

## The Art of Blending Special Education Leadership and Guidance

**ISBE/SELA Statewide Directors' Conference June 7-8, 2023**  
**Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield**

This exciting return of the Statewide Directors' Conference has been confirmed for early June to provide great professional learning and planning opportunities for the 2023-24 school year.

### **Wednesday, June 7**

The kickoff afternoon highlights ISBE's collaborative leadership efforts and partnerships with other state agencies and sharing expanded resources for families/districts.

1 p.m. -- Special Keynote and Welcome Address by Dr. Tony Sanders  
*A Vision for Special Education*



Dr. Sanders received his bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois Springfield, his Master of Business Administration from New York Institute of Technology, his Chief School Business Official Endorsement from Northern Illinois University, an Honorary Doctor of Laws from Judson University, and his Doctor of Education from Aurora University. Dr. Sanders also has advocated at the state and federal levels as a member and past chair of the Large Countywide and Suburban District Consortium. He supported the effort to reform Illinois' school funding formula and enact Evidence-Based Funding and to pass the Every Student Succeeds Act. Prior to becoming the U-46 superintendent in 2014, Dr. Sanders served as the district's chief of communications and accountability and then chief of staff. He also previously served as the chief communications officer for St. Louis Public Schools and in communications and governmental relations roles within Illinois government, including at ISBE.

2 p.m. -- Dana Weiner from the Illinois Governor's Office  
*Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative*

3 p.m. -- Joy Decker from the Illinois Department of Human Services and Kristine Herman from the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services  
*Community-Based Supports, Pathways to Success Initiative*

## Thursday, June 8

8:30 a.m. -- Morning Keynote by Dr. Zephine Smith-Dixon

*Creating a Masterpiece That Will Change the Lives of Children – Transform Your Special Education Program by Thinking Outside of the Box to Address Common Issues*



Dr. Zephine Smith-Dixon, a native of Orangeburg County in South Carolina, is a newly elected board member of the Council for Exceptional Children. She participated with the Technical Work Group as one of nine individuals in the country to advise on special education funding and finance.

Dr. Smith-Dixon has completed various educational studies: K-12 education in Orangeburg Consolidated School District 3; bachelor's degree in Special Education from Columbia College, Master of Education in Elementary Education from South Carolina State University, and a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University. She has received the following accolades: Tri-County Special Educator of the Year, Vance-Providence Elementary Teacher of the Year, and Orangeburg Consolidated School District 3 Alternate District Teacher of the Year. Columbia College in South Carolina presented her with the Wil Lou Gray Outstanding Educator Award in April 2018.

### Collaborative Breakout Sessions Throughout the Day

The breakout sessions focus on important current topics combined with a local special education leadership perspective based on experience, blending the art of leadership with implementing guidance effectively. The sessions include a focus on:

- o IDEA/State Grants/Funding
- o State Technical Assistance Projects
- o Blending Vision with Current Special Education Trends and Hot Topics
- o New Directors Sessions – The Art of Balance and Knowledge

### Registration:

Follow this link ([Registration Link here](#)) to register. Please contact Molly Dunne at [mdunne@nsseo.org](mailto:mdunne@nsseo.org) if you have questions regarding registration or professional development credit.

### For Hotel Reservations:

Guests may make reservations in the group block via the internet or telephone using the following methods. Please keep in mind that reservations at the discounted group rate will close at 4 p.m. on May 15.

- **Internet:** Click one of the following links to access your group's discounted rate. You will see the name of your group next to the discounted rate. *Please do not adjust the adult/children count in the search field, as all rooms on the block are reserved for one adult. (However, each room allows for up to four guests.)*
  - Short Link: [ISBE - Special Education Director Conference](#)
  - Long URL: [https://www.crowneplaza.com/redirect?path=asearch&brandCode=CP&localeCode=en&regionCode=1&hotelCode=SPICC&checkInDate=07&checkInMonthYear=052023&checkOutDate=09&checkOutMonthYear=052023&numberOfAdults=1&numberOfRooms=1&rateCode=6CBARC&\\_PMID=99801505&GPC=N5A&cn=no&viewfullsite=true](https://www.crowneplaza.com/redirect?path=asearch&brandCode=CP&localeCode=en&regionCode=1&hotelCode=SPICC&checkInDate=07&checkInMonthYear=052023&checkOutDate=09&checkOutMonthYear=052023&numberOfAdults=1&numberOfRooms=1&rateCode=6CBARC&_PMID=99801505&GPC=N5A&cn=no&viewfullsite=true)

- **Telephone:** If you prefer, you may call IHG Central Reservations to make a booking in the group block. Dial the telephone number below and provide the Group Code or Block Name for the agent to locate the group booking.

- **IHG Central Reservations:** 1-800-227-6369

**Group Code and Block Name:** N5A/ISBE – IPO Special Education Director Conference

The ISBE/SELA conference is funded and coordinated through the collaborative efforts of ISBE and SELA/Northwest Suburban Special Education Organization. Registered participants will receive professional development credits.