Agenda
Lincolnshire, IL • July 30–August 1

Monday, July 30

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Glass Commons
	Continental Breakfast	Field House
8:00–9:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Rebecca DuFour *PLCs at Work: Lessons Learned and Next Steps*	Performing Arts Center
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	(Various locations)
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	Field House
12:30–2:00 p.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	(Various locations)
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	**Panel Discussion**—*Receive practical answers from presenters to your most pressing questions.*	Performing Arts Center
	Brainstorming Session—Timothy D. Kanold *Spotlight on the PLC Work of Central Office Leaders*	2104 W
	Brainstorming Session—Brian K. Butler *Celebrating Learning for* All *on AllThingsPLC*	5044
3:15–3:30 p.m.	Break	
3:30–5:00 p.m.	**Reception**	Lincolnshire Marriott Resort – Marquee Tent

Tuesday, July 31

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Glass Commons
	Continental Breakfast	Field House
8:00–9:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Mike Mattos *Challenging Educational Mythology: Proven Practices and Brutal Facts in Creating Great Schools*	Performing Arts Center
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	(Various locations)
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	Field House
12:30–2:00 p.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	(Various locations)
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	**Team Time**—*Presenters are available to aid in your collaborative team discussions.*	Field House

7:00–11:00 p.m.	**Karaoke Night**	Lincolnshire Marriott Resort – Marquee Tent

Wednesday, August 1

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Field House
8:00–9:30 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	(Various locations)
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Robert Eaker *What Commitments Are You Prepared to Make—and More Importantly, Keep?*	Performing Arts Center

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Breakouts at a Glance

Presenter & Title	Monday, July 30		Tuesday, July 31		Wednesday, August 1
	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.
Jack Baldermann					
Successful Implementation Plans and Ideas for Fledgling PLCs	8046–8048		1414 W		
PLCs, Strategic Leadership, and Outstanding Results		8046–8048			
Motivating Disengaged Students: Useful Methods and Ideas for Educators				1414 W	4100
Tim Brown					
Student Data Notebooks: Developing Ownership, Motivation, and a Growth Mindset	4200			2115 W	
Raising Questions and Finding Answers in Our Grading Practices		Performing Arts Center			2115 W
Getting on the Same Page: Establishing Collective Commitments About Learning and Collaboration			2115 W		
Brian K. Butler					
What About Us? The PLC at Work Process in Early Childhood	1500–1502 W			1500–1502 W	
The Answer Is in the Room: Taking Collective Responsibility for English Learners at All Levels		1500–1502 W			
Ensuring Teams Engage in the Right Work			1500–1502 W		1500–1502 W
Luis F. Cruz					
English Learners and PLCs	4100				
I Like What I'm Hearing! So How Do We Initiate Our PLC Journey?		4100			

Remembering Rick DuFour: Embracing the "Tight and Loose" of the PLC Process			4100		
Taping Before Painting: Taking the Critical Steps to Respond Collectively When Students Don't Learn				4100	
I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful					Performing Arts Center
Rebecca DuFour					
Creating and Protecting the Shared Foundation of a PLC at Work	2115 W				
Lights, Camera, Action! Setting the Stage for PLC Success in Elementary Schools		2115 W			
Robert Eaker					
Friday Night in America: A Commonsense Approach to Improving Student Achievement	5044				
A Focus on Learning: What Would It Look Like If We Really Meant It?		5044			
Aligning the Work of a Professional Learning Community: Central Office, Schools, and Teams			5044		
Developing a Stretch Culture				5044	
Heather Friziellie					
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools			2206 W		
Unpack and Make Yourself Comfortable: Answering Critical Question One				2206 W	
Protocols for Results: Turning Data Into Information					1414 W

Heather Friziellie & Julie A. Schmidt					
Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes (Part 1)	2204 W				
Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes (Part 2)		2204 W			
Aaron Hansen					
Commitment, Persistence, and Re-Inspiration	8036–8040			8036–8040	
How to Develop PLCs for Singletons and Small Schools		8036–8040			8036–8040
Empowering Students to Own Their Learning in a PLC: Students as Partners in Reaching Rigor Levels on Next-Generation Assessments			8036–8040		
Chris Jakicic					
Too Much to Teach, Too Much to Learn	1414 W				
Simplifying Assessment Design		1414 W		2204 W	
Writing Quality Questions for Common Formative Assessments			2204 W		2204 W
Brandon Jones					
Abandoning Archaic Practices: Motivating and Preparing Generation Z Students	7044–7046			7044–7046	
The Elephant in the Room: Building Consensus and Overcoming Conflict		7044–7046			
The Tipping Point: Creating an Epidemic of Excellence in Schools			7044–7046		7044–7046
Timothy D. Kanold					
HEARTPRINT: Living a Fully Engaged, High Energy, Well-Balanced Professional Life!	2104 W				2104 W

Getting to the HEART of Central Office and School-Site PLC Leadership and Coaching!		2104 W			
Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great Instruction and Tasks!			2104 W		
Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Assessment, Homework, and Grading!				2104 W	
Sharon V. Kramer					
How to Leverage PLCs to Improve Your School	2500–2502 W				
Learning Is Not a Spectator Sport. So How Do We Involve Students?		2500–2502 W		2500–2502 W	
Learning for *All* Requires Differentiation			2500–2502 W		2500–2502 W
Mike Mattos					
Building the Collaborative Culture of a Professional Learning Community at Work (Part 1)	2206 W				
Building the Collaborative Culture of a Professional Learning Community at Work (Part 2)		2206 W			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools			Performing Arts Center		
Simplifying Response to Intervention: How to Create a Highly Effective, Multitiered System of Supports				Performing Arts Center	
Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC Process					5044
Anthony Muhammad					
Bringing the Four PLC Questions to Life: Systems That Ensure All Students Learn	Performing Arts Center				
Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change		4200			

Building Culture, Creating Purpose, and Overcoming Frustration on Your PLC Journey			4200		
Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!				4200	
Getting Started: Building Consensus and Responding to Resisters					4200
Maria Nielsen					
The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!	7066–7068		7066–7068		
Show Me What Ya Got: Student Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Learning		7066–7068			7066–7068
Digging Into the Data Without Getting Bogged Down				7066–7068	
Timothy S. Stuart					
Personalized Learning in a PLC	7044–7046			7044–7046	
Giving Students Agency Through the Four Critical Questions		7044–7046			
Great to Greater: PLC at Work in High-Performing Schools			7044–7046		7044–7046

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Session Descriptions

Jack Baldermann
Successful Implementation Plans and Ideas for Fledgling PLCs
Jack Baldermann provides innovative ideas and a step-by-step process for successful PLC implementation for educators whose schools are starting the PLC process or need a reboot. As a principal, Jack worked with his team to successfully develop PLCs in three schools, and he has consulted and supported effective PLC implementation at schools throughout the country. Participants can expect to receive practical information to launch or relaunch the PLC process and start designing a strategic plan to integrate PLC concepts.

PLCs, Strategic Leadership, and Outstanding Results
Jack Baldermann shares specific programs, ideas, plans, and tools used to transform schools. After four years of implementing PLC concepts, Westmont High School (a Title I school) became the most improved high school in Illinois in 2014 and 2015 with a graduation rate of 99 percent, a graduation rate of 100 percent for Latino and African American students, double-digit increases on every NCLB exam, a dramatic reduction in suspensions, achievement of adequate yearly progress for the first time in seven years, and one of the most improved advanced placement programs in the country. Riverside Brookfield High School achieved similar results using PLC concepts and employing strategic leadership.

Participants gain:
- Specific strategies to implement PLC concepts that are proven to result in significant student achievement
- Practical tools to help establish a high-functioning PLC school
- Useful information and inspiration to improve students' academic performance

Motivating Disengaged Students: Useful Methods and Ideas for Educators
Jack Baldermann shares the findings of leading researchers and practitioners in education, including new research based on more than 300 interviews with students identified as underperforming. He shows the results of specific programs that are making a substantial difference in student achievement and facilitates a discussion about how to reach and engage unmotivated students.

Participants in this session:
- Learn about and discuss current research and best practices in education that positively impact the lives of all students.
- Examine research on why students disengage from the learning process and what educators can do to help them become more successful.
- Explore ideas and solutions that work in harmony with PLCs.
- Gain information and strategies to implement at their schools or districts.

Tim Brown

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

Educators in schools with a focus on learning promote a strong sense of self-efficacy in their students. Several recent studies show this is one of the greatest factors of student motivation and engagement. Participants examine the essential characteristics for building student self-efficacy and a growth mindset through data notebooks. Tim Brown shares products teams have developed to engage and empower students in self-reporting and reflection.

This session addresses these 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 effectively use these products to help students own their learning?

Raising Questions and Finding Answers in Our Grading Practices

Talking about grading practices is often 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 that are aligned with learning outcomes.

Participants discuss these essential questions:
- What do principles of learning, student motivation, and grading have in common?
- What are the reasons and rationale behind changes in grading practices?
- What grading practices and guidelines do successful teams and schools implement?

Getting on the Same Page: Establishing Collective Commitments About Learning and Collaboration

Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, argues that explicitly stated values are one of the most powerful steps teams can take toward becoming exemplary. Developing a common vision of instruction, assessment, and interventions at the classroom, team, and schoolwide levels are critical steps in the PLC process. Tim Brown shares strategies and provides helpful examples for developing collective commitments and common vision.

Outcomes include:
- Understanding the importance of developing explicit commitments with members of a team
- Participating in strategies for developing collective commitments as a team
- Exploring processes and protocols that make values more than a one-time event

Brian K. Butler

What About Us? The PLC at Work Process in Early Childhood

For years, schools have focused on implementing the PLC at Work process in the K–12 system. However, many preschool programs want to know how to make this process work for their schools and children, too. 2016 DuFour Award recipient Mason Crest Elementary addresses this and goes deeper.

Through the powerfully collaborative and data-driven process of PLCs, the school combined a preschool special education class with a general education preschool Head Start class and dispelled the myth that students with early learning challenges could not achieve developmental milestones. Indeed, they could even exceed them.

Outcomes include:
- Learning the administrative team's role in supporting the preschool collaborative team
- Experiencing the power of common assessments and acquiring the preschool team data analysis protocol used to assess effective practices and to flexibly and seamlessly group students during their play activities to give appropriate support and challenge
- Understanding how shifting teacher mindsets and teacher talk ensures high expectations for all
- Exploring how children still learn through play and how teachers can change their approach to that time

The Answer Is in The Room: Taking Collective Responsibility for English Learners at All Levels
To ensure the success of English learners who may require language instruction and support throughout the school day, we have to replace the model of one or two EL teachers attempting to meet all the needs of hundreds of students with one that builds the capacity for all staff to be EL instructors. EL teachers must work collaboratively to help all staff take collective responsibility for EL students and make "all means all" a reality. Administrators and teachers in this session learn about a system and process, based on collaboration and teamwork, that can easily be implemented in their schools while building the capacity of all teachers to effectively support English learners through job-embedded professional development.

Outcomes include:
- Learning about dangerous detours and seductive shortcuts that do not align with the mission of ensuring high levels of learning for all students and adults
- Exploring various team meeting structures and purposes that enable teams to focus on planning instruction, assessment, interventions and extensions, and the role of EL teachers in these meetings
- Engaging with elementary and secondary school case studies that address the issues around embracing a culture of collective responsibility for English learners and all students
- Identifying and exploring resources for building greater, more effective collaboration in schools

Ensuring Teams Engage in the Right Work
Taking a page from *School Improvement for All: A How-To Guide for Doing the Right Work* (Solution Tree Press, 2017) by Sharon Kramer and Sarah Schuhl, participants delve deep into the *right work* of teacher teams. Kramer and Schuhl state, "The best way to describe, clarify, and monitor the task of teams is to delineate the products that they would create from answering the four questions of learning" which drive the work of collaborative teams (p. 22). Participants gain absolute clarity on what this looks, feels, and sounds like at the team level.

Outcomes include:
- Gaining an understanding of the impact that doing the right work can make on culture and student achievement
- Acquiring a team protocol for complementing defined tasks, products, and artifacts that come out of answering the four critical questions of learning
- Assessing where teams are regarding each task
- Observing a team using artifacts and products to complete a task

Brainstorming Session: Celebrating Learning for *All* on AllThingsPLC
Has your organization demonstrated a commitment to PLC concepts? Is the evidence of student learning the pride of your teams? Do you want the world to celebrate your community's dedication to ensuring high levels of learning for *all*?

Discover how to shine the spotlight on your organization's PLC journey. This brainstorming session provides information, guidance, and support to school and district leaders and leadership teams who want the right work they engage in every day to be widely recognized and for their schools to be seen as models of the PLC at Work process. After a brief overview of the guidelines, criteria, and application process for official recognition, PLC associates and Solution Tree staff answer participants' questions. Attendees are provided time to begin the application process and have access to other practitioners whose organizations have received this honor.

Schools recognized as models of the PLC process are eligible to apply for the 2019 DuFour Award, a $25,000 cash award to be presented during a ceremony at the 2019 Summit on Professional Learning Communities at Work in Phoenix, Arizona.

Luis F. Cruz
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. Learn the seven steps an EL taskforce can initiate to ensure students learning English as a second language are included in the "all means all" mantra defining a school's fundamental purpose of learning for every student.

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.

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 every student. 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? Is it normal to expect staff resistance to this process and is there a difference between rational and irrational forms of resistance? Luis F. Cruz explains in practical terms the *who*, *why*, and *how* associated with the PLC process.

Participants learn:
- How to initiate a PLC process
- The role of a guiding coalition
- How to establish the foundation of a PLC

Remembering Rick DuFour: Embracing the "Tight and Loose" of the PLC Process
Throughout his professional life Dr. Richard DuFour shared important insights aimed at guiding educators in their quest to continuously strengthen implementation of the PLC process. One of his most notable keynotes captured the essence of which aspects of the PLC process must be "tight" and which could be "loose." Join Luis F. Cruz as he celebrates the life of Rick DuFour by reminding audiences of Rick's message and his purpose of ensuring learning for ALL students.

Outcomes include:
- Understanding why teams adopting a collaborative culture is a "must do" in the PLC process
- Learning why ensuring a "guaranteed and viable" curriculum is essential to the PLC process
- Exploring why allowing teachers the "defined autonomy" to teach in the manner they feel most effective is a "loose" aspect of the PLC process

Taping Before Painting: Taking the Critical Steps to Respond Collectively When Students Don't 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 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 learn:
- The difference between rational and irrational forms of adult resistance and how to address each
- That effective leadership is an art *and* a science and how to maneuver in both directions
- Practical actions to accelerate the PLC process

Rebecca DuFour

[KEYNOTE] PLCs at Work: Lessons Learned and Next Steps
This year marks the 20th anniversary of the publication of *Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement* (Solution Tree Press, 1998) by Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker. This seminal work culminated from years of research and implementation of the PLC process in numerous school settings.

Many books and resources, hundreds of events, and thousands of professional development days later, what have we learned from schools and districts around the world that have become high-performing PLCs? What are the next steps for educators who are committed to implementing and sustaining this powerful, continuous improvement process in their own schools and districts? In this keynote, Rebecca DuFour elaborates on lessons learned and provides recommendations for high-leverage next steps on the PLC at Work journey.

Outcomes include:
- Developing and reinforcing the common language of the PLC process
- Identifying characteristics of the PLC process that have remained constant over the decades
- Gaining new insights from practitioners who are implementing the PLC process
- Planning for high-leverage next steps on the PLC at Work journey

Creating and Protecting the Shared Foundation of a PLC at Work
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?

Lights, Camera, Action! Setting the Stage for PLC Success in Elementary Schools
Elementary school educators beginning the PLC journey face the immediate challenge of how to provide time and structure essential to the PLC process. This interactive session is designed to help elementary educators address that challenge.

Rebecca DuFour provides effective templates and proven strategies for reallocating existing resources to support learning for all. Participants are invited to bring their creative ideas to this session.

This session is recommended for elementary-level educators who have an interest in or a responsibility for creating schoolwide and team schedules.

Robert Eaker

[KEYNOTE] What Commitments Are You Prepared to Make—and More Importantly, Keep?
Leaders of high-performing professional learning communities recognize that developing shared beliefs representing a district's or school's mission and vision is not enough. They move beyond building consensus around shared *beliefs* to leading a process that results in shared *commitments* to specific behaviors. The question, "What commitments are we prepared to make?" forms the framework for action within a PLC culture. Learn how shared commitments drive collaboration, planning, monitoring, celebrating, and decision making in PLCs to improve learning levels for every student, skill by skill, name by name.

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 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 PLCs make while developing a *stretch culture*. He pays particular attention to assessment and providing students with additional time and support.

Heather Friziellie

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. After examining the key ingredients 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.

Participants examine strategies to collaboratively:
- Examine core beliefs.
- Respond to each student's learning needs in a timely, directive, and systematic way.
- Utilize resources (human, material, and temporal) in different ways.
- Utilize data to drive intervention.
- Examine the most common RTI mistakes.
- Make celebrations part of school culture.

Unpack and Make Yourself Comfortable: Answering Critical Question One

This session briefly lays the groundwork for committing to a guaranteed and viable curriculum before delving into a process of prioritizing and unpacking. Participants first examine the "why" of establishing a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Then, the process—starting at the standards level—for teams to work through a protocol to deeply understand, prioritize, and pace the learning standards into a meaningful learning progression of activities that lead to student mastery via scaffolding to assess student progress. Time will be allocated for participants to engage in the work and reflect on ways to take the process back to their collaborative teams.

Protocols for Results: Turning Data Into Information

Is your system overwhelmed with data? Using protocols to transform data into information is an efficient and effective way to achieve improved results. Participants examine tools that empower teams to use data to drive instruction and impact student learning and also identify specific processes to meet district needs.

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

Heather Friziellie & Julie A. Schmidt

Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes (Parts 1 & 2)

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 and understand how we got here, they must then define what improvement looks like and how to get there. Heather Frizielllie challenges participants to examine their professional beliefs before delving into collaborative structures, the importance of scaffolding, what tailored instruction does and does not look like, and ideas and examples that have resulted in improved outcomes for all students.

Aaron Hansen
Commitment, Persistence, and Re-Inspiration

Author and educator Mike Schmoker calls it *the press*—the daily avalanche of reports, lesson plans, grading, parent inquiries, emails, and meetings that add to the enormous pressure teachers and leaders face. It is no wonder that educators often feel frustrated and are distracted from what is important. Aaron Hansen motivates participants through structured activities and stories that reiterate what is crucial: all students learning at high levels. Participants are re-inspired as they develop ways to keep staff members committed, persistent, and motivated.

Participants can expect to:
- Learn how to connect each staff member's personal purpose to the organization's vision.
- Help staff members establish and sustain commitment and persistence to achieve high levels of learning for all students.
- Become re-inspired to make a difference at their sites and in their districts.

How to Develop PLCs for Singletons and Small Schools

PLC concepts resonate with most educators, but making collaborative learning work in small schools or for singleton teachers can be challenging. Participants explore five models for creating meaningful professional learning teams: 1) changing schedules to allow teachers to teach the same subjects, 2) vertical teaming, 3) cross-curricular teaming, 4) supporting roles, and 5) using electronic tools to pair teachers with peers in the same subject area.

Participants discuss common structural barriers that prevent singletons from joining collaborative teams and develop an action plan to incorporate singletons into the PLC process.

Empowering Students to Own Their Learning in a PLC: Students as Partners in Reaching Rigor Levels on Next-Generation Assessments

Let's aspire to more than merely leading students to pass the state test. Students who own their learning and know that it is meaningful will exceed expectations on high-stakes tests and be empowered to do more. Participants are challenged to get serious about what they really want students to learn to be successful in school and life instead of just on tests. They will learn how to supercharge their PLC practices, the most powerful model for changing schools, to blow through the low levels of thinking on most tests while enabling students to gain attributes, skills, and hope for an even more important test—the test of life.

Outcomes include:
- Using PLC practices to empower kids to own their learning
- Helping kids develop metacognition and self-efficacy for passing the state test and much more
- Being reminded of the "moral purpose" of giving hope to students

Chris Jakicic

Too Much to Teach, Too Much to Learn
What do we want our students to know and do? This question serves as the foundation for the work of a PLC and guides teams on what to assess and respond to. Chris Jakicic shows why identifying essential standards is necessary to having a guaranteed and viable curriculum and to increasing student achievement. Participants explore strategies teams can use to select essential standards and ways to use them in their work.

Simplifying Assessment Design
Common formative assessments written, administered, and used by collaborative teams can have a significant impact on student achievement. This session focuses on helping participants avoid making common mistakes in assessment design that often lead to misusing data to respond to students' learning needs. Participants learn how to unwrap standards into learning targets and how to write an assessment plan to gain reliable data.

Participants in this session:
- Understand how unwrapping standards into learning targets improves the quality of formative assessments.
- Learn how to choose the right type of assessment to match the rigor of learning targets.
- Discover ways to create an assessment plan that leads to a more valid and reliable assessment.

Writing Quality Questions for Common Formative Assessments
If educators base teaching decisions on assessment results, how do they know their assessment items provide accurate information? Participants explore ways to write items that translate into better information about student learning. In particular, they gain strategies for assessing more rigorous learning targets.

Participants can expect to:
- Become familiar with writing better constructed-response and multiple-choice questions to provide them with more accurate information about what students need next.
- Explore ways to choose or develop stimulus information to increase the rigor of an assessment item.
- Learn how to develop quality rubrics that score questions in a way that provides information to teachers, collaborative teams, and students.

Brandon Jones
Abandoning Archaic Practices: Motivating and Preparing Generation Z Students
We are currently preparing students for jobs that do not currently exist so they will be able to use technologies that haven't been invented in order to solve problems we are not yet aware of. What happens when all the tricks we have in the bag fail to motivate, engage, and excite the current generation of students who are dependent on the immediacy of the world around them? The problem lies in the fact that their system of thinking from the neural level to the practical is instant and problem based—exactly the opposite of preceding generations! In this session Brandon Jones compares traditional and 21st century learning practices that make significant impacts on student motivation and learning.

Participants can expect to:
- Examine significant differences between Generation Z and past generations.
- Identify traditional practices that demotivate students.
- Identify 21st century learning practices that motivate and prepare students for the future.

The Elephant in the Room: Building Consensus and Overcoming Conflict
We have read the books, studied the research, watched the videos, and attended the training. Why, then, is everyone still not moving in the same direction? Establishing protocols for how decisions are made is a critical step in becoming a highly effective PLC. Even with these methods in place, there will be staff unwilling to support the process. Participants examine ways to approach building consensus as well as the means to deal with resistance so the journey continues. This session is based on the cultural research of Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, Thomas Many, and Anthony Muhammad.

Participants can expect to:
- Examine how to lay the foundation for maximum buy-in.
- Analyze the latest research regarding types of people who contribute to the culture of your organization.
- Learn how to establish consensus.
- Explore strategies for working with resisters.

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 relates to the PLC process.
- Explore practical ways to apply these principles to improve school leadership and culture.

Timothy D. Kanold
HEARTPRINT: Living a Fully Engaged, High Energy, Well-Balanced Professional Life!
Timothy D. Kanold draws from his bestselling 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 live an energetic and well-balanced professional life every day.

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

Participants can expect to:
- Examine the H and the E elements of their HEART: their relational Happiness and how to become fully Engaged in their work.
- Discover ways to improve their relational intelligence and impact (heartprint) on others.
- Learn ways to pursue and sustain a well-balanced, high-energy personal and professional PLC life and the positive effects this can have on others.

Getting to the HEART of Central Office and School-Site PLC Leadership and Coaching!
PLC leaders affect risk-taking and change success and inspire others. Drawing from chapters in part 4: "R is for Risk" of his bestselling book HEART!, Timothy D. Kanold reveals the practical work of school leadership. He begins with the power of emotionally connecting others to the results of their effort, explores the risk-vision interdependency, and ends with the secret to entropy avoidance in leading the PLC culture.

As Dr. Kanold indicates, "As we become fully formed professionals, we tie our workplace heartprint to the results of our effort and seek to avoid entropy—chaos, disorganization, and randomness—in our daily work."

Participants learn how to:
- Use goal setting and results to help others measure the impact of their daily actions.
- Lead and create a vision for risk-taking and action interdependent with the measurable results of their work.
- Avoid the signs of entropy—chaos, disorganization, and randomness—for their area of PLC school leadership.

Brainstorming Session: Spotlight on the PLC Work of Central Office Leaders
Central office personnel are invited to share with colleagues their biggest obstacles toward full implementation of the PLC process in their districts. Timothy D. Kanold, a former school superintendent, facilitates this focused session and provides an opportunity to brainstorm solutions using an engaging, meaningful dialogue process.

Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great Instruction and Tasks!
Based on the 2018 Solution Tree series Mathematics in a PLC at Work: *Every Student Can Learn Mathematics*, lead author Timothy D. Kanold explores how collaborative teams can achieve a level of improved student achievement through a balanced use of lower-level and higher-level-cognitive-demand tasks with meaningful and formative feedback to students during instruction.

Dr. Kanold shares six research-affirmed lesson design criteria essential to inspiring student perseverance and sustained effort in mathematics class every day. He also shares sample mathematics tasks and online resources for teacher support.

Participants use the PLC mathematics lesson design model to:
- Examine the difference between relevant and meaningful mathematics content and vocabulary.
- Examine the effective and balanced use of lower-level and higher-level-cognitive-demand tasks during class.
- Consider the effective and balanced use of in-class student discourse for formative assessment feedback when students get stuck during the lesson.

Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Assessment, Homework, and Grading!
Mathematics assessment can either inspire or destroy student learning. Based on the 2018 Solution Tree series Mathematics in a PLC at Work: *Every Student Can Learn Mathematics*, lead author Timothy Kanold explores the inspiring assessment, scoring, intervention, and grading routines of collaborative teams in a PLC culture.

Dr. Kanold reveals the criteria for creating high-quality unit assessments (quizzes and tests) and helps participants reflect upon and answer the formative question "Now what?" when an assessment is returned to the students. The session ends with a discussion about the research-affirmed criteria for high-quality mathematics homework routines and practices.

Participants in this session:
- Use high-quality mathematics unit-assessment-design protocols and discussion tools for evaluating the quality of current mathematics assessments.
- Develop formative strategies for student response, intervention, and ownership of learning during and at the end of a unit of study.
- Explore research and discussion tools to design highly effective mathematics homework routines and practices.

Sharon V. Kramer
How to Leverage PLCs to Improve Your School
This session outlines strategies that ensure learning for all. Sharon V. Kramer uses the PLC model to highlight and deconstruct the five challenges, or greatest opportunities, to successful and sustainable school-improvement results. Educators who face the unique challenges of serving at-risk youth gain practical solutions to these real-world issues.

Participants examine ways to:
- Support a culture of success.
- Engage everyone in the right work.
- Establish a shift from what *all* students need to what *each* student needs.
- Develop leadership for learning.
- Engage students in owning their learning.

Learning for All *Requires* Differentiation
To ensure all students learn at high levels, teachers need to respond to the needs of *each* student. Differentiation is a way to reach all students, but it is difficult for any teacher to do alone. Sharon V. Kramer demonstrates a collaborative team process for meeting the needs of all learners in a proactive, rather than reactive, manner.

Participants in this session:
- Learn the difference between *proactive* and *reactive* differentiation.
- Understand how a team develops a learning plan that includes differentiation *before*, *during*, and *after* instruction.
- Identify tools and strategies for differentiation.

Learning Is Not a Spectator Sport. So How Do We Involve Students?
The research is clear: When students are engaged in the assessment process, they become more motivated and focused on learning. Students today are poised to take ownership of their learning. However, in some classrooms, student involvement in the learning process is limited. Using practical examples of student work, Sharon V. Kramer illustrates ways to engage students in learning and assessment.

Outcomes include:
- Examining research related to student involvement in the assessment process
- Reviewing best practices that motivate and empower students to improve their learning
- Identifying strategies that engage students in understanding targets, monitoring their own learning, and communicating progress

Mike Mattos

[KEYNOTE] Challenging Educational Mythology: Proven Practices and Brutal Facts in Creating Great Schools
Becoming a professional learning community requires more than committing to the collaborative practices proven to best ensure learning. A PLC must also be willing to discontinue policies and procedures that are counterproductive to student success. Unfortunately, many schools stubbornly hold on to myths—widely held beliefs that are false—that justify teacher isolation and student failure. Mike Mattos discusses essential practices that are required to ensure high levels of learning for every student and challenges the educational mythology that is holding us back.

Outcomes include:

- Learning the five essential practices of the PLC at Work process
- Identifying school myths and inaccurate beliefs that are counterproductive to collaboration and student learning
- Understanding how these myths lead to practices, policies, and procedures that inhibit student learning
- Beginning a "stop-doing" list for schools and districts
- Embracing a commitment and assurance that the academic success of every student is possible

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

Collaborative teacher teams are the engines that drive a professional learning community. In this two-part breakout, participants learn about the specific work of teacher teams, including the use of SMART goals, team norms, and the four critical questions that guide team collaboration. This breakout is highly recommended for participants new to the PLC process and for returning participants who want to evaluate and improve team collaboration.

Participants in this session:

- Study the specific work of teacher teams in the PLC at Work process.
- Define key vocabulary.
- Evaluate their current team progress.
- Learn how to use the book *Learning by Doing* as an ongoing resource.
- Acquire tools and sample products.

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

The biggest obstacle most secondary schools face in providing interventions is not identifying which students need help but how to schedule the time needed to provide the help during the school day. This breakout provides real examples from a high-performing school on how it created time for supplemental and intensive interventions.

Participants learn specific steps to implement a flexible secondary intervention period, including how to:

- Determine what interventions to offer each week.
- Require students to attend specific interventions.
- Monitor student attendance.
- Allocate staff.
- Extend student learning.
- Address potential obstacles.
- Do all this within current teachers' contractual obligations.

Simplifying Response to Intervention: How to Create a Highly Effective, Multitiered System of Supports

How does your school respond when students don't learn? Compelling evidence shows that response to intervention (RTI)—also known as a multitiered system of supports (MTSS)—can successfully engage a school's staff in a collective process to provide every student with the additional time and support

needed to learn at high levels. Yet, at many schools, this potential lies dormant, buried under layers of state regulations, district protocols, misguided priorities, and traditional school practices that are misaligned to the essential elements of RTI. This session shows how the PLC at Work process creates the larger, schoolwide framework required to successfully create a multitiered system of supports.

Outcomes include:
- Understanding the characteristics of the three tiers of the RTI process
- Connecting the work of teacher teams in a PLC to effective supplemental interventions
- Clearly defining the roles of classroom teachers, administration, and support staff in the RTI process

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

Participants are called on 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 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 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)

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 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. Anthony 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.

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 addresses 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

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 steps for a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- Explore the learning–assessing cycle in a unit of study.

Show Me What Ya Got: Student Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Learning
Maria Nielsen helps teachers move past "sit and get" in the classroom to a place where all students actively participate in learning. She shares engagement strategies to assess student understanding throughout a lesson or unit of study.

Participants 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.

Digging Into the Data Without Getting Bogged Down
How does a collaborative team employ essential learning outcomes to create common assessments and use the data to plan next steps for students? Participants experience the process of analyzing and responding to common formative assessments for interventions and extensions.

Learning outcomes include:
- Examining the process of creating and using common assessments
- Efficiently analyzing data as a team
- Mapping an assessment plan and using data to plan next steps

Timothy S. Stuart
Personalized Learning in a PLC
Based on his book *Personalized Learning in a PLC: Student Agency Through the Four Critical Questions*, Timothy S. Stuart illustrates how PLCs provide a strong framework for creating the school of the future. The PLC construct can be used to create highly personalized learning environments for students and ensure that all students learn essential standards at high levels and become proficient in 21st century skills.

Participants learn ways to engage students and personalize their learning pathways and progressions by asking and answering the four critical PLC questions from their own perspectives: What do I need

to know and be able to do? How will I know that I have learned it? What will I do if I am not learning? What will I do if I already know it?

Outcomes include:
- Discovering ways to ensure that all students learn at high levels through a personalized approach to learning
- Understanding how to personalize learning pathways in schools
- Understanding how to personalize learning progressions in schools

Giving Students Agency Through the Four Critical Questions
Student agency is at the heart of learning at the highest level. PLCs provide a strong framework for empowering lifelong learners. Based on his book, *Personalized Learning in a PLC: Student Agency Through the Four Critical Questions*, Dr. Stuart demonstrates how to bring students into PLC conversations, increase student agency, create relevant learning experiences, and offer authentic assessment opportunities for students to accelerate their learning.

Participants discover ways to empower students to take collective responsibility for their learning by responding to the four critical questions of a PLC: What do I need to know and be able to do? How will I know that I have learned it? What will I do if I am not learning? What will I do if I already know it?

Participants in this session:
- Learn how to utilize the PLC construct to give students agency over their learning.
- Understand how students can share in the collective responsibility for learning.
- Develop simple strategies for implementation in schools.

Great to Greater: PLC at Work in High-Performing Schools
How do great schools continue to improve? Based on his book *Global Perspectives: Professional Learning Communities at Work in International Schools*, Timothy S. Stuart illustrates how some of the highest performing schools in the world continue to improve. He demonstrates the positive impact this structure has in taking learning to a higher level and its impact on professional growth and school culture. Dr. Stuart shares his implementation journey at three high-performing schools—how it continues to increase academic performance and creates a system for continuous innovation, collaboration, and improved instructional practice.

Participants in this session:
- Understand how to leverage PLC processes in high-performing schools.
- Acquire PLC implementation strategies.
- Develop a plan for working with high-performing teachers.