

# Agenda

## October 10–12 • San Diego, CA

### Tuesday, October 10

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Ballroom 6 Lobby
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Tim Brown <i>The Professional Learning Community Journey: Creating a School of High Expectations</i>	Ballroom 6
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	<b>Breakouts</b>	
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	<b>Breakouts</b>	
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	<b>Panel Discussion</b> <i>A Q&amp;A time with presenters. Receive practical answers to your most pressing questions.</i>	Ballroom 6
	<b>Brainstorming for Central Office Leaders</b> —Timothy D. Kanold <i>Spotlight on the PLC Work of Central Office Leaders</i>	

### Wednesday, October 11

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Ballroom 6 Lobby
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:30 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Mike Mattos <i>When All Means All</i>	Ballroom 6
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:15 a.m.	<b>Breakouts</b>	
11:15 a.m.–12:45 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
12:45–2:15 p.m.	<b>Breakouts</b>	
2:15–2:30 p.m.	Break	
2:30–3:45 p.m.	<b>Team Time</b> <i>A collaboration time for your team. Presenters are available for help in team discussions.</i>	Ballroom 6

### Thursday, October 12

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Ballroom 6 Lobby
8:00–9:30 a.m.	<b>Breakouts</b>	
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Anthony Muhammad <i>The Will To Lead: Working Together to Create a PLC Culture</i>	Ballroom 6

**Agenda is subject to change.**

## Breakouts at a Glance

Presenter & Title	Tuesday, October 10		Wednesday, October 11		Thursday, October 12
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
<b>Michael Bayewitz</b>					
Collegiality Versus Congeniality: Engaging in the Difficult Conversations of a PLC	11B		11B		
Unleashing Parent Engagement in High-Poverty Elementary Schools		11B			11B
Leading PLCs in High-Poverty Elementary Schools: Proven Practices for Eliminating the Achievement Gap				11B	
<b>Tim Brown</b>					
Setting the Stage and Communicating High Expectations	9B			9B	
Student Data Notebooks: Developing Ownership, Motivation, and a Growth Mindset		9B			9B
Raising Questions and Finding Answers in Our Grading Practices			9B		
<b>Luis F. Cruz</b>					
I Like What I Am Hearing! So How Do We Initiate Our PLC Journey?	4B				
English Learners and PLCs		4B		4B	
Taping Before Painting: Taking the Critical Steps to Respond Collectively When Students Do Not Learn			4B		
I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful					4B
<b>William M. Ferriter</b>					
Our Students <i>Can</i> Assess Themselves	5B				
Small Schools and Singletons: Structuring Meaningful Professional Learning Teams for Every Teacher		5B		5B	
Digital Tools That Make Differentiation Doable			5B		5B

<b>Heather Friziellie</b>					
Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes (Part 1)	7B				
Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes (Part 2)		7B			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools			7B		
Protocols for Results: Turning Data Into Information				7B	
<b>Timothy D. Kanold</b>					
HEARTPRINT: Living a Fully Engaged, High Energy, and Well-Balanced Professional Life!	2B				
Central Office and School-Site PLC Leaders and Coaches: Becoming Great at Sustaining Change!		2B			
Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great <i>Instruction!</i>			2B		
Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Homework, Grading, and Great <i>Assessment!</i>				2B	
<b>Mike Mattos</b>					
Building the Collaborative Culture of a Professional Learning Community at Work (Part 1)	6AE				
Building the Collaborative Culture of a Professional Learning Community at Work (Part 2)		6AE			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools			6AE		
Simplifying Response to Intervention: How to Systematically Respond When Students Don't Learn				6AE	
Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC Process					6AE

<b>Anthony Muhammad</b>					
Bringing the Four PLC Questions to Life: Systems That Ensure That All Students Learn	8B				
Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change		8B			
Building Culture, Creating Purpose, and Overcoming Frustration on Your PLC Journey			8B		
Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!				8B	
Getting Started: Building Consensus and Responding to Resisters					8B
<b>Maria Nielsen</b>					
The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!	10B				
Common Assessments: The Key to Uncommon Results for Student and Teacher Learning		10B		10B	
Show Me What Ya Got: Student Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Student Learning			10B		10B
<b>Mark Weichel</b>					
Why PLCs? A Top Ten List	7A				
Connecting PLCs to Personalized Learning		7A		7A	
Question Four of a PLC: A How-To Guide			7A		7A
<b>Kenneth C. Williams</b>					
Starting a Movement: How a Guiding Coalition Leads From the Front	11A				
12 Angry Men: The Power of Productive Conflict		11A		11A	
At Risk or Underserved? Focusing on What Really Matters in Student Learning			11A		11A

**Agenda is subject to change.**

## Session Descriptions

### Michael Bayewitz

#### **Collegiality Versus Congeniality: Engaging in the Difficult Conversations of a PLC**

Creating a collaborative culture is an essential characteristic of a successful PLC. To create a culture of collaboration, educators must build trust and invest in developing personal relationships. How do educators maintain congeniality and still confront difficult facts when results fall short? Participants leave this session with a toolkit for effective communication and coaching strategies on how to engage in difficult collegial conversations within the context of a PLC.

Participants in this session:

- Gain appreciation for the importance of building a collaborative culture.
- Understand the difference between collegiality and congeniality in a PLC.
- Leave with a toolkit for effective communication and coaching.

#### **Unleashing Parent Engagement in High-Poverty Elementary Schools**

For years, educators have stressed the importance of parent involvement in schools. However, many schools—particularly high-poverty schools—have struggled to realize sustained, meaningful parent engagement. Using the PLC principle of focus on learning (a commitment to learning for *every* student) as an entry point, participants learn new and different ideas for how they can meet parents' needs by strengthening partnerships and removing barriers to learning.

Participants in this session:

- Challenge conventional thinking about how schools partner with parents in high-poverty areas.
- Identify the difference between parent involvement and parent engagement.
- Learn how barriers to learning can be removed by engaging parents in creative and innovative ways.

#### **Leading PLCs in High-Poverty Elementary Schools: Proven Practices for Eliminating the Achievement Gap**

Most educators would agree with the statement, All children can learn. Unfortunately, many schools fall short in making this a reality. Successful schools have built high-functioning PLCs with proven results for narrowing—even eliminating—the achievement gap, despite high poverty and mobility rates. Using real-life examples, artifacts, and tools, Michael Bayewitz reveals how Title I schools have built and maintained a consistent track record of success despite the ever-changing landscape in education.

Participants in this session:

- Hear about the unique PLC journey of a high-performing Title I elementary school.
- See concrete examples of interventions and practices that ensure student success at Title I schools.
- Obtain replicable ideas and strategies, supported by practice and research, to implement at their K–6 schools.

## **Tim Brown**

### **[KEYNOTE] The Professional Learning Community Journey: Creating a School of High Expectations**

This session is a call to action to energize individual and collective efforts to create schools of high expectations through the PLC process. In 1997, University of Tennessee researchers S. Paul Wright, Sandra P. Horn, and William L. Sanders reported, “As a result of analyzing the achievement scores of more than 100,000 students across hundreds of schools, the conclusion is that the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher.” More recent studies by Dr. John Hattie have concluded that not only are teachers the key contributors to student learning, but their impact is most profound when they work together to evaluate their effect on student learning. Unsurpassed collaboration must become a priority within a school.

Tim Brown discusses the three big ideas of the PLC at Work process, their connection to beliefs and practices, and what it means to commit to focus on learning, work collaboratively, and hold ourselves accountable to the mission, vision, values, and goals of our schools.

### **Setting the Stage and Communicating High Expectations**

Lee G. Bolman and Terrence Deal write in their book *Leading with Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit*, “Organizations without a rich symbolic life become empty and sterile. The magic of special occasions is vital to building significance into collective life.” Tim Brown offers practical strategies to motivate students and staff to communicate and celebrate a culture of learning while also committing to high expectations for learning.

Participants in this session discuss these essential questions:

- How do principals and teachers communicate high expectations to students?
- How can teachers establish a classroom culture centered on learning rather than compliance?
- Why are celebrations important, and how do they become part of our symbolic life?

### **Student Data Notebooks: Developing Ownership, Motivation, and a Growth Mindset**

Educators in a school with a focus on learning promote a strong sense of self-efficacy in their students. Several recent studies show this may be one of the greatest factors for student motivation and engagement. In this session, participants examine the essential characteristics for building student self-

efficacy and a growth mindset through data notebooks. Tim Brown shares products that teams have developed to engage and empower students in self-reporting and reflection.

This session addresses the following questions:

- What are the key components of a highly motivated and engaged classroom?
- What products do teams create to improve student learning and ensure self-efficacy in the PLC process?
- How can teachers use these products effectively to help students own their learning?

### **Raising Questions and Finding Answers in Our Grading Practices**

Talking about grading practices is a touchy subject full of emotions, opinions, and personal beliefs. However, when schools make the shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, they must be willing to examine policies, practices, and guidelines to see if they support the principles of learning. Tim Brown shows how a staff can engage educators in a collaborative process committed to grading practices aligned with learning.

Participants discuss and share beliefs and practices on these essential questions:

- What do principles of learning, student motivation, and grading have in common?
- What is the reasoning and rationale behind changes in grading practices?
- What grading practices and guidelines have successful teams and schools implemented?

### **Luis F. Cruz**

#### **I Like What I'm Hearing! So, How Do We Initiate Our PLC Journey?**

Research from academia and accounts from educators worldwide confirm that PLCs, when implemented effectively, increase high levels of learning for all students. However, questions indeed remain. Who is responsible for initiating a PLC? How does a team establish the foundational pillars of a PLC? How does this process take shape? Luis F. Cruz explains in practical terms the *who* and *how* associated with the PLC process.

Participants in this session learn:

- How to initiate a PLC process
- The role of a guiding coalition
- How to establish the foundational pillars of a PLC

### **English Learners and PLCs**

Luis F. Cruz shares how schools use PLC strategies to help English learner populations flourish. This session details PLC components administrative and teacher leaders use to close the achievement gap for students learning English as a second language. Dr. Cruz shows how taskforce leadership can reculture and restructure, while introducing best practices to increase learning outcomes for all students.

As a result of this session, participants discover how:

- Teacher-led taskforces increase academic performance for English learners.
- PLC practices can highlight stark realities when English learners are not learning.
- Adults change their expectations and behaviors when listening to the needs of English learners, resulting in significant improvements in student achievement.

### **Taping Before Painting: Taking the Critical Steps to Respond Collectively When Students Do Not Learn**

The third critical question of a PLC, What do we do when students don't learn? often stumps teachers and administrators. Luis F. Cruz showcases methods that schools across the country use to guarantee effective collaboration (taping the room) to ensure an effective collective response when students do not learn (painting the room). Participants learn how the PLC and RTI processes complement each other in increasing academic achievement for all students.

Participants in this session learn:

- How teacher teams effectively collaborate and respond when students do not learn
- Ways to ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum
- The critical role of common assessments

### **I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful**

As educators initiate an effective PLC process, they need practical tools to begin and enhance their journey. After leaving this institute, educators may discover that staff back at their site need to be convinced that the PLC process is the most practical path to take in the collective quest to accelerate learning for all students. Luis F. Cruz shares articles, templates, activities, and videos to provide administrative and teacher leaders the necessary tools to amplify improvement at their site.

Participants in this session learn:

- The difference between rational and irrational forms of adult resistance and how to address each
- Effective leadership is an art and a science and how to maneuver each
- Practical actions to accelerate the PLC process

### **William M. Ferriter**

#### **Our Students *Can* Assess Themselves**

In the spring of 2012, Canadian educational change expert Dean Shareski issued a simple challenge on his blog: "I'm wondering if you're ready to let your students assess themselves. Not as some experiment where you end up grading them apart but where you really give the reigns over to them?" Shareski's challenge resonates with William M. Ferriter, who has always been dissatisfied with the grade-driven work in his classroom. In this session, William introduces participants to the tangible steps he has taken in response to Shareski's challenge to integrate opportunities for self-assessment into classrooms.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss the important role self-assessment plays in learning.
- Explore simple self-assessment behaviors that can be integrated into any classroom.
- Learn common challenges in integrating student self-assessment into the classroom.

### **Small Schools and Singletons: Structuring Meaningful Professional Learning Teams for Every Teacher**

The PLC concept resonates with most educators, but making collaborative learning work in small schools or for singleton teachers can be challenging. Participants explore four models for building meaningful professional learning teams for singletons and teachers in small schools: 1) creating vertical teams to study skills that cross content areas, 2) using interdisciplinary teams to address the engagement levels of at-risk students, 3) designing class loads that allow teachers to teach the same subjects, and 4) using electronic tools to pair teachers with peers working in the same subject area.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss the common structural barriers that prevent singletons from working on collaborative teams.
- Examine four potential models for creating meaningful professional learning teams for teachers.
- Develop the beginnings of an action plan for incorporating singletons into the PLC process.

### **Digital Tools That Make Differentiation Doable**

If schools are truly working to ensure success for every student, learning experiences need to be customized and aligned to student interests, needs, and unique learning styles. The challenge, however, rests in making differentiation manageable. While few teachers doubt the importance of differentiating, many struggle to make customized learning spaces a reality. William M. Ferriter introduces participants to a range of digital tools that can be used to track progress by student and standard, provide structure for differentiated classrooms, and facilitate initial attempts at remediation and enrichment.

Participants learn how digital tools:

- Make quick checks for understanding and simplify tracking progress by student and standard.
- Deliver content and free up class time for individualized instruction.
- Facilitate the use of classroom observations as a source of evidence of student progress.

### **Heather Friziellie**

#### **Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes (Part 1)**

In Part 1 of this two-part session, Heather Friziellie looks at the role of special education in a professional learning community, including participation in collaborative teams and work related to next-generation and Common Core standards. She covers instructional shifts, scaffolding, the importance of text complexity, and scaling.

Part 1 participants:

- Discuss the long-term implications for writing IEP goals.
- Consider the role of special educators in collaborative teams and the structures that facilitate participation.
- Identify what it means to be data driven after special education eligibility has been determined.
- Gain clarity on decision-making guidelines for individual students and their exposure to grade-level targets.

### **Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes (Part 2)**

In the second part of this session, Heather delves into the historic opportunity to improve access to rigorous academic content standards for special education students and what makes that feasible. She continues her exploration of instructional shifts, scaffolding, the importance of text complexity, and scaling, while participants continue their discussion of long-term implications for writing IEP goals.

Part 2 participants:

- Examine required instructional shifts in advancing special education programs.
- Identify the role of scaffolding, the importance of text complexity, and the value of scaling for special education students.
- Consider IEP goals aligned to next-generation targets, including those required by Common Core standards.

### **Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools**

Schools that function as PLCs must ultimately do two things: 1) build a collaborative culture to promote continuous adult learning, and 2) create structures and systems that provide students with additional time and support for learning.

Participants examine strategies to collaboratively:

- Identify specific student learning needs.
- Respond to each student's learning needs in a timely, directive, and systematic way.
- Utilize resources (human, material, time) in different ways.
- Make celebrations part of the school culture.

After examining various models of systematic intervention and enrichment, participants receive criteria to assess their own schools' responses and an action-planning template for next steps in raising the bar and closing the gap.

### **Protocols for Results: Turning Data Into Information**

Is your system overwhelmed with data? Using protocols to transform data into information is an efficient and effective way to achieve improved results. Participants in this session examine tools that

empower teams to use data to drive instruction and impact student learning, and they identify specific processes to meet the needs of their school system.

During this session, participants:

- Briefly review research related to data-driven decision making.
- Explore multiple protocols for data analysis.
- Reflect on their school or district's current reality, while identifying tools that can be used or modified to meet specific needs.

## **Timothy D. Kanold**

### **HEARTPRINT: Living a Fully Engaged, High Energy, and Well-Balanced Professional Life!**

Dr. Timothy Kanold draws from his new book *HEART! Fully Forming Your Professional Life as a Teacher and Leader* to provide research, insights, and tools from thought leaders inside and outside education. He examines ways for educators to lead an energetic, happy, and well-balanced professional life.

The relational expectations, give and take, and daily chaos of a PLC school culture can sometimes be overwhelming. By understanding the impact of their effect on others, participants can become more inspiring, more fully engaged in their work, and have a magnified impact on students and colleagues—season after season.

Participants can expect to:

- Examine elements of their *HEARTs*: Their relational happiness and the reasons for limited engagement at their sites.
- Discover ways to improve their relational intelligence and impact (*heartprints*) on others.
- Learn ways to pursue and sustain a well-balanced, high-energy personal and professional life and the positive effects this can have on others.

### **Central Office and School-Site PLC Leaders and Coaches: Becoming Great at Sustaining Change!**

Do you have a heart for central office or school site leadership? Those who choose leadership roles are expected to effect meaningful change, inspire others, and nurture a collaborative PLC culture. Timothy D. Kanold asks, “Why would someone follow you or listen to your professional *voice of authority*? Why are you leading?”

Leadership must focus on the right thoughts and actions. Drawing from his latest book *HEART! Fully Forming Your Professional Life as a Teacher and Leader*, Dr. Kanold reveals the practical work of school leadership. He begins with the power of vision (pulling change forward) and ends with the power of results (looking back) in developing a PLC culture.

Participants learn how to:

- Create and use the power of vision as their *voices of authority* to make decisions and bring about positive change.
- Use the power of results from formative feedback for energy, focus, and change.
- Use leadership thoughts and wisdom toward the *right* purposes to effect change and passion.

### **Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great Instruction!**

Based on the Solution Tree series *Beyond the Common Core*, series editor Timothy D. Kanold explores how collaborative teams can achieve a level of improved student achievement through higher-level-cognitive-demand tasks and formative assessment.

These discussion tools and actions include creative ways to increase scores, analyze student work on math tasks, help students persevere via productive struggle, and move beyond normal checks for understanding. Dr. Kanold shares techniques for effectively analyzing student work with colleagues and ideas that motivate students and result in their sustained effort every day. He uses three high-leverage PLC teacher team actions and protocols to illustrate these techniques.

Participants use the PLC mathematics lesson design model to:

- Examine criteria for effective mathematics instruction.
- Examine criteria and effective discussion tools that support students on higher-level-cognitive-demand tasks during class.
- Use discussion tools to develop effective in-class, formative assessment processes when students get stuck.
- Analyze student work and accurate scoring of that work.

### **Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Homework, Grading, and Great Assessment!**

Based on the Solution Tree series *Beyond the Common Core*, this session explores how individuals and collaborative teams can achieve high-level mathematics results well beyond state standards. Participants examine three high-leverage team actions of a collaborative PLC team related to homework, creating quality unit tests, and scoring exams to improve student motivation and achievement in each unit of study.

Participants in this session also:

- Examine how high-quality unit-assessment-design protocols and discussion tools can be used in collaborative teams.
- Explore research and discussion tools to design highly effective mathematics homework protocols and practices.
- Discover discussion tools to analyze student assessment and grade student work with fidelity as part of a formative assessment process at the end of each unit of study.

## **Mike Mattos**

### **[KEYNOTE] When All Means All**

A PLC's mission of ensuring that all students learn at high levels is not intended to be a wishful outcome for *most* students but a staff's collective promise to *every* child. In this keynote, Mike Mattos discusses the essential elements of the PLC at Work process which a school or district must commit to when embracing a mission to ensure high levels of learning for *all* students.

This session calls on participants to:

- Translate a mission of learning into specific actions educators must take.
- Understand how these actions are not singular steps, but a continuous, ongoing process of school improvement.
- Commit to the idea that every student can be academically successful.

### **Building the Collaborative Culture of a Professional Learning Community at Work (Parts 1 & 2)**

Powerful collaborative teams are the fundamental building blocks of a PLC and a critical component in building a collaborative culture.

Participants learn how educators transform their congenial groups into high-performing collaborative teams and explore the specific work those teams undertake. They discover ways to provide time and support for collaborative teams during the school day. Most importantly, they identify structures and strategies to help teams stay focused on doing the work that results in student achievement.

*This two-part continuing session is designed for educators at all levels and is highly recommended for participants who are new to PLC concepts.*

### **Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools**

The rubber hits the road in the PLC process with the question, How do we respond when students don't learn? A learning-focused school can't achieve this mission without a systematic process to ensure struggling students have the additional time and support needed to succeed. What does an effective secondary school intervention process look like? This session provides participants with practical, proven secondary intervention ideas.

This session calls on participants to:

- Learn how to systematically identify students who need extra help.
- Create time in the master schedule for supplemental and intensive interventions.
- Best utilize staff and resources to target interventions and extension.

## **Simplifying Response to Intervention: How to Systematically Respond When Students Don't Learn**

How does your school respond when students don't learn? Compelling evidence shows that response to intervention can successfully engage a school staff in a collective process to provide every child with the additional time and support needed to learn at high levels. Yet, at many schools, this potential lies dormant, buried under layers of state regulations, district protocols, misguided priorities, and traditional school practices that are misaligned to the essential elements of RTI. This session provides clarity and practical ideas for creating a multi-tiered system of support.

This session calls on participants to:

- Understand the characteristics of the three tiers of the RTI process.
- Connect the work of teacher teams in the PLC process to effective supplemental interventions.
- Clearly define the roles of classroom teachers, administration, and support staff in the RTI process.

## **Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC Process**

The principal has an essential role in creating a PLC. Without effective support and leadership, achieving this outcome is virtually impossible. Specifically targeted to site administrators, this session provides proven practices and examples of how to lead and support the work of collaborative teacher teams.

This session calls on participants to:

- Learn how to create an effective site leadership team.
- Effectively address violations to a school's collective commitments.
- Monitor and support the work of collaborative teams.

## **Anthony Muhammad**

### **[KEYNOTE] The Will to Lead: Working Together to Create a PLC Culture**

This keynote explores the connection between school culture and successful PLC implementation. PLC strategies do not implement themselves. The collective belief systems, values, and behaviors of educators have a major impact on the success or failure of a PLC journey. Effective leadership is the catalyst to developing high-performing PLCs, and this session explores strategies that inspire, enlighten, and push people to do great things for students and, contrarily, exposes ill-conceived strategies and behaviors that inhibit momentum and productivity.

Participants gain insight into:

- What current research teaches us about human motivation
- Which leadership behaviors undermine the purpose of a PLC
- Practical strategies to improve their ability to lead others to higher levels of performance

### **Bringing the Four PLC Questions to Life: Systems That Ensure All Students Learn**

This session focuses on systemic implementation of the four critical questions of a PLC. Participants gain a powerful understanding of what it takes to move from theory to practical, systemic implementation. The strategies Dr. Muhammad presents can be immediately applied when participants return to their schools.

Participants in this session:

- Practice developing essential standards and student outcomes.
- Learn the process of creating useful and valid common assessments.
- Discover how to methodically create an effective academic intervention system that meets students' individual needs.

### **Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change**

This session explores the connection among personal and institutional mindsets and academic achievement gaps. The issue of inequality in student learning outcomes has been studied and debated for years and commonly holds that the primary culprit in the fight to overcome the achievement gap is our own individual and collective thinking.

As a result of this session, participants understand:

- The true meaning and value of school culture
- The power of mindsets and their influence on educator effectiveness
- How to shift from damaging mindsets (superiority and inferiority) to high levels of efficacy (liberation mindset)

### **Building Culture, Creating Purpose, and Overcoming Frustration on Your PLC Journey**

This session addresses two vital stages in the process of creating a PLC culture: 1) establishing philosophical agreement and building shared purpose, and 2) addressing staff frustration and reluctance to change. Anthony Muhammad leads an exploration of the theories linking school culture and student learning, and participants leave with practical strategies to start the process of transforming the culture at their schools and districts.

Learning targets include:

- Addressing counterproductive belief systems and forming a cohesive team of student advocates
- Analyzing and managing staff frustration
- Understanding the balance between support and accountability

### **Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!**

How can a culture of collaboration be created? How can an environment where people embrace collective responsibility be implemented? This session addresses the collaborative characteristics of a high-performing PLC. Participants learn how teachers, support staff, school administrators, and central

office work together to improve school performance. Dr. Muhammad also discusses the issues of staff resistance to change and the leader's role in building consensus.

As a result of this session, participants can:

- Construct and protect productive collaborative relationships.
- Create organizational coherence and ensure collaboration at all levels of the school community.
- Understand the balance between support and accountability.

### **Getting Started: Building Consensus and Responding to Resisters**

The most significant barriers to building a school culture focused on continuous improvement are the traditions of privatizing practice, of isolation, and of individual autonomy that have characterized teaching. How can a faculty build consensus for significant change? What are the most effective ways of addressing the concerns of those who resist even when the staff has decided to move forward?

As a result of this session, participants can:

- Define consensus.
- Apply the most effective strategies for building consensus.
- Utilize seven research-based strategies for addressing resistance.

### **Maria Nielsen**

#### **The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!**

This interactive session establishes, reboots, or re-energizes the work of collaborative teams. Schools across the country are using this simple learning–assessing process to connect the dots of a PLC. Maria Nielsen helps teams see the big picture of a PLC and put it all together in a recurring cycle of collective inquiry. The 15-day challenge is a practical way to bring the PLC process to life.

Participants in this session:

- Clarify the work of collaborative teams.
- Establish the steps for a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- Explore the learning–assessing cycle in a unit of study.

#### **Common Assessments: The Key to Uncommon Results for Student and Teacher Learning**

The secret is out: Common formative assessments are the key to improving student learning! Formative assessments are powerful when teams of teachers create common assessments then share and discuss the results. This collaborative process leads to a dramatic increase in student learning as well as effective teaching practices. Maria Nielsen provides the tools and information necessary to use common assessments across a grade level or department and illustrates practical strategies for implementing and using common assessments to substantially improve student and adult learning.

Participants in this session:

- Examine the benefits of using common assessment as a grade level or department.
- Understand the balance between formative and summative assessments.
- Gain formative assessment tools to improve student and adult learning.
- Discover quick and easy ways to look at data and drill down to individual students.

### **Show Me What Ya Got: Student Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Student Learning**

Maria Nielsen helps teachers move past “sit and get” in the classroom to a place where all students actively participate in learning. Participants learn engagement strategies to assess student understanding throughout a lesson or unit of study.

During this interactive session, attendees can expect to:

- Explore the *nifty nine* best teaching strategies.
- Learn how to assess student learning by implementing engagement strategies.
- Identify the differences among assessment questions, open questions, and engagement questions.

## **Mark Weichel**

### **Why PLCs? A Top Ten List**

To facilitate its success, it is critical that all stakeholders understand why a particular change is introduced to an organization. PLC experts have developed data- and research-informed imperatives for why a school committed to addressing the four critical questions of a PLC is the best option to ensure all students learn at high levels. Participants leave this interactive session with tools to respond to the *why* and *how* of a PLC.

### **Connecting PLCs to Personalized Learning**

Strategic plans in schools and districts nationwide include the term *personalized learning*. Despite the growing popularity of personalized learning, it can be difficult to conceptualize and connect to existing structures, such as those in a PLC. Participants in this session learn about the five elements of personalized learning and see how this work can connect to and enhance the work of a PLC.

### **Question Four of a PLC: A How-to Guide**

A basic tenant of professional learning communities is to ensure that teams carefully analyze the four critical questions for each unit of study. For many teams, the most challenging question to address is how to provide enrichment for students who have already achieved a stated learning target. In this session, participants learn 10 strategies and protocols for teams to consider when planning enrichment.

## **Kenneth C. Williams**

### **Starting a Movement: How a Guiding Coalition Leads From the Front**

Reculturing a school into a professional learning community is a movement, and a movement begins with a small, select group of staff members willing to lead from the front.

Kenneth C. Williams makes the case for why schools must rethink the role of the traditional school leadership team. He provides methods for transitioning from a *leadership team* to a *powerful guiding coalition*. Participants explore the differences among forms of leadership, which is much more than a name change, as well as the required competencies of its members. Participants receive a toolkit of resources to evaluate leadership and create a guiding coalition at their schools.

### **12 Angry Men: The Power of Productive Conflict**

Kenneth C. Williams uses the classic film *12 Angry Men* as a lens to discuss the five qualities that characterize effective teams:

1. Open inquiry
2. Accepting responsibility for decision making
3. Participation of team members
4. Productive conflict to discover ideas and reveal new information
5. The essential role of diversity in decision making

The film explores consensus building techniques among a group of men whose diverse personalities create intense conflict. Kenneth shows how teams face and overcome similar challenges to collaborate and succeed. The primary learning outcome is for participants to gain ideas to substantially improve team effectiveness.

### **At Risk or Underserved? Focusing on What Really Matters in Student Learning**

The questions teachers ask about educating youth impact the results. Participants in this session learn to shift traditional thinking and change paradigms by collaboratively using expertise and resources to maximize student achievement. Kenneth C. Williams helps educators capitalize on PLC principles to ensure success for all students.