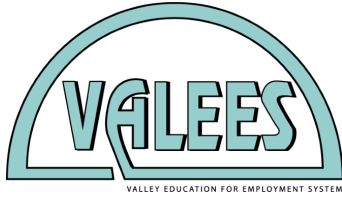


**Building Partnerships for America’s Future:
A CTE Professional Development Conference**

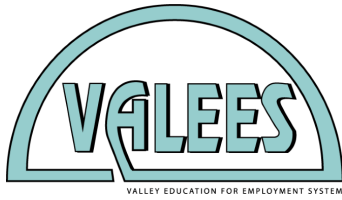
VALEES regional Career and Technical Education teachers, their core subject counterparts, counselors, instructional support personnel, administrators, and representatives of special populations are welcome to a day of professional development focused on the Perkins V quality components of a CTE system.

<u>When:</u>	Friday, February 27, 2026
<u>Where:</u>	Waubonsee Community College, Sugar Grove Campus
<u>Professional Development:</u>	PD form is only given for 5 hours.

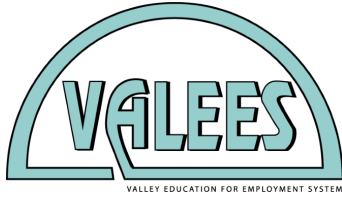
7:30 a.m.-7:55 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast
8:00 a.m.-8:15 a.m. APC Event Rooms	Welcome-In the Academic and Professional Center (APC) Event Rooms of Waubonsee Community College, Sugar Grove Campus.
8:15 a.m.-10:05 a.m. TEC Building	Tour of TEC -Bus transportation will be provided and will leave from the APC <u>immediately</u> following the Welcome. Tour Waubonsee’s new Technical Education Center (TEC)-a building specially designed to meet the rigorous training and education needs of 21st century technicians, the makers and doers that drive the regional economy and beyond.
10:15 a.m.-11:05 a.m.	Session 1
APC 158	Construction Trades & Woods: Team-Based Challenge Roundtable During the October program committee meeting, team-based challenges for Construction Trades and Woods courses were discussed. This roundtable is a follow-up to the program committee meeting. Be prepared to share the team-based challenge you implemented, how it went, what you and the students learned, and learn from others about their first implementation of a team-based challenge. Facilitator: Kevin Pattermann, Oswego High School



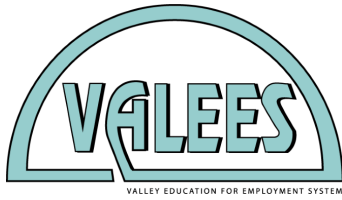
<p>APC 258</p>	<p>Creative Thinking Come learn how to be more creative. This workshop will offer ideas and activities to improve your creative skills, the creative skills of your students, and the environment in which they learn. WARNING: This will be interactive! Fun and laughter will ensue! This workshop meets during sessions 1 and 2. If you choose this session, you will not see a session 2 selection. Presenter: Josh Wilson, Freelance Designer Double Blocked Sessions 1 and 2</p>
<p>APC 170</p>	<p>Culinary Arts and Restaurant Management Business Advisory Meeting Regional secondary and post-secondary teachers of culinary arts and restaurant management coursework should attend this business and industry advisory meeting. Representatives from local employers hiring in restaurant positions will also attend to share their perspectives on employment, technology trends, and must have technical and employability skills. This workshop meets during sessions 1 and 2. If you choose this session, you will not see a session 2 selection. Facilitator: Kristin Doucette, East Aurora High School Double Blocked Sessions 1 and 2</p>
<p>APC 160</p>	<p>Drone Technology Discover how drone technology can transform middle and high school career programs by engaging students in hands-on, future-ready learning. This session explores practical ways educators can integrate drones into pathways such as engineering, agriculture, public safety, and media production. Participants will learn about affordable equipment options, safety and regulatory considerations, and classroom-ready project ideas. Live demonstrations will showcase flight skills, data collection techniques, and industry-aligned applications. Attendees will leave with resources, lesson concepts, and confidence to launch or expand a drone component in their CTE programs. Presenter: Jim Kerry, Indian Valley Vocational Center</p>
<p>APC 194</p>	<p>Early Childhood Education: Teacher Roundtable Teachers will share and exchange resources, curriculum ideas, and teaching strategies used in early childhood education courses. Bring a curriculum map, scope and sequence, rubrics, lesson plans and other resources that work well in your</p>



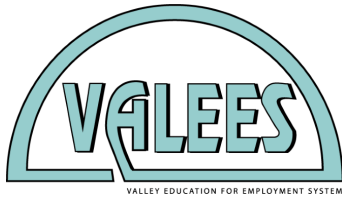
	<p>classroom to share with your colleagues. Presenter: Meghan Jones, West Aurora High School</p>
<p>APC 120</p>	<p>Enhancing Learning with SchoolAI, Part 2 Presented last year this session will include an update on new SchoolAI tools. The session introduces SchoolAI's powerful features, such as Assistants that help with lesson planning and administrative tasks, and Tools that provide data-driven insights for monitoring student progress. Teachers will also explore Spaces, interactive chatbots designed to engage students in immersive, self-paced learning activities that foster curiosity and exploration. Educators will leave with practical skills to integrate these AI solutions into their teaching, enhancing lesson interactivity and adaptability to individual student needs. They'll learn strategies to utilize AI for assessing student progress and offering personalized feedback, helping each student reach their full potential. Additionally, this session equips teachers with the knowledge to leverage the SchoolAI platform, empowering them to create more engaging and inclusive learning environments. Presenter: John Alesch, Plano High School</p>
<p>APC 180</p>	<p>Launch Your Career: Communication Skills The essential employability skill of Communication was the most highly rated for importance in entry-level employment in a recent survey of employer partners in the VALEES region. Associate Professor of Communication, Jennifer McGuire will guide participants through a process she uses in COM 121 Communication in the Workplace titled Launch Your Career. Come learn practical strategies for improving the Communication skills of your students as they prepare to Launch Their Careers! Presenter: Jennifer McGuire, Waubonsee Community College</p>
<p>APC 190</p>	<p>Middle School Career Days and Support for Industry Partner Engagement Junior Achievement (JA) is a non-profit organization, with more than a 100 year history, that provides hands-on programs focused on financial literacy, entrepreneurship and work readiness. In school years 24-25 and 25-26, JA has provided or will provide support to VALEES Middle Schools as they implement Career Days. Hear from JA regional staff on the support they are ready to offer your Middle School to plan a</p>



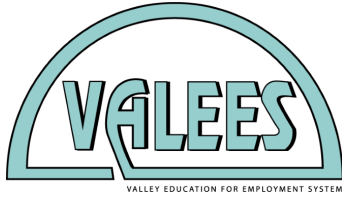
	<p>meaningful engaging Career Day with industry professionals. The first half of this session will review the Middle School Career Day model and the second half will review all the programming JA offers from K-12. All JA support is free of cost, always. Presenter: Ryan Falck, Junior Achievement of Chicago</p>
<p>APC 280</p>	<p>Student Support: Opportunities at Waubonsee Community College In this panel discussion, learn about four student programs at Waubonsee Community College that support post-secondary success in college and future career readiness. Leaders from the Apprenticeship program, Latinx Resource Center, QuickPath (one year degree completion), Waubonsee Works (WIOA funded Youth Services) will provide a high level overview of the programs. You will leave knowing how to connect or refer students to these support programs at Waubonsee. Facilitator: Dr. Alyson Gaspar, Waubonsee Community College Panel Members: Alesha Blank; Erika Iniguez; Jenni Lara and Dr. Chassie Sherretz, Waubonsee Community College</p>
<p>11:10 a.m.-12:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Session 2</p>
<p>APC 120</p>	<p>AI Curriculum in Information Technology (IT) Programs Join Harper College faculty member Annabel Hasty as she shares content on artificial intelligence and machine learning. This session serves as an introductory experience to Harper College’s sequence of AI and Emerging Technologies programs and content. This session is for high school or Area Career Center IT teachers and is intended to support future curriculum development related to the AI skills and abilities needed in this rapidly emerging industry. Topics explore generative AI, ethical and bias-related considerations, real-world AI applications across industries, and essential AI literacy skills. Teachers from other programs are also welcome to attend, with the understanding that the session focuses on curriculum design and AI concepts rather than general AI tool usage. Presenter: Annabel Hasty, Harper College</p>
<p>APC 190</p>	<p>Aptitude Tests and Math Strategies During a recent professional development experience at ComEd, the Construction and Skilled Trade Selection System (CAST) aptitude test was shared. Join this session for an analysis of the types of questions appearing on aptitude tests that screen applicants in skilled trades fields. JR Wilson, Oswego High School, will lead the analysis of aptitude test questions. During</p>



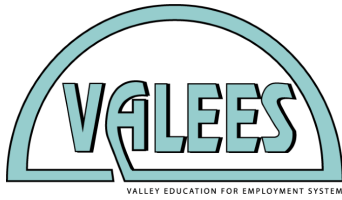
	<p>the second half of this session, Karl Kettelkamp, Fox Valley Career Center, will share easily implemented strategies for reading a ruler and practical concepts to help students with alternate methods of simplifying English/Imperial ruler fractions. Learn strategies that are working with welding students at Fox Valley Career Center. Presenters: Karl Kettelkamp, Fox Valley Career Center and JR Wilson, Oswego High School</p>
<p>APC 158</p>	<p>CNA Roundtable: Simulations Molly Allen, Indian Valley Vocational Center, will demo CNA Simulations by Learn Care Together during the first half of this session. CNA Simulations is a web-based instructional software that supports clinical skill development in CNA programs. Molly is in her first year of using CNA Simulations with IVVC CNA students. In the second half of this session, Molly will facilitate a roundtable focused on simulation experiences. Please bring an activity, lesson plan, teaching strategy, etc. to share with the group. Presenter: Molly Allen, Indian Valley Vocational Center</p>
<p>APC 194</p>	<p>Fashion: Teacher Roundtable Teachers will share and exchange resources, curriculum ideas, and teaching strategies used in clothing, fashion design and fashion merchandising courses. Bring a curriculum map, scope and sequence, rubrics, lesson plans and other resources that work well in your classroom to share with your colleagues. Presenters: Monica Hernandez and Brittany Thomas, West Aurora High School</p>
<p>APC 270</p>	<p>Middle School: Teacher Roundtable In a roundtable format, come share your best practices for middle school CTE instruction and learn from your VALEES regional middle school colleagues. Mike Livorsi and Pattie Pattermann, Kaneland Harter Middle School CTE teachers, will organize teachers into CTE subjects and facilitate small groups. Come prepared with ideas to share and questions for your colleagues. Presenters: Mike Livorsi and Pattie Pattermann, Kaneland Harter Middle School</p>
<p>APC 260</p>	<p>Oswego SD308 College and Career Readiness Workgroup Time This session is for educators employed by Oswego SD308 only. Join Ben Owen, Director College and Career Readiness for timely updates and an opportunity to give feedback on the efforts</p>



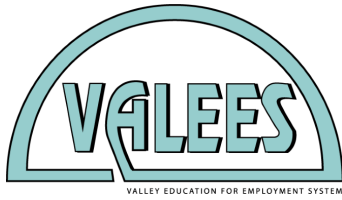
	<p>of the district's Career and Technical Education programs, College and Career Pathway Endorsement adoption, and other college and career readiness topics. Presenter: Ben Owen, Oswego SD308</p>
<p>APC 180</p>	<p>Seed Your Future Seed Your Future is a national movement to promote horticulture and inspire people to pursue careers working with plants. Discover how the green industries of horticulture and floriculture naturally connect to every Career Cluster in the CTE Framework. In this session, educators will explore cross-disciplinary pathways that link plant science to business, design, health, technology, manufacturing, engineering, human services, and more. Educators will walk away with real-world examples of career pathways from two green industry experts and classroom-ready connections that show students the powerful, career-rich world of horticulture, far beyond the greenhouse. Presenter: Jazmin Albarran, Seed Your Future</p>
<p>APC 280</p>	<p>Team-Based Challenges 101 This session offered in 2025 is being repeated to support the continued development of team-based challenges and answer the questions that still remain. Educators will leave the workshop with a better understanding of team-based challenges and how to utilize them within their classrooms to facilitate more authentic, industry-based learning experiences. The session will provide teachers with ready to use team-based challenges and related resources for any CTE classroom. If, after attending last year's session and implementing a team-based challenge, you had questions or successes to share, bring them to this workshop. Presenter: Jenny Wold, FCAE District 2</p>
<p>APC 160</p>	<p>Work-Based Learning (WBL) Manual Updates The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) updated the Work-Based Learning Manual in June of 2025. Abbi Barton, ISBE Principal Consultant, will review the WBL Manual and highlight the changes and updates made this summer. This session is NOT just for WBL Coordinators. CTE teachers who want to understand the spectrum of experiences from career awareness activities like guest speakers to internships are invited to attend. See how the work you do in the classroom aligns and builds across the WBL spectrum. Presenters: Juliana</p>



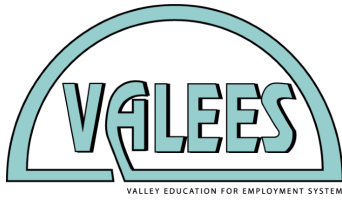
	Garruto and Charmell Stoxstell, Career and Technical Education, Illinois State Board of Education
12:00 p.m.-12:40 p.m.	Lunch
12:45 p.m.-1:35 p.m.	Session 3
APC 120	<p>AI and CTE: A National Update Join Tony Holub, Oswego SD308 Director of Schools-STEAM, as he shares national trends in implementing AI practices in CTE coursework and programs. After attending ACTE Vision 2025 with a focus on AI content, Tony will share the conference highlights including innovations in CTE programs using AI across the country, future forecasting for the impact of AI on CTE secondary programs and much more! Presenter: Tony Holub, Oswego SD308</p>
APC 160	<p>Accounting and Business Advisory Meeting Regional secondary and post-secondary teachers of accounting and business coursework should attend this joint business and industry advisory meeting. Representatives from local employers hiring for accounting and business positions will also attend to share their perspectives on employment, technology trends, and must have technical and employability skills. The business advisory meets during sessions 3 and 4. If you choose this session, you will not see a session 4 selection. Presenters: Andy Clements, Waubonsee Community College and Bobby Kaminski, Oswego East High School Double Blocked Sessions 3 and 4</p>
TEC Building	<p>Automotive Technology: Industry Standard Equipment For high school automotive technology teachers, Waubonsee Community College faculty will demo new equipment in the TEC building. The workshop meets during sessions 3 and 4. If you choose this session, you will not see a session 4 selection. Presenters: Tyler Friedland and Guy Tiberio, Waubonsee Community College Double Blocked Sessions 3 and 4</p>



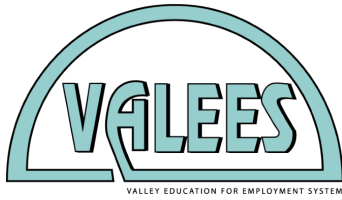
<p>APC 158</p>	<p>Construction Trades and Woods Business Advisory Teachers of Construction Trades & Woods programs meet with employer partners in this business advisory session. Attending an annual business advisory meeting is a requirement of all approved CTE programs. Meet that requirement by attending this regional meeting of teachers and employer partners. Facilitator: Joe Barbic, Indian Valley Vocational Center</p>
<p>APC 270</p>	<p>CTE Inspired After-School Clubs Hear from three middle school teachers about forming and sustaining after-school middle school CTE experiences. Jen Frances and Lisa Metallo, Herget Middle School, and Zoey Dye, Hinckley-Big Rock Middle School will share their experiences, project ideas, successes and challenges. Presenters: Zoey Dye, Hinckley-Big Rock Middle School, Jen Frances and Lisa Metallo, Herget Middle School</p>
<p>APC 170</p>	<p>Early Childhood Education Business Advisory Meeting This training will dive into typical child behaviors, understanding why a behavior might be happening and the impact of sensory processing on children. We will also discuss tips and tricks to support child development, emotional regulation and decrease negative behaviors. Presenter: Shannon Keating, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant, Kane County Health Department</p> <p>This workshop meets during sessions 3 and 4. If you choose this session, you will not see a session 4 selection</p> <p>Double Blocked Sessions 3 and 4</p>
<p>APC 190</p>	<p>Essential Employability Skills-Teaching and Assessing for Initiative, Self Drive, Accountability and Reliability The essential employability skills of Accountability and Reliability and Initiative and Self Drive were ranked second and third in a survey of VALEES employers for entry-level positions. Learn strategies for teaching and assessing Initiative and Self Drive in this session. When Initiative and Self Drive skills are strong, Accountability and Reliability are also high. Get ready to prepare students for success in entry level employment while also improving learning in your classroom today! Presenter: Dr. Jason Klein, Northern Illinois University</p>



<p>CANCELED</p>	<p>Industry Recognized Credentials Updates CANCELED The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is examining Industry Recognized Credentials (IRCs) for relevance to student career pathways after high school. Juliana Garruto and Charmell Stoxstell, ISBE Principal Consultants, will review ISBE's current and future efforts to define IRCs of value across the 7 CCPE endorsement areas. Presenters: Juliana Garruto and Charmell Stoxstell, Career and Technical Education, Illinois State Board of Education</p>
<p>APC 180</p>	<p>Information Technology Business Advisory Meeting Regional secondary and post-secondary teachers of information technology coursework including computer programming, networking and maintenance, cybersecurity and other IT courses should attend this joint business and industry advisory meeting. Representatives from local employers hiring for information technology positions will also attend to share their perspectives on employment, technology trends, and must have technical and employability skills. Presenters: Eamon Newman, Waubonsee Community College and Danielle Wukitsch, Fox Valley Career Center</p>
<p>APC 194</p>	<p>Interior Design: Teacher Roundtable & Advisory Teachers will share and exchange resources, curriculum ideas, and teaching strategies used in interior design courses. Bring a curriculum map, scope and sequence, rubrics, lesson plans and other resources that work well in your classroom to share with your colleagues. Presenter: Jennifer Melendez, Batavia High School</p>
<p>APC 258</p>	<p>Regaining Focus: Hinckley-Big Rock Implements a No Cell Phone Policy Part 2 During last year's conference, Hinckley-Big Rock CUSD #429 Superintendent, Dr. Jessica Sonntag and CTE Department Chair, Tracey Sanderson discussed HBR's cell phone policy and supporting practices to remove distracting personal technology from the classroom and regain student focus. In the first half of this workshop, they will review what led them to create the policy for school year 24-25 and how the policy was implemented. In the second half of this workshop, they will provide a Part 2, updating participants on how it's going without cell phones and other personal technology, the challenges and successes from</p>



	<p>the first year and what year two of a no cell phone policy looks like in the HBR District. Presenters: Dr. Jessica Sonntag and Tracey Sanderson, Hinckley-Big Rock CUSD #429</p>
<p>1:40 p.m.-2:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Session 4</p>
<p>APC 120</p>	<p>AI and the Future of Work: Learning as a Lifelong Practice What if “having a job” doesn’t mean “being done learning” anymore? In this session, Jimi Allen, founder of TalkLab, will explore how AI is pushing us from fixed occupations toward a future where continuous learning, collaboration, and problem-solving are the real work. Drawing on insights from the ThinkAI Tech Town Hall, he’ll look at how people are already using AI to explore ideas, make sense of massive amounts of information, and create new solutions together.</p> <p>We’ll focus on big-picture questions:</p> <p>How are careers changing in an AI-shaped world?</p> <p>What kinds of skills will matter most when learning never really stops?</p> <p>How can we imagine “work” as an ongoing, collaborative process of discovery instead of a static job description?</p> <p>This session is designed to give educators a clear, hopeful picture of the future of work-and how today’s students can grow into it. Presenter: Jimi Allen, TalkLab</p>
<p>APC 190</p>	<p>Designing Authentic Learning Experiences for All Grade Levels This highly rated session from last year's conference is being repeated. Last conference, this session focused on middle school instructional practice. This year, the session is open to all teachers. Through authentic, problem-based learning experiences, the student question “when will I ever use this in real life?” is answered. Whether you are currently designing authentic learning experiences and want to enhance your practice or whether you’re new to designing authentic experiences, this session will provide practical applications from a former middle school teacher. Presenter: Dr. Jason Klein, Northern Illinois University</p>



<p>APC 194</p>	<p>Middle School Counselor Roundtable: Implementing the 6th-8th Grade PaCE Framework Similar to last year, Angie Koontz, Somonauk Middle School counselor will facilitate a discussion of best practices across the region in the implementation of the 6th-8th grade PaCE framework. Angie will provide an update on her work at Somonauk Middle School. Prepare to bring your best practices, ideas, and questions. This is a time to share and learn from other schools. Facilitator: Angie Koontz, Somonauk Middle School</p>
<p>APC 258</p>	<p>New Programs at Waubonsee Community College: Industrial Maintenance and Water/Wastewater Technology Labor market demand for skilled hands-on professionals continues to grow, and Waubonsee has the programs to meet the demand. Learn about two new programs that launched this school year. Water/Wastewater Technology is a one-year program that prepares students for Illinois EPA certification needed to work in water and wastewater treatment plants. Industrial Maintenance is a hands-on noncredit program that prepares students with Smart Certification Alliance (SACA) credentials to work in advanced manufacturing roles. Learn how to interest your students in both career pathways and how to help them on their pathway journey to Waubonsee. Presenters: Dr. Nancy Christensen and Suzanne Markin, Waubonsee Community College</p>
<p>APC 280</p>	<p>Trending Issues Facing Healthcare and Public Service Professionals This session will present information that is important to prepare students for careers in the healthcare and public service professions. Sample topics to be addressed include: Use of Artificial Intelligence in healthcare fields, addressing mental health and avoiding burnout, the effect of an aging population. Presenters: Bob Cofield, Waubonsee Community College and a special guest TBA</p>