

Agenda

November 13–15 • Las Vegas, NV

Monday, November 13

7:00–8:00 am	Registration Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Douglas Reeves <i>Leading Through Uncertainty: Enduring Values, Principles, and Practices</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakouts	
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Breakouts	
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–4:15 p.m.	Panel Discussion	

Tuesday, November 14

7:00–8:00 am	Registration Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Rebecca DuFour <i>Building and Protecting the Solid Foundation of a Learning Organization</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakouts	
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Breakouts	
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–4:15 p.m.	Role-Alike Group Meetings <i>Educators can participate in an expert-facilitated conversation with others with similar responsibilities. Come ready to share successes and challenges, to discuss promising practices, and to find solutions to vexing issues about student learning.</i> Elementary Teacher Leaders Facilitator: Rebecca DuFour	
	Elementary Administrators Facilitator: Justin Baeder	
	Secondary Teacher Leaders Facilitator: Regina Stephens Owens	
	Middle School Administrators Facilitator: Anthony Muhammad	
	High School Administrators Facilitator: Brandon Jones	
	Instructional Coaches Facilitator: Cassandra Erkens	
	District Office Facilitator: Douglas Reeves	

Wednesday, November 15

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:30 a.m.	Keynote —Cassandra Erkens <i>Getting to the Good Stuff: Resiliency and Investment</i>	
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:30 a.m.	Keynote —Anthony Muhammad <i>All Means All: The Rebirth of Egalitarianism</i>	

Agenda and presenters are subject to change.

Breakouts at a Glance

Presenter & Title	Monday, November 13		Tuesday, November 14	
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.
Justin Baeder				
Making Time for Classroom Conversations	X			
The Inbox Overhaul: How to End Email Overload Forever		X		
Improvement Mapping: Hypothesis-Driven Strategic Planning			X	
Beyond the Feedback Sandwich: Evidence-Based Classroom Conversations for Instructional Improvement				X
Rebecca DuFour				
Leading and Supporting the <i>Right Work</i> of Collaborative Teams			X	
Leading and Supporting Student Learning in Elementary Schools				X
Cassandra Erkens				
Modeling What Matters	X			
Healthy and Productive Teams		X		
Engineering Engaging Conversations			X	
Navigating Conflict and Feeling Good About It				X
Brandon Jones				
Abandoning Archaic Practices: Motivating and Preparing Generation Z Students	X			
Facing the Giants: Overcoming the RTI Odds in Secondary Schools		X		
Built to Last: Selecting, Supporting, and Empowering Your Most Valuable Asset			X	
The Tipping Point: Creating an Epidemic of Excellence in Schools				X
Anthony Muhammad				
The Four Skills of a Transformational Leader	X			
Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!		X		

Transforming School Culture			X	
Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change				X
Regina Stephens Owens				
Building Systems and Structures to Support Your PLC	X			
A Data Discussion for Instructional Leaders: From Data to Design and Demonstration of Learning		X		
The Why Effect: Intentional Systems Drive Inspirational Cultures			X	
Critical Thinking and Cool Technologies				X
Douglas Reeves				
Next-Generation Accountability	X			
How Great Leaders Model Critical Thinking		X		
The Daily Disciplines of Leadership			X	
The Change Readiness Assessment: Are You Really Ready to Change?				X

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Session Descriptions

Justin Baeder

Making Time for Classroom Conversations

How can school leaders make time to visit classrooms and talk with teachers on a daily basis?

Overwhelming workloads and frequent interruptions are par for the course, but they don't have to keep administrators away from their most important instructional leadership work. Participants learn how to schedule the right number of classroom visits—and at the right times, set expectations, create systems to handle interruptions, and make time to have purposeful, growth-minded conversations with teachers every day.

Participants in this session:

- Calculate their "interruption ratio" and identify specific times throughout the day to visit classrooms and talk with teachers.
- Define specific types of interrupting and non-interrupting emergencies, and set expectations with office staff about how to handle each type.
- Develop systems for ensuring effective follow-up with each teacher after each classroom visit.

The Inbox Overhaul: How to End Email Overload Forever

How can we transform email from a source of overwhelm into a powerful leadership tool? Most administrators receive hundreds of emails a week and feel as though they will never be able to keep up with it all. Participants learn how to get to "inbox zero" every day, so email can serve its intended purpose as a communication tool rather than a source of distraction and stress. Justin Baeder shows how to quickly triage emails, manage ever-changing task backlogs, and ensure that an important message is never again missed.

Participants in this session:

- Develop a simple and expedient workflow for processing every message.
- Learn three essential tools to manage, document, and follow up on tasks from any device.
- Set clear expectations for staff communication to minimize interruptions and ensure consistent follow-through.

Improvement Mapping: Hypothesis-Driven Strategic Planning

How can schools truly become learning organizations? Too often, strategic plans include far too many overlapping and conflicting strategies that inhibit organizational learning. Participants learn how to develop improvement maps to articulate testable, cause-and-effect hypotheses to discern which improvement efforts are actually producing desired results. Justin Baeder shows how to connect a school's mission and vision to achievable milestones, verifiable measures of progress, and specific actions.

Participants in this session:

- Develop an improvement map for an existing initiative in their organization.
- Distinguish between testable and non-testable hypotheses to develop clearer, more focused strategic plans.

- Learn how to turn big-picture goals into results for students with the HEAT (Hypothesize, Experiment, Analyze, Talk) inquiry cycle.

Beyond the Feedback Sandwich: Evidence-Based Classroom Conversations for Instructional Improvement

How can we engage in meaningful instructional conversations that are professionally rewarding for leaders and teachers? Too often, post-observation discussions are either administrator-driven "feedback sandwiches" or unpleasant interrogations. Participants discover how to have evidence-based conversations about teacher practices that result in less defensiveness, greater trust, and dramatically higher levels of learning.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the role teacher autonomy and decision making play in professional learning.
- Learn ways to restructure their post-observation conferences to maximize learning while minimizing directive feedback.
- Shift the focus of post-observation discussions from judgment and evaluation to evidence and shared expectations.

Rebecca DuFour

[KEYNOTE] Building and Protecting the Solid Foundation of a Learning Organization

Steven Covey writes, "Effective leadership is putting first things first." The first step in the never-ending journey of continuous improvement of a PLC at Work is establishing a solid foundation for all subsequent efforts. This foundation rests on four pillars, each of which asks a particular question:

1. *Why* does our school and district exist, and what is our fundamental purpose?
2. *What* must we become as a school and district to fulfill that purpose?
3. *How* must each of us behave to create such a school and district?
4. *Which* targets will we pursue first, and which initial steps must we take to reach them?

Rebecca DuFour leads participants through an examination of each question and explores ways to move educators' responses beyond rhetoric to a reality that shapes the culture of their schools and districts.

Leading and Supporting the *Right Work* of Collaborative Teams

Powerful collaborative teams are the fundamental building blocks of a professional learning community and critical components in building a collaborative culture. Organizing people into teams and providing time for collaboration are necessary steps on the journey, but unless teams use that time to focus on the *right work*, collaboration will not lead to higher levels of student learning.

Participants in this session:

- Discover ways to provide time and structure for teams.
- Learn how to transform congenial groups into high-performing collaborative teams.
- Identify and experience the specific work of collaborative teams in a PLC.

Rebecca DuFour elaborates on leading and supporting the *team learning process* and the specific work high-performing collaborative teams undertake to drive cycles of continuous improvement.

This session is recommended for teachers and administrators at all levels.

Leading and Supporting Student Learning in Elementary Schools

Leaders of the PLC process 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 collectively:

- Respond to the learning needs of each student in a timely, directive, and systematic way.
- Create and sustain strong parent partnerships to enhance student learning.
- Make celebrations part of the school culture.

After examining different models of systematic intervention and enrichment, participants receive criteria to assess their schools' responses and an action-planning template for next steps to ensure high levels of learning for *all*.

This session is recommended for primary and elementary-level educators.

Cassandra Erkens

[KEYNOTE] Getting to the Good Stuff: Resiliency and Investment

In the ideal classroom, all learners would be deeply invested in their learning, demonstrating motivation, persistence, passion, and high levels of intellectual risk taking and engagement. Is that realistic? Yes! But changes to current assessment practices and systems must be made if learners will ever be able to self-regulate as they engage in the work of deep learning. This keynote explores the mental mindset and practical strategies educators must employ to support learners in *getting to the good stuff*.

Participants in this session:

- Identify the barriers that block learners from truly investing in their own learning.
- Explore the educator's mindset that is required to support deep learning at the classroom level.
- Identify the strategies and tools that teachers can use to support learners in self-regulation.

Modeling What Matters

Quality leadership *is* the work of formative assessment. Cassandra Erkens presents formative assessment practices as quality leadership strategies and provides tools and resources for teacher leaders and administrators to model the use of assessment practices as a means of developing assessment literacy among staff. Systemic change happens when leaders model the way and then engage staff in exploring transparent practices over time.

As a result of this session, participants:

- Understand the role of leadership in supporting significant change efforts.
- Identify leadership practices that align with quality formative assessment.
- Explore options for engaging staff in the quality formative assessment process.

Creating and Sustaining Healthy and Productive Teams

While the concept of teaming implies working *smarter*, the truth of collaboration sometimes feels like working *harder*. The work of collaboration requires that teams not only be productive, but also *healthy*. Effective leaders must monitor for health *and* productivity in their teams. In addition, they must be willing to provide team leaders with the necessary supports to manage emotion and become self-sufficient.

Cassandra Erkens leads attendees in:

- Examining characteristics of healthy, productive teams
- Identifying tools and protocols to successfully monitor collaboration
- Exploring strategies, skills, and guidelines to address conflict safely and directly

Engineering Engaging Conversations

The quality of formative data teachers can generate during instruction is directly related to the quality of the questions they ask and the classroom conversations data generate. This session explores two frameworks: one for creating engaging conversations and one for monitoring student engagement and learning.

Navigating Conflict and Feeling Good About It

Many leaders avoid addressing conflict because the work feels awful and the fear of residual negative effects can be paralyzing. However, a leader's willingness and ability to address conflict directly and safely is tantamount to his or her overall impact as a leader and in building and sustaining rapport with staff. While navigating conflict is always nerve-wracking at the outset, leaders can adopt specific strategies to address and resolve conflict in a manner that consistently elicits respect, improves relationships, and enables progress.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the role of leadership in addressing conflict.
- Identify the value in *having* conflict.
- Explore effective strategies, skills, and guidelines to address conflict.

Brandon Jones

Abandoning Archaic Practices: Motivating and Preparing Generation Z Students

Educators are charged with preparing students for jobs that don't yet exist, using technologies not yet invented, to solve problems no one yet recognizes. So, what happens when all the available tricks fail to motivate and engage students dependent on the immediacy of their world? The problem lies in the fact that their system of thinking, from the neural level to the practical, is instant and problem based—the opposite of preceding generations! Participants compare traditional and 21st century learning practices that have significant impact on student motivation and learning.

Learning outcomes include:

- Exploring the significant differences between Generation Z and past generations
- Identifying traditional practices that demotivate students
- Examining 21st century learning practices that motivate and prepare students for the future

Facing the Giants: Overcoming the RTI Odds in Secondary Schools

The primary mission of a PLC is to ensure high levels of learning for all students. Do the systems of support in schools truly align with this mission? Despite a teacher's best efforts in class, some students will not be successful without additional time and support. Creating a system in which all students are guaranteed to receive directed, specific, and timely intervention is essential to their success. Based on RTI research and action research from several model PLC schools, this session focuses on common barriers secondary schools face when attempting to provide additional help for students, solutions to those challenges, and the proven enrichment plan of a model PLC secondary school.

Participants in this session:

- Examine their current reality and challenges of systematic interventions in secondary schools.
- Determine how a PLC addresses common challenges and helps sustain a tiered system of support for students.
- Investigate the enrichment and intervention plan of an exemplary secondary school PLC.

Built to Last: Selecting, Supporting, and Empowering Your Most Valuable Asset

Hiring and retaining outstanding staff is a key component of any excellent school. Yet, the percentage of college freshmen who say they will seek a degree in education dropped to an all-time low of 4.2% in 2016. In fact, that percentage has steadily fallen every year since 2004. With fewer trained educators entering the field, the need to support, coach, and retain quality individuals has never been greater. Brandon Jones discusses key priorities to consider in the hiring process, identifies common areas of difficulty for staff, and leads an examination of a practical system of support for all educators.

Participants in this session:

- Examine proven methods for hiring quality individuals.
- Identify common areas in which teachers and administrators need additional support.
- Study a systematic approach to providing staff support that leads to increased effectiveness and self-efficacy.

The Tipping Point: Creating an Epidemic of Excellence in Schools

What do Adlai Stevenson High School, Sesame Street, and Paul Revere have in common? They each experienced a successful epidemic that led to extraordinary results. There is a notion that these success stories exist due to a perfectly timed idea, wild luck, or having had a charismatic leader. But each of them, and others like them, exist because of a finite and predictable set of rules. Participants examine Malcolm Gladwell's three principles of epidemics and determine how they can be applied to improving schools.

Participants in this session:

- Examine the rules of "the tipping point," including the Law of the Few, the Stickiness Factor, and the Power of Context.
- Learn how creating a successful epidemic is connected to the PLC process.
- Explore practical ways to apply these principles to improve school leadership and culture.

Anthony Muhammad

[KEYNOTE] All Means All: The Rebirth of Egalitarianism

Equality is the cornerstone of a public school system and behavior is a product of thinking. Anthony Muhammad facilitates an examination of the root causes for the achievement gap and the leader's responsibility to create equitable learning environments. Participants also examine the mindsets of schools that work to liberate all students versus schools content with historical inequality. Leaders are tasked with guiding their staffs through tough and honest reflection, and this session models that important process.

Participants understand that:

- The achievement gap is a product of collective thinking.
- Systemic change requires self-examination and tough personal and professional commitments.
- Change requires abandoning old assumptions and comforts.

The Four Skills of a Transformational Leader

This session addresses the importance of transformational leadership. School culture provides the context for all good strategies. Leaders who understand how to motivate, develop, and build consensus are invaluable to their organizations. This era of constant change requires leadership that understands the development of human capital. Dr. Muhammad leads an examination of four leadership competencies: communication, trust building, professional support, and accountability.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the true meaning and value of school culture.
- Recognize the importance of developing consensus.
- Acquire practical skills that inspire others to embrace change.

Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!

How is a culture of collaboration created? How can an environment be implemented in which people embrace collective responsibility? 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 staff resistance to change and the leader's role in building consensus.

Participants in this session:

- 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.

Transforming School Culture

This session addresses the issue of conflicting agendas within schools. A high-performing school has a very clear purpose: high levels of learning for all students. Participants examine the barriers to aligning individual agendas with the organization's agenda, and what *all* parties must do to develop the synergy necessary to guarantee learning. They also examine the theoretical framework Anthony Muhammad developed in his book *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division* (Solution Tree Press, 2009) as the basis for creating a collaborative culture.

Participants learn:

- How staff division manifests and how to prevent it
- Strategies that heal old social and professional wounds
- Ways to create an environment where every professional can thrive

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 hold that the primary culprit in the fight to overcome the achievement gap is our 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)

Regina Stephens Owens

Building Systems and Structures to Support Your PLC

In a world of education that spans brick and mortar, blended learning, and virtual worlds, teachers are faced with important questions: How can we ensure high levels of achievement in all learning environments? How do we bring clarity of the PLC process to all stakeholders and ensure continuous improvement? Where do we begin? Educators must address these questions in order to improve student achievement through 21st century learning and teaching. Regina Stephens Owens examines the processes, protocols, and potential pitfalls of a PLC, and brings clarity to the journey. She shows how PLC components are used in a systemic process to sustain student and teacher success.

Dr. Owens calls on participants to:

- Examine the three big ideas of a PLC and their impact on blended learning environments and virtual schools.
- Learn strategies that ensure high levels of learning for students and teachers by creating a more efficient and effective system.

A Data Discussion for Instructional Leaders: From Data to Design and Demonstration of Learning

In a time of tremendous focus on data, it is imperative to develop a rich culture of collaboration through dialogue and data protocols to move from a deficit mindset to a growth mindset. Participants learn ways to create a culture of collaboration, use different types of data protocols, and write and manage SMART goals to ensure capacity building and increased student achievement.

Participants in this session:

- Examine ways to focus on results through the lens of data.
- Obtain tools, tips, and templates proven to impact team and student learning.
- Learn strategies to support SMART goals that promote and enhance learning while focusing on a growth mindset.

The Why Effect: Intentional Systems Drive Inspirational Cultures

Organizational purpose and collective beliefs and commitments affect building systems at all levels of an organization. How do you ensure that all practices and procedures are intentional and personify organizational beliefs? It all begins with the *why*. Regina Stephens Owens discusses moving from compliance, coercion, and fear to cultures that are respectful, responsive, and reflective. Participants explore frameworks of intentionality—frameworks that promote leaders who advance global dispositions and ensure that students are prepared for college, career, and life.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding how to promote high standards of achievement for all
- Discovering how to create a collective, rather than individual, leadership focus
- Examining the essential role of diversity in decision making
- Adapting global dispositions to promote cultural responsiveness

Critical Thinking and Cool Technologies

How technology is used as a tool for learning may be significantly different in a professional learning community than in a traditional school. Using technologies alone does not mean that 21st century learning skills are met, that students are authentically engaged, or that critical thinking is occurring. Schools must ensure that teachers are equipped to effectively choose technologies and empowered to facilitate learning that results in critical thinking.

In this session, participants:

- Evaluate technologies using Bloom's taxonomy.
- Examine technologies that support critical thinking skills.
- Discuss various technologies and how to effectively implement them to ensure learning.

Douglas Reeves

[KEYNOTE] Leading Through Uncertainty: Enduring Values, Principles, and Practices

In times of economic and political upheaval, leaders face uncertainty and challenge. In this interactive keynote, Douglas Reeves provides practical advice for leaders and policymakers who support students and staff members during turbulent and uncertain times.

Dr. Reeves illustrates ways to:

- Synthesize the latest and best research on change leadership.
- Evaluate alternative strategies for leadership success.
- Apply the research to personal and professional responsibilities.

Next-Generation Accountability

Educational accountability has fundamentally changed—from a system based on test scores to a new alternative based on teaching, leadership, and learning. This session covers three levels of accountability: 1) system-level indicators – the values that unite an entire state, province, or district; 2) school-level indicators – the specific actions of teachers and school administrators; and 3) qualitative reflections – the “story behind the numbers.”

Learning outcomes include:

- Creating new accountability indicators

- Synthesizing accountability research
- Understanding the impact of accountability on student results

How Great Leaders Model Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the foundation for every 21st century skill. Creativity, collaboration, communication, and every other 21st century skill depends on the ability of leaders to compare claims to evidence—the essence of critical thinking. Participants engage in an Oxford-style debate, a classic critical thinking exercise in which each participant chooses the role of advocate or researcher and then proposes and rebuts alternative points of view.

Learning outcomes include:

- Applying the essential elements of critical thinking
- Synthesizing different points of view on essential leadership issues
- Understanding the perspectives of opposing points of view

The Daily Disciplines of Leadership

The root of the word *discipline* means learning. Because great leaders must be disciplined, they must also be great learners. Douglas Reeves conceived the “Daily Disciplines of Leadership” in 2001 and has updated the research and disciplines for 2017.

Participants in this session:

- Apply the Daily Disciplines to their personal and professional responsibilities.
- Create a “not-to-do” list based on their leadership priorities.
- Synthesize the latest and best research on leadership and its impact on student achievement.

The Change Readiness Assessment: Are You Really Ready to Change?

Are you truly ready for change? The change readiness assessment invites participants to analyze their past successes with change at the individual and organizational levels. Based on these successes, each participant identifies which quadrant of “change readiness” is most appropriate for them.

Outcomes for this session include:

- Assessing personal and organizational change readiness
- Synthesizing past experiences with change and applying these to present and future challenges
- Identifying the quadrant of change readiness most applicable to participants and their organizations