

# Agenda

## November 8–10 • San Antonio, TX

### Wednesday, November 8

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration	<b>Locations TBD</b>
	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>	
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>	
	<b>Brainstorming for Central Office Leaders</b> —Timothy D. Kanold <i>Spotlight on the PLC Work of Central Office Leaders</i>	

### Thursday, November 9

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Mike Mattos <i>When All Means All</i>	
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>Team Time</b> <i>A collaboration time for your team. Presenters are available for help in team discussions.</i>	

### Friday, November 10

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:30 a.m.	<b>Breakouts</b>	
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Robert Eaker <i>Kid by Kid, Skill by Skill: Becoming a Professional Learning Community</i>	

**Agenda is subject to change.**

## Breakouts at a Glance

Presenter & Title	Wednesday, November 8		Thursday, November 9		Friday, November 8
	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>Tim Brown</b>					
Setting the Stage and Communicating High Expectations	X			X	
Student Data Notebooks: Developing Ownership, Motivation, and a Growth Mindset		X			X
Raising Questions and Finding Answers in Our Grading Practices			X		
<b>Luis F. Cruz</b>					
I Like What I Am Hearing! So How Do We Initiate Our PLC Journey?	X				
English Learners and PLCs		X		X	
Taping Before Painting: Taking the Critical Steps to Respond Collectively When Students Do Not Learn			X		
I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful					X
<b>Scott A. Cunningham</b>					
Teaching English Learners in a PLC: Strategies for Success	X				
Bloom It Up and Other Strategies PLCs Use to Extend and Enrich Learning		X		X	
How a High-Poverty, Dysfunctional School Became a National Model PLC			X		X
<b>Robert Eaker</b>					
Friday Night in America: A Commonsense Approach to Improving Student Achievement	X				
A Focus on Learning: What Would It Look Like If We Really Meant It?		X			
Aligning the Work of a Professional Learning Community: Central Office, Schools, and Teams			X		
Developing a Stretch Culture				X	
<b>Troy Gobble</b>					
Proficiency-Based Assessment: Process, Not Product	X			X	
Proficiency-Based Instruction		X			X

Bring the Wonder Back to Your Science and Engineering Classrooms: Implementing NGSS Practices Through Your PLC			X		
<b>Timothy D. Kanold</b>					
HEARTPRINT: Living a Fully Engaged, High Energy, and Well-Balanced Professional Life!	X				
Central Office and School-Site PLC Leaders and Coaches: Becoming Great at Sustaining Change!		X			
Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great <i>Instruction!</i>			X		
Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Homework, Grading, and Great <i>Assessment!</i>				X	
<b>Mike Mattos</b>					
Building the Collaborative Culture of a Professional Learning Community at Work (Part 1)	X				
Building the Collaborative Culture of a Professional Learning Community at Work (Part 2)		X			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools			X		
The Power of One: Creating High-Performing Teams for Singleton Staff				X	
Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC Process					X
<b>Anthony Muhammad</b>					
Bringing the Four PLC Questions to Life: Systems That Ensure That All Students Learn	X				
Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change		X			
Building Culture, Creating Purpose, and Overcoming Frustration on Your PLC Journey			X		
Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!				X	
Getting Started: Building Consensus and Responding to Resisters					X
<b>Maria Nielsen</b>					
The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!	X				

Common Assessments: The Key to Uncommon Results for Student and Teacher Learning		X		X	
Show Me What Ya Got: Student Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Student Learning			X		X
<b>Julie A. Schmidt</b>					
Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes (Part 1)	X				
Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes (Part 2)		X			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools			X		
Taking Your Collaborative Team to the Next Level				X	
Capacity and Change					X
<b>Darwin Prater Spiller</b>					
No Winners, No Losers, No Punches Thrown	X			X	
More Than Baking Cookies: Making Parents Crucial Members of the Learning Team		X			X
PLC: It's Who We Are and Not a Meeting			X		
<b>Mark Weichel</b>					
Why PLCs? A Top Ten List	X				
Connecting PLCs to Personalized Learning		X		X	
Question Four of a PLC: A How-To Guide			X		X

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# Session Descriptions

## 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

### **Scott A. Cunningham**

#### **Teaching English Learners in a PLC: Strategies for Success**

Scott A. Cunningham provides specific strategies to meet the diverse needs of EL students in an inclusionary environment. The focus of this session is to underscore the importance of ensuring that all students' needs are met in restrictive environments. Participants examine diverse teaching practices, how teachers collaborate, and current research related to the PLC process, and they develop several systematic processes to meet the needs of all EL students. They will gain an understanding of how their own mindsets can hinder or enhance student learning.

Learning outcomes for this session include:

- Understanding Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol and its effects on teaching ELs.
- Developing strategies to create inclusionary practices for all students.
- Evaluating our own mindsets towards students from different backgrounds.

### **Bloom It Up and Other Strategies PLCs Use to Extend and Enrich Learning**

Scott A. Cunningham leads an exploration of strategies that extend and enrich learning for all students. Participants analyze common assessment data to plan and guide instruction that addresses the fourth critical question of a PLC, What do we do when students have learned the intended information? Scott shows how extended, enriched learning benefits all students, including advanced learners.

### **How a High-Poverty, Dysfunctional School Became a National Model PLC**

Scott A. Cunningham took bold steps to help his high-poverty, dysfunctional school become a national model PLC. In this session, he explains processes and strategies that turned his school around, showing ways other leaders and schools can make significant changes in the service of learning.

In particular, Scott and his fellow school leaders overhauled their system to create time for collaboration; added resources without receiving extra money (including Title I funding); reallocated existing resources; focused on common assessments to drive instruction; changed special education practices to more inclusive models; and transformed a culture of low expectations to one devoted to high levels of learning for every student.

Participants in this session learn strategies to increase collaboration time and review research-based best practices for creating a culture of high expectations.

### **Robert Eaker**

#### **[KEYNOTE] Kid by Kid, Skill by Skill: Becoming a Professional Learning Community**

Achieving significant improvement in learning for *all* students is a difficult, complex, and incremental journey. While the PLC process provides educators with the most promising vehicle to undertake this journey, the focus must remain on each student's learning—skill by skill. In this keynote, Robert Eaker shares ideas, examples, and research-based methods useful in implementing proven PLC practices with specificity, precision, and fidelity. At the heart of it, educators must ensure their best intentions and efforts don't simply swirl around classrooms and schools but achieve a real, lasting impact within them.

### **Friday Night in America: A Commonsense Approach to Improving Student Achievement**

Teachers already know more about how to ensure student learning than they may realize. Band directors, art teachers, and coaches regularly employ successful strategies in nonacademic school settings. In particular, tactics football coaches use to win on the gridiron on Friday nights are similar to efforts school teams use in the academic arena. Robert Eaker reviews practices that lead to improved

student learning across the board. He shows how teacher teams can “suit up” with powerful strategies to triumph every school day.

### **A Focus on Learning: What Would It Look Like If We Really Meant It?**

There is a fundamental difference between schools that function as professional learning communities and their more traditional counterparts: a shift from a focus on teaching and covering content to a focus on learning for every student, skill by skill. While few would disagree with the importance of student learning, some schools struggle with exactly how to embed practices that promote student success in the classroom. This session focuses on specific strategies that schools, teams, and teachers use to enhance student success in schools that *really mean it* when they proclaim they want all students to learn.

### **Aligning the Work of a Professional Learning Community: Central Office, Schools, and Teams**

A districtwide professional learning community is more than a sum of individual parts. A high-performing school district that functions as a PLC reflects a thoughtful alignment and integration of work at the central office level, in individual schools, and in teacher teams. While highlighting the efforts of highly successful school districts, Robert Eaker describes how these districts organize and align at each level to implement professional learning community concepts and practices districtwide.

### **Developing a Stretch Culture**

If the goal of achieving high levels of learning for all students is to be realized, then schools must develop a culture that stretches the aspirations and performance levels of students and adults alike. Robert Eaker focuses on cultural shifts that professional learning communities make while developing a *stretch culture*. He pays particular attention to assessment and providing students with additional time and support.

## **Troy Gobble**

### **Proficiency-Based Assessment: Process, Not Product**

While educators’ knowledge of effective assessment practice has grown in the past few years, there is still a disconnect between the skills they aim to develop and the information their assessments provide. Troy Gobble asserts that assessments should have neither a formative nor summative purpose. Instead, they are experiences to help students meet and exceed proficiency expectations.

Participants in this session:

- Create learning targets and develop and scale proficiency-based goals.
- Build assessments that support student learning, serve instructional practice, and move students toward proficiency.
- Develop models of student reflection specifically aimed at meeting and exceeding learning expectations.

## **Proficiency-Based Instruction**

To build a class centered on student proficiency, the traditional model of instruction must change. Teachers must be clear not only on *what* they want students to learn, but *how* they want them to learn it. A teacher-centered classroom cannot facilitate meaningful learning experiences for students in a proficiency-based learning environment. In this session, participants examine instructional design and delivery models that support proficiency-based assessment and grading and learn how to develop an instructional plan to support students as they reflect on their own learning.

Participants in this session:

- Consider planning lessons that focus on *how* students learn rather than *what* they learn.
- Make instructional shifts to ensure students reach proficiency expectations.
- Understand the relationship between instruction and assessment strategies.

## **Bring the Wonder Back to Your Science and Engineering Classrooms: Implementing NGSS Practices Through Your PLC**

Next Generation Science Standards practices for science and engineering explain how to explore the universe and describe expectations for how students should engage in inquiry-style lessons. Participants examine how teachers collaborate to deepen understanding of science and engineering practices and create meaningful experiences for students.

Objectives include:

- Gaining an appreciation for NGSS science and engineering practices
- Exploring the differences between traditional teaching and inquiry-based learning through science and engineering
- Focusing on the impact collaborative practices have on student and teacher learning

## **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.

### **The Power of One: Creating High-Performing Teams for Singleton Staff**

High-performing collaborative teams are the foundation for any professional learning community—the engines that drive the entire process! Invariably, in every school or district, there are educators who are singletons (the only person who teaches a particular course or grade level); support multiple grade levels, such as a special education teacher or reading coach; or provide supplemental support, such as a school counselor or psychologist. How do these individuals fit into collaborative teams? This session offers guiding principles and real-life examples of how to create meaningful, powerful, collaborative teams for educators looking to connect to the *power of one*.

This session calls on participants to:

- Learn multiple ways to create meaningful, job-embedded teams for singleton staff.
- Consider teaming options for elective or specials teachers, special education staff, and unique programs.
- Repurpose a site intervention team into a high-performing collaborative team.

### **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**

### **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.

### **Julie A. Schmidt**

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

In Part 1 of this two-part session, Julie Schmidt 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, Julie 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.

## **Taking Your Collaborative Team to the Next Level**

Highly effective PLC practices are built on the foundation of high-functioning collaborative teams. These teams recognize that each team member brings different perspectives to the table. This session focuses on the dynamics of collaborative teams, understanding those dynamics, and various tools available to assess stages of development.

Objectives of this session include:

- Defining the characteristics of high-performing teams
- Engaging in an activity to help build understanding for team members
- Exploring tools to assess a team's efficacy

## **Capacity and Change**

Participants in this session dig into the important work of a guiding coalition on the PLC journey and explore the teacher leader's role. Understanding the change process and knowing what to expect is paramount to the success of any school-improvement plan, and it is especially critical as an organization develops into a deeply embedded professional learning community.

Participants in this session:

- Consider leadership through the lens of their current roles.
- Examine what it takes to develop a guiding coalition.
- Understand the change process and what to expect along the way.

## **Darwin Prater Spiller**

### **No Winners, No Losers, No Punches Thrown**

The work of school improvement can be messy and emotional. If it's done right, it never comes up for a vote and requires no fifth quarter discussions in the parking lot. There should be no losers in a PLC. Rather, teams should always strive to come to consensus. Darwin Spiller shares time-tested strategies to get all staff on the same page and traveling on the same journey.

Participants in this session:

- Acquire strategies to build consensus in team and whole-school settings.
- Gain ideas for understanding resisters and helping them become change agents.
- Experience the process of shifting the focus to ensure all decisions are based on best results for students.

### **More Than Baking Cookies: Making Parents Crucial Members of the Learning Team**

All too often, parents are relegated to stapling, labeling, or baking as volunteers in schools. In reality, the learning teams in schools will never fully communicate their high expectations to students nor get to the high levels of learning they desire without parents as working partners on teams outside school. Darwin Spiller shares ideas, tools, and stories of how his staff built a learning community with parents as vital partners.

Outcomes include learning:

- Ways to access parents' unique abilities and experience
- How to differentiate training and strategies to build parent knowledge, skills, and confidence to be full partners
- Strategies to find and utilize community resources to strengthen school-parent partnerships

### **PLC: It's Who We Are and Not a Meeting**

It's a new day! Traditional schools often relegate the PLC process to schoolwide or team meetings that occur from 3:15-4:00 on Wednesdays. Becoming a true professional learning community is a process that may require a new mindset for all stakeholders. Building a shared mission and beliefs, working

through experience biases, and creating a system of collective responsibility make the journey achievable. Participants in this session learn how to build the pillars of PLC and gain an appreciation for its processes.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding why we do what we do
- Distinguishing how a PLC school is different from a traditional school
- Examining protocols that ensure the four questions and PLC processes are embedded in the daily work of the school
- Determining how leaders at every level can share the responsibility for continuous improvement

## **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.