital lives of your students and learn how a 24/7 connected society has impacted their mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing. We will also learn best practices on managing and mitigating digital pitfalls to create a successful learning experience.

12:15 -

1:15 pm ET

Break

1:15 –
2:15 pm ET

Lessons from the Pandemic: Seeing Your Students as Individuals

Rachel Dowell, Mount St. Mary Catholic High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Teachers, administrators, and school staff will reflect on the ways that the pandemic changed education. COVID-19 challenged us to reflect on what is essential in education and to innovate so that we could continue to serve our students. In this session, we will look at how the challenges and constraints we experienced forced us to grow in the ways that we teach and love our students.

2:30 –
3:30 pm ET

Put On Your Own Oxygen Mask First: Teacher & Staff Social-Emotional Needs Matter

Amanda Ables, Mercy Academy, Louisville, Kentucky

Two years of living and working in a global pandemic have led to many teachers placing their own social and emotional health as their lowest priority. This has led to higher rates of depression, anxiety and burn out across the field of education. This presentation seeks to discuss current concerns for teacher and staff mental health with specific suggestions for strategies to alleviate stress and create a healthier workplace overall.

3:45 –
4:45 pm ET

Project-Based Learning: Creating Partnerships for Global Advocacy

Ryan McGoron, Mercy High School, Burlingame, California, and Colleen Swain, Mercy International Association, Mercy Global Action

The session will focus on project-based learning related to the Critical Concerns including building partnerships with Mercy schools around the world. The process integrates the Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach as a framework for critical thinking, reflection, analysis and advocacy to bring about systemic change at local, national, and international levels.

4:45 –
5 pm ET

Closing Prayer and Ritual

PRESENTERS



Sister Áine O'Connor has been a member of the Institute Leadership Team since 2017. Previously, through Mercy International Association (MIA), she was the Mercy Global Action coordinator at the United Nations; she completed a Mercy Grassroots extended global educational experiential assignment on addressing global poverty; and she was assistant to the president for mission at Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland. A native of Dublin, Ireland, Áine studied speech and language therapy and applied healing arts, and she holds a doctorate in philosophy from the School of Clinical Speech and Language Studies, University of Dublin, Trinity College Dublin.

Keynote Speaker



Amanda Ables currently serves as the Director of Community Wellness & Learning Differences at Mercy Academy in Louisville, Kentucky. She earned her undergraduate degrees in English and Psychology from the University of Kentucky and her Masters and Doctorate in Psychology from Indiana University-Bloomington. Amanda has spent the last 15 years working with children, adolescents and adults in school, university and clinical settings addressing behavioral, social and emotional health challenges across settings. Prior to joining the Mercy team, Amanda served as a Clinical Psychologist in the local Children's Hospital with an emphasis on providing evaluation and treatment for youth with ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Anxiety Disorders.



Rachel Dowell is an accomplished educator with many professional interests that include the impact of mentorship on student and teacher success, how data is used in schools, and teacher growth. Rachel enjoyed teaching Latin for a decade before moving into school administration and she is currently serving as Mount St. Mary Catholic High School's Dean of Curriculum. Rachel and her family live and enjoy life in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

PRESENTERS



Amie Konwinski is the founder and CEO of Smart Gen Society, a nationally celebrated nonprofit providing proactive education and restorative justice services to students, caregivers, and educators impacted by the effects of a 24/7 digitally connected society. A military veteran and mother of five daughters, Amie combines proactive parenting techniques with 20+ years of experience in organizational leadership and computer engineering to engage students, caregivers, and educators to be smart and safe on technology and social media. Applying data, humor, and candor, Amie expertly walks the line of honoring the importance of digital connections and providing real-life strategies to close the safety gaps within students' smartphone and social media usage.



Ryan McGoron is the Social Studies Department Chair at Mercy High School in Burlingame, California. He created a course called Contemporary World Issues that utilizes a project-based learning framework and focuses on the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy. Ryan graduated with a BA in History from Xavier University and completed his Master's in Education at John Carroll University.



Colleen Swain is the Leadership Development and Advocacy Associate with Mercy International Association, Mercy Global Action (MIA-MGA). During her time with MIA-MGA, Colleen has engaged in global policy at the United Nations and numerous Mercy justice advocacy responses in relation to the MIA key thematic areas of Displacement of Persons and Degradation of Earth at both the local and global level. Most recently, Colleen has been the program manager of the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship. Colleen graduated from Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island, where she earned her Master's Degree in International Relations and Bachelor degrees in Global Studies with a concentration in international development and Spanish.