Agenda
Pittsburgh, PA • July 19–21

Wednesday, July 19

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Auditorium Lobby
	Continental Breakfast	323 (Cafeteria)
8:00–9:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Eric Twadell *From Good to Great: Laying the Foundation of a PLC at Work*	301 (Auditorium)
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	**Breakouts**	(See pages 3–4)
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	323 (Cafeteria)
12:30–2:00 p.m.	**Breakouts**	(See pages 3–4)
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	**Panel Discussion** *A Q&A time with presenters. Receive practical answers to your most pressing questions.*	301 (Auditorium)

Thursday, July 20

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Auditorium Lobby
	Continental Breakfast	323 (Cafeteria)
8:00–9:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Julie A. Schmidt *Yes We Can! All Really Does Means* All *in a PLC*	301 (Auditorium)
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	**Breakouts**	(See pages 3–4)
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	323 (Cafeteria)
12:30–2:00 p.m.	**Breakouts**	(See pages 3–4)
2:00–2:30 p.m.	Break	
2:30–3:30 p.m.	**Team Time** *A collaboration time for your team. Presenters are available for help in team discussions.*	301 (Auditorium)

Friday, July 21

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	323 (Cafeteria)
8:00–9:30 a.m.	**Breakouts**	(See pages 3–4)
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Anthony Muhammad *The Will to Lead: Working Together to Create a PLC Culture*	301 (Auditorium)

Agenda is subject to change.

Breakouts at a Glance

| Presenter & Title	Wednesday, July 19		Thursday, July 20		Friday, July 21
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Brian K. Butler					
Uniting Academic and Behavioral Interventions at Mason Crest Elementary	312			312	
Collaborating in the Core in Elementary Schools		312			312
Developing a Common Language			312		
Scott Carr					
Stuck in the Middle and Happy to Be Here!	227				
Collaborative Learning: Engaging Students and Adults With Digital Tools		227		227	
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William M. Ferriter					
Our Students *Can* Assess Themselves	241–242				
Small Schools and Singletons: Structuring Meaningful Professional Learning Teams for Every Teacher		241–242		241–242	
Digital Tools That Make Differentiation Doable			241–242		241–242
Anthony Muhammad					
Bringing the Four PLC Questions to Life: Systems That Ensure All Students Learn	301 (Auditorium)				
Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change		301 (Auditorium)			
Building Culture, Creating Purpose, and Overcoming Frustration in Your PLC Journey			301 (Auditorium)		
Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!				301 (Auditorium)	
Getting Started: Building Consensus and Responding to Resisters					301 (Auditorium)
Julie A. Schmidt					
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools			148–149		
Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes (Part 1)				148–149	
Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes (Part 2)					204–223

Breakouts at a Glance

| Presenter & Title | Wednesday, July 19 | | Thursday, July 20 | | Friday, July 21 |
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Sarah Schuhl					
Focusing Teams and Students With Learning Targets	300			300	
Data, Data, Data: What Do We Need? What Do We Do With It?		300			300
Formative Assessment Processes in Your K-12 Mathematics Classroom			300		
W. Richard Smith					
Wow! So This Is What We Should Be Doing: Best PLC Practices in Action	400			400	
Moving From "Just Doing" to High Performing: Fresh Ideas and Approaches for PLCs		400			400
Moving the Long-Term English Learner to Meaningful Fluency: A Critical Challenge for Schools and Districts			400		
Bob Sonju					
Coaching Teams: Working Together to Solve Common Team Challenges	314		314		
The Big Rocks: What Effective Teams Do to Increase Student Learning		314			314
From Chaos to Clarity: Aligning the Work of Teams, Schools, and Districts				314	
Eric Twadell					
From Coblaboration to Collaboration: Utilizing Collaborative Protocols to Improve Student Learning	204–223		204–223		
Proficiency-Based Assessment: Beyond the Formative and Summative Divide		204–223			
Beyond the Test: Formative Assessment Practices That Work (and Those That Don't) in a PLC				204–223	

Agenda is subject to change.

Upper St. Clair High School

First Floor
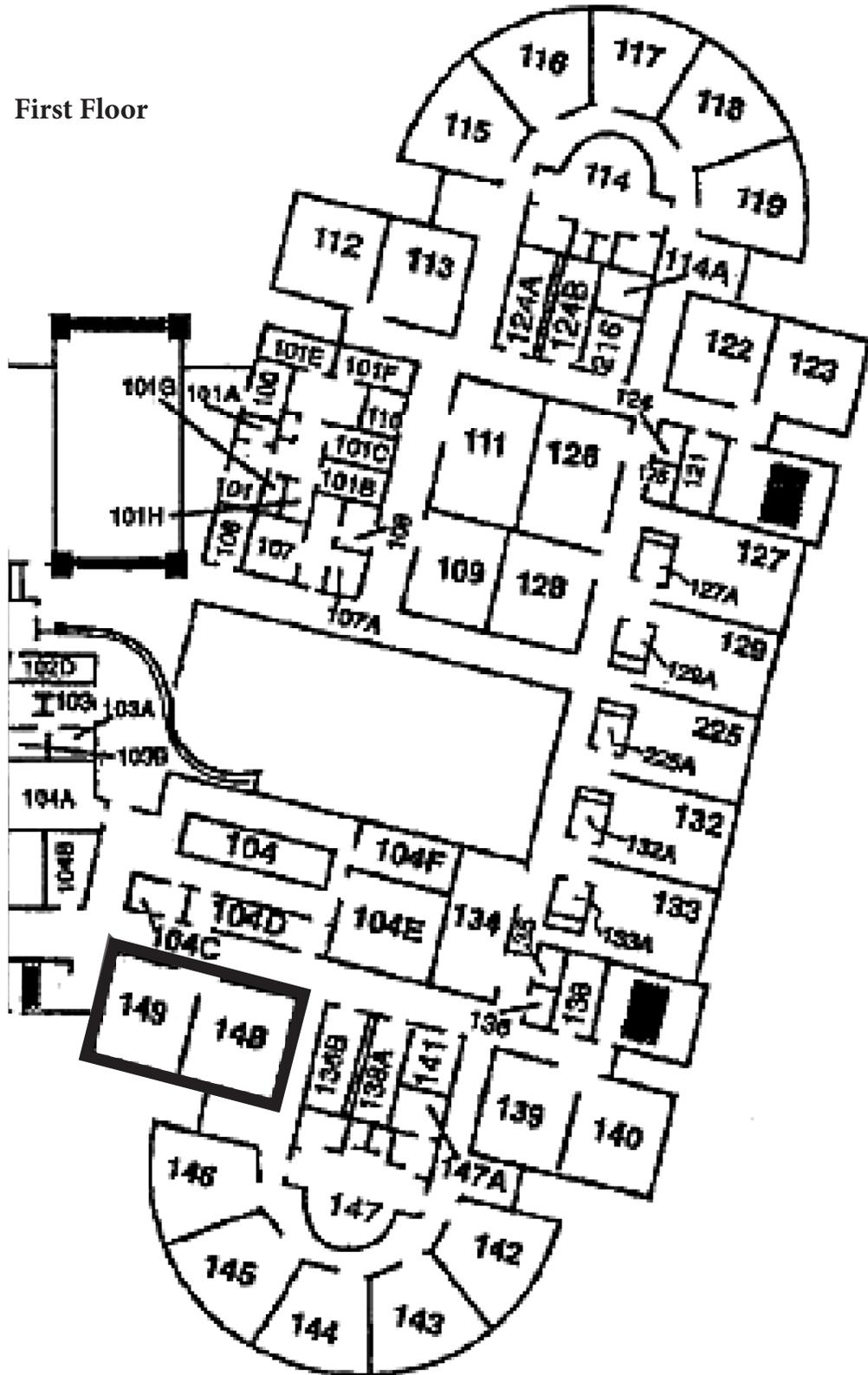
Upper St. Clair High School
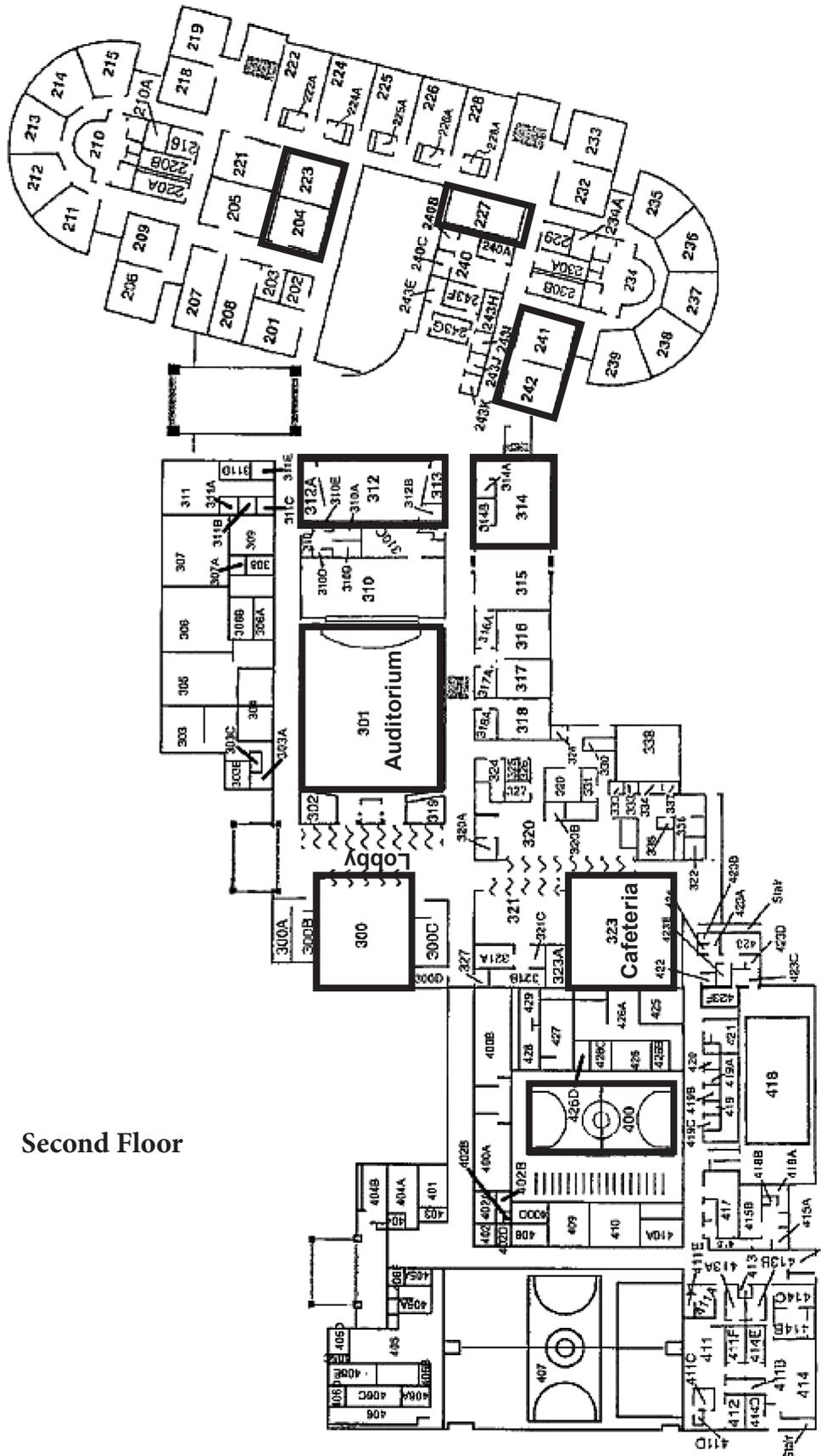
Second Floor

Session Descriptions

Brian K. Butler
Uniting Academic and Behavioral Interventions at Mason Crest Elementary
Many schools struggle with the "will or skill" dilemma. Participants see how Mason Crest Elementary School learned from trials and errors and became inspired and engaged by the efforts of a few of its staff to craft a "pro-solve" process to unite academic and behavior intervention processes.

Participants build shared knowledge by reading a section of *Uniting Academic and Behavior Interventions: Solving the Skill or Will Dilemma* (Buffum, Mattos, Webber, & Hierck, 2014), learn about Mason Crest's work to unite its academic and behavior monitoring processes, and collaborate to create a plan for individual students to use this process.

Collaborating in the Core in Elementary Schools
It is critical that every student receive high-quality instruction from the outset to meet the goal of academic achievement for all. To ensure high-quality Tier 1 instruction for students, adult learning in a school needs to be intentional and inclusive. How is professional development viewed at the school? Is it a one-shot, sit-and-get lecture, a one-time workshop, or a multifaceted approach? The overriding question for teachers and administrators is, How do we ensure high-quality Tier 1 core instruction and learning for all students through focused, collective, ongoing, and job-embedded professional development?

Participants at this session can expect to:
- Understand the importance of building a common language, common knowledge, and common expectations around job-embedded professional development through structured, whole-staff learning opportunities.
- View the process and purpose of involving all staff (culture) in building (structure) common collaborative time into the master schedule.
- Understand the purpose and importance of planning grade-level team meetings and having the opportunity to see some of these teams in action.
- Examine a lesson plan model that focuses on differentiation in Tier 1.
- Explore the idea of co-teaching and the four models that allow staff to continue learning and reflecting together in real time.

Developing a Common Language
Participants assess and build on their knowledge of key terms and vocabulary found in PLCs by comparing and contrasting their own experiences with Brian Butler's case study. They learn how to identify, embed, and hold themselves and their teammates accountable for the three Cs—common knowledge, common language, and common expectations—while forming a school that functions as a PLC.

Objectives of this interactive session include:
- Learning and identifying key terms of a PLC
- Assessing the importance of the three Cs when implementing the PLC process
- Discovering how to purposefully build, embed, and expect accountability in a PLC school

Session Descriptions

Scott Carr

Stuck in the Middle and Happy to Be Here!

From Oreo cookies to Tootsie Pops, the best stuff is often found in the middle! This is also true with PLCs in middle schools. Scott Carr focuses on how the PLC model fits into a middle school structure. Attendees learn about types of teaming and ways to collaborate and use team time to create a supportive structure for learners.

Learning outcomes include:
- Identifying different types of middle-level teaming
- Discovering how to direct the focus of middle-level teams on the right work
- Discussing how PLC frameworks may be integrated into existing structures

Collaborative Learning: Engaging Students and Adults With Digital Tools

Scott Carr looks at digital tools and strategies that enhance collaborative learning inside and outside secondary classrooms. Modeling collaborative learning helps prepare students to work in a technology-immersed world. Scott also shows how educators can benefit from digital tools by building personal learning networks for professional growth.

Participants discover:
- Aspects of collaborative learning strategies such as project-based learning and its importance in preparing students for life beyond high school
- Free online tools and their practical uses in a classroom
- Ways to share other digital tools and how to use them effectively

Creating a Culture of Celebration

In an age of standards and assessments, it is easy to forget the value of celebration and recognition. Scott Carr presents ways to create a positive culture for all in a school. By following these innovative examples, teachers can become energetic leaders in a culture that values celebration.

Participants learn about:
- Various ways to celebrate and recognize students and school staff
- Effective structures for celebration and recognition
- Becoming leaders of celebration at their school sites

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. He 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.

Session Descriptions

William M. Ferriter
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 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 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.

Anthony Muhammad
The Will to Lead: Working Together to Create a PLC Culture
This keynote explores the connection between school culture and successful PLC implementation. 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. Anthony Muhammad 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

= Keynote

Session Descriptions

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 Anthony 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 for creating useful and valid common assessments.
- Discover how to methodically create an effective academic intervention system that meets each student's 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, which has been studied and debated for years, 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 is a culture of collaboration 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. Anthony Muhammad 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 sustain productive collaborative relationships.
- Create organizational coherence and ensure collaboration at all levels of the school community.
- Understand the balance between support and accountability.

Session Descriptions

Anthony Muhammad
Getting Started: Building Consensus and Responding to Resisters
Privatizing practice, isolation, and individual autonomy that have traditionally characterized teaching are the most significant barriers to building a school culture focused on continuous improvement. Anthony Muhammad address the questions: How can a faculty build consensus to effect significant change? and What are the most effective ways to respond to the concerns of those who resist even when the staff has decided to move forward?

Outcomes include:
- Defining consensus
- Applying the most effective strategies for building consensus
- Learning seven research-based strategies for addressing resistance

Julie A. Schmidt
Yes We Can! All Really Does Mean *All* in a PLC
Warning: This work is not for the faint of heart! When teams commit to the PLC process and decide to engage in a cycle of continuous improvement, the first critical step is to examine their personal and systemic beliefs about students, themselves, and learning. Only then can they exclaim with confidence that "All really does mean all!" Once team members collectively make that commitment, they must then define what that looks like and how to get there. Julie Schmidt challenges participants to examine their professional beliefs before sharing ideas and examples that have resulted in improved outcomes for all students.

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 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.

= Keynote

Session Descriptions

Julie A. Schmidt
Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes (Part 1)
In the first part 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.

Sarah Schuhl
Focusing Teams and Students With Learning Targets
How can students articulate what they are learning? What should teachers assess to determine whether or not students are learning? Learning targets help bring clarity to students and teachers about outcomes expected in each course or subject area. Participants gain insight about writing clear learning targets from standards. Sarah Schuhl discusses strategies for using learning targets to help students self-assess their progress and for PLC teams to create and analyze common assessments.

Data, Data, Data: What Do We Need? What Do We Do With It?
The third big idea for PLC teams is a focus on results. How do collaborative teams use data to make informed decisions related to assessment and instruction, determine whether students have learned, and involve students in the learning process? Participants explore ways to collect and organize data and consider how to respond to the results obtained. They also learn a protocol for analyzing assessment data in a PLC team.

Session Descriptions

Sarah Schuhl
Formative Assessment Processes in Your K–12 Mathematics Classroom
How will you know if students are learning the content standards and process standards for mathematics in daily lessons and units? Which effective tasks and homework assignments further develop student learning? In this session, based on the *Beyond the Common Core* series, participants explore how collaborative teams use high-level tasks and lesson design to formatively assess student learning.

Participants use the high-leverage actions of collaborative teams to understand the scope and purpose of the formative assessment process. They explore the use of high-level tasks, homework, and lesson design to strengthen the formative assessment process.

W. Richard Smith
Wow! So This Is What We Should Be Doing: Best PLC Practices in Action
When attending a Solution Tree PLC at Work Institute, participants gain a wide array of valuable information, but they may wonder how all this will play out back at their own schools. W. Richard Smith presents a real-time look at the work of a PLC team. The PLC process comes to life with clarity and purpose as participants review data and see the efforts and best practices of successful teacher teams.

Participants leave with:
- Best practices to consider for their own PLC teams
- Clarity about the impact of data and instructional best practices
- Structures and practices that help guide teams as they respond to the four critical questions of a PLC

Moving From "Just Doing" to High Performing: Fresh Ideas and Approaches for PLCs
W. Richard Smith provides a step-by-step approach to make any PLC function at a high level. Participants learn the critical nuts and bolts to ensure teams make the most of their PLC time. They gain fresh ideas and approaches proven to be successful by teams of all sizes and at all grade levels.

Outcomes of this session include:
- Learning tools and activities that promote successful collaboration
- Gaining a clear vision of the relationship between the four critical questions of a PLC and the actions that make PLCs effective, efficient, and meaningful
- Gaining access to pragmatic activities and actions that make schoolwide and districtwide PLCs purposeful and impactful

Session Descriptions

W. Richard Smith
Moving the Long-Term English Learner to Meaningful Fluency: A Critical Challenge for Schools and Districts

Long-term English learners (LTELs) have finally been recognized as a subgroup of students who desperately need focus and support. W. Richard Smith presents strategies and programmatic approaches to define the learning needs of LTEL students and promote language development and knowledge. He focuses on differentiation strategies and extended learning for these students.

Participants in this session:
- Discover researched-based progress monitoring and a data-based focus for LTEL students.
- Learn how a PLC approach focused on best practices, differentiation, and intense interventions improves outcomes for LTEL students.
- Gain insight into district- and schoolwide supports and strategies to address LTEL students' learning needs, from preschool through high school.

Bob Sonju
Coaching Teams: Working Together to Solve Common Challenges

What should happen when a team starts to struggle? As teachers move toward becoming interdependent teams, challenges inevitably arise. Ensuring high levels of learning for every student requires a change in thinking and practice. Participants briefly review the work of highly effective teams, consider scenarios showing common team challenges, and work collaboratively to identify strategies for moving a team forward.

Participants in this session:
- Identify common challenges that limit a team's efficacy.
- Collaboratively resolve specific challenges and share strategies to help teams progress.
- Practice specific coaching strategies designed to assist teams in their critical work.

The Big Rocks: What Effective Teams Do to Increase Student Learning

With a focus on the "big rocks" of a high-performing school, this session guides participants through the fundamentals of a PLC and highlights the results that highly effective teams aim to achieve during collaboration meetings. Participants are called on to articulate specific team actions in support of an effective PLC and are provided high-leverage questions that drive the work of collaborative teams.

From Chaos to Clarity: Aligning the Work of Teams, Schools, and Districts

Often, confusion reigns as teams, schools, and districts attempt to implement processes to make a dramatic difference in student learning. Bob Sonju illustrates how clear expectations, processes, and effective professional development can transform an organization's purpose into reality. He clarifies the work of teams, schools, and the district office and provides strategies to align that work to ensure every student learns at high levels.

Session Descriptions

Eric Twadell

From Good to Great: Laying the Foundation of a PLC at Work
The first step in the never-ending journey of continuous improvement in a PLC is building a strong foundation on the three big ideas: 1) shifting from a teaching culture to a learning culture, 2) creating and sustaining a culture of collaboration, and 3) focusing on results. This session focuses on *why* schools need to reculture as PLCs to effect substantive improvement.

From Coblaboration to Collaboration: Utilizing Collaborative Protocols to Improve Student Learning
Eric Twadell explores proven, effective protocols for helping teachers and teams enhance their ability to collaborate and substantially impact student achievement. This session focuses on:
- Examples and resources that help teachers in PLCs work as members of collaborative teams
- The impact of collaborative protocols on student and teacher learning
- Hands-on development of team agendas and protocols to emphasize student learning and achievement

Proficiency-Based Assessment: Beyond the Formative and Summative Divide
While educators' knowledge of effective assessment practice has grown in the past few years, the chasm of understanding between *formative* and *summative* practices has widened. Eric Twadell argues that assessments should have neither a formative nor summative purpose. Instead, they are *experiences* to help students meet and exceed proficiency expectations.

Participants learn to:
- Create learning targets as well as develop and scale proficiency-based goals.
- Make instructional shifts to ensure students reach proficiency expectations.
- Build assessments that support student learning.
- Ensure that assessment serves instructional practice and moves students toward proficiency.

Beyond the Test: Formative Assessment Practices That Work (and Those That Don't) in a PLC
This session explores effective formative assessment practices teachers and teams can use to gather more meaningful data and provide students with more helpful feedback. Participants explore examples and templates to facilitate effective formative assessment experiences.

Outcomes include:
- Developing an understanding of assessment practices that do not support student learning
- Recognizing effective formative assessment practices
- Exploring examples and templates developed to ensure student learning and achievement

= Keynote