

# Agenda

## Seattle, WA • November 8–9

### Thursday, November 8

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Anthony Muhammad <i>What Is School Culture and Why Should I Care?</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch	
12:30–2:00 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:45 p.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Anthony Muhammad & Kenneth C. Williams <i>Linking School Culture Theory and Practice</i>	

### Friday, November 9

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:15 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	
11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m.	Lunch	
12:15–1:45 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	
1:45–2:00 p.m.	Break	
2:00–3:30 p.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Kenneth C. Williams <i>Starting a Movement: Taking Students to and Through the BAR</i>	

**Agenda is subject to change.**

## Breakouts at a Glance

Presenter & Title	Thursday, November 8		Friday, November 9		
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.	9:45–11:15 a.m.	12:15–1:45 p.m.
<b>Aspasia Carlson</b>					
The Equitable Classroom	X				
Inside the Turnaround School		X			
Building Your Guiding Coalition for Culture Change			X		
Be the Change!				X	
Creating a Culture of Equity					X
<b>Tom Hierck</b>					
Building Relationships: The Key to Growth for <i>All</i>	X				X
Starting a Movement: Authentic Alignment		X			
Seven Keys to a Positive Learning Environment in Your Classroom: Keys 1 to 3			X		
Seven Keys to a Positive Learning Environment in Your Classroom: Keys 1 to 6				X	
<b>Rosa Isiah</b>					
The Role of Equity and Mindset in a Healthy School Culture	X		X		
The Role of Teacher Leadership in Developing School Culture		X			X
Practical Strategies for Improving Inclusion for Historically Marginalized Students				X	

<b>Anthony Muhammad</b>					
Assessing the Health of Our School Culture (Part 1)	X				
Assessing the Health of Our School Culture (Part 2)		X			
Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change			X		X
Transforming School Culture: New Insights				X	
<b>Regina Stephens Owens</b>					
The Why Effect: Intentional Systems Drive Inspirational Cultures	X				
Designing and Developing Culture in High-Performing Schools		X			
With the World at Their Fingertips: What's Next?			X		X
#CultureCan				X	
<b>Kenneth C. Williams</b>					
Starting a Movement: How a Guiding Coalition Leads From the Front	X				
12 Angry Men: The Impact of One, the Power of Team		X			
At Risk or Underserved?: Focusing on What Really Matters in Student Learning			X		X
Status Quo Disruptor or Defender: Which Will You Choose to Be?				X	

**Agenda is subject to change.**

# Session Descriptions

## **Aspasia Carlson**

### **Creating a Culture of Equity**

Learning is the foundational business of all schools. For this to occur in meaningful and sustainable ways, educators and school leaders must create equitable learning environments that support all students. Creating and nurturing a safe, ethical, and equitable school community takes strategic allocation of energy and resources that support a vision of positive culture. Research indicates that a safe environment for learning includes physical, social, and emotional factors that affect students' ability to engage and learn. School leaders are faced with a unique and challenging objective where a diverse group of individuals with varying beliefs, backgrounds, and habits are brought together in a school and are tasked with finding their communal rules of conduct. This breakout session provides a framework for envisioning, planning, and implementing a school culture that positively supports all learners.

Participants can expect to learn about:

- The key components of an equitable and supportive school culture
- How all students can feel safe physically, emotionally, and socially when there are so many diverse experiences to consider
- How leaders can monitor and sustain positive change

### **Be the Change!**

Social justice issues are being addressed in social media and the classroom. How can educators and school leaders harness the call to activism that has motivated students to stand up and act on behalf of their generation? This session gives participants a closer look at the phenomenon of student and educator activism and helps turn this time into an opportunity for unity, action, and civic development. Understanding common beliefs and values within a school community helps leaders focus the frustrations, passions, and actions of their students and staff to bring a movement to life.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn about social justice issues that affect today's students and educators.
- Assess and focus the passion and activism in young people at the secondary school level.
- Explore the possibilities for responsible avenues for student civic engagement.

### **Inside the Turnaround School**

Schools that educate students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are tasked with providing a multitude of services, while battling shrinking resources and budgets and implementing turnaround strategies. Leaders have to maximize their efforts to strategically implement change and create supports to help sustain the turnaround effort. They must help motivate their teachers to do the difficult work, champion the cause, and rally community resources to help create meaningful change.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand and engineer supports for positive change at all levels.
- Explore operational, cultural, and instructional aspects that promote positive transformation to turn around at-risk schools.
- Engage community, business, and postsecondary organizations to support school turnaround.

### **Building Your Guiding Coalition for Culture Change**

Driving and sustaining meaningful positive change in a school requires a united, unrelenting effort on the part of school leaders and their teams. Principals must choose the right people and lead them with a vision they believe in. Complementing one another's strengths and weaknesses can help leaders build teams that are capable of creating positive school environments that support increased student achievement at all levels and meet the needs of all students.

Participants can expect to:

- Assess and structure a team of individuals united with a common purpose and vision to support cultural transformation.
- Understand that weaknesses can be overcome by getting the right people on your guiding coalition and aligning all efforts to support a common vision.
- Learn that monitoring the work of leadership teams is a critical part of sustainability and training the principal's successor.

### **Tom Hierck**

#### **Seven Keys to a Positive Learning Environment in Your Classroom: Keys 1 to 3**

Creating a positive classroom learning environment is a complex but necessary task for all educators. By fully realizing the seven keys, teachers can establish clearer expectations, enhance instruction and assessment practices, and foster quality relationships with students, thereby maximizing the potential of all students. Author Tom Hierck focuses on the first three keys and includes helpful stories from teachers as well as classroom strategies to consider in implementing the keys.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how each key can help establish a positive learning environment.
- Discover collaborative practices that can establish common student expectations across classrooms and schools.
- Consider helpful strategies for fostering a healthy classroom culture.

#### **Seven Keys to a Positive Learning Environment in Your Classroom: Keys 4 to 6**

Creating a positive classroom learning environment is a complex but necessary task for all educators. By fully realizing the seven keys, teachers can establish clearer expectations, enhance instruction and assessment practices, and foster quality relationships with students, thereby maximizing the potential of all students. Author Tom Hierck focuses on keys 4 to 6 and includes helpful stories from teachers as well as classroom strategies to consider in implementing the keys.

Participants can expect to:

- Highlight how each key can help establish a positive learning environment.
- Learn how the effective use of data can minimize both academic and behavioral challenges among students.
- Peruse the essential practices that teachers should have in their classroom assessment toolbox.

### **Building Relationships: The Key to Growth for All**

This session—about building trust in relationships—is based on the premise that educators make a difference in the lives of students by creating a school climate that is positive and conducive to collaborative learning for all. Every child who enters classrooms in September will be different in June. How will they change? Will they simply be one year older? Will they simply have a year’s worth of new facts in their heads? Will they be more school-wise and better able to spew back what we want to hear? Or will they be independent thinkers, mature enough to tackle the academic and social challenges ahead?

Participants can expect to:

- Understand that what we do with students and how we do it—from September to June—is the critical factor.
- Learn that positive behaviors can be taught as part of building effective relationships.
- Gain strategies and activities to use in building relationships.

### **Starting a Movement: Authentic Alignment**

Infuse energy back into the practices of your PLC. Explore the four-stage authentic alignment model, which will take you through the Why, Eye, How, and Now of transforming your school's culture. Through this inspiring session, participants discover how to bridge the gulf between principles and practice to cultivate an empowering environment that is committed to a cycle of continuous improvement.

Participants can expect to:

- Use the authentic alignment model to align the school's guiding principles and staff actions.
- Learn to express, clarify, and align beliefs so they are meaningful to teachers, staff, and other stakeholders.
- Update practices to 21st-century expectations to ensure learning for all students.

## **Rosa Isiah**

### **The Role of Equity and Mindset in a Healthy School Culture**

Equity and growth mindset are essential to the development of a healthy school culture. Creating this type of equitable learning community requires a shift in adult beliefs and expectations. Why does this matter? Although students of color and historically marginalized groups are making some progress, there is tremendous work to do to close achievement and opportunity gaps. This work begins with

analyzing our own beliefs and behaviors about equity and mindset and the powerful role it plays in our learning communities.

Participants gain an understanding of the impact of equity and mindset on the development of a healthy school culture. Participants also analyze their beliefs and behaviors and obtain practical strategies to begin the work.

Attendees can expect to:

- Establish a clear understanding of equity, mindset, and healthy culture in a learning community.
- Examine the barriers that feed a toxic school culture.
- Explore their beliefs and behaviors as well as their role in developing a school culture that promotes equity and a growth mindset.

### **Practical Strategies for Improving Inclusion for Historically Marginalized Students**

Creating a safe and inclusive learning community is vital for all students in order to meet the needs of the whole child. Creating an inclusive school culture includes recognizing the issues that historically marginalized students face as a result of their identity: race and ethnicity, language and culture, and socioeconomic status. To address the needs of the whole child in learning communities, students' lived experiences and identities must be embraced as assets.

Participants gain an understanding of the importance of acknowledging and embracing each child's identity and the gifts they bring to the learning community. Participants explore the role of microaggressions and impact on school culture.

Participants can expect to:

- Gain an understanding of the experiences of historically marginalized students and how those experiences continue to impact academic achievement.
- Explore the impact of microaggressions in their interactions with students and staff and how they contribute to a school's culture and climate.
- Leave with practical strategies that can be used to create a more inclusive climate in their learning communities.

### **The Role of Teacher Leadership in Developing School Culture**

The role of a leader is not to impose rules, but to help develop a sense of purpose, shared goals, and shared commitment to student achievement. Teacher leaders, formal and informal, contribute greatly to this purpose and culture of learning for all. Teacher leaders are active participants in decision making and professional development, and they strongly impact positive change in schools. In essence, teacher leaders help develop professional learning communities that seek learning for all stakeholders in a healthy culture.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the impact of teacher leadership on school culture.
- Discuss and examine the role of the school site administrator as a model and mentor who establishes structures that develop teacher leaders.
- Explore methods that can be immediately implemented to develop teacher leaders.

## **Anthony Muhammad**

### **[KEYNOTE] What is School Culture and Why Should I Care?**

This keynote makes a clear distinction between school culture and school climate and why it should be important to everyone. Participants explore the research history of this topic and why it has been widely ignored as well as what each and every member of a school community has to contribute in order to build a healthy and productive culture. Participants leave with a clear understanding of how culture drives every action and decision made in schools.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand the importance of school culture from an empirical perspective.
- Be able to clearly recognize the difference between a "healthy" and a "toxic" culture.
- Leave with strategies and insights that start to engage the entire school community in the culture-building process.

### **Assessing the Health of Our School Culture (Part 1)**

This session provides a practical process to assess the health of a school's culture. Participants are introduced to six formal indicators of school culture and a rubric that allows them to evaluate their environment. Concrete examples of how healthy cultures operate and the important leverage points in transforming a school culture are provided .

Participants can expect to:

- Learn the six formal indicators of a healthy culture.
- Practice rating schools on a rubric while assessing their school environments.
- Leave with concrete ideas that allow them to drastically improve their school culture.

### **Assessing the Health of Our School Culture (Part 2)**

This session provides a practical process to assess the health of a school's culture. Participants are introduced to the four pillars of school culture (communication, trust, capacity-building, and accountability). Participants explore ways to assess staff's perspectives and deeply held beliefs that influence organizational behavior and strategize ways to positively influence those perspectives.

Participants can expect to:

- Acquire a deep knowledge of the importance of the four pillars of school culture.
- Learn about tools that allow leaders to assess deeply held beliefs that affect the four pillars of school culture.
- Obtain proven strategies to cultivate these critical areas of school culture performance.

### **Transforming School Culture: New Insights**

This presentation 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. The theoretical framework developed by Anthony Muhammad in *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division* is examined as the basis for developing a collaborative culture.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how to address competing objectives and conflict.
- Understand the logic and utility of the TSC framework.
- Address frequently asked questions about school culture and the TSC framework in the current political and educational context.

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

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

Participants can expect to:

- Uncover the true meaning and value of school culture.
- Explore the power of mindsets and their influence on educator effectiveness.
- Learn how to shift from damaging mindsets (superiority and inferiority) to high levels of efficacy (liberation).

### **Anthony Muhammad & Kenneth C. Williams**

#### **[KEYNOTE] Linking School Culture Theory and Practice**

This keynote provides a link between two critical books on school culture: *Transforming School Culture* and *Starting a Movement*. Anthony Muhammad creates a case for the importance of developing a school culture framework and why the *Transforming School Culture* model fits that need. Ken Williams explains the importance of translating research into practice and creating a guiding coalition of educators to make the research real for your school.

Participants can expect to:

- Articulate the connection between school culture research and the school improvement process.
- Understand the importance of theoretical frameworks to guide their practice.
- Start the process of developing and empowering a guiding coalition of leaders in their school.

## **Regina Stephens Owens**

### **The Why Effect: Intentional Systems Drive Inspirational Cultures**

Building systems at all levels of your organization is affected by your beliefs and your organizational purpose. How do you ensure that all practices and procedures are intentional and personify the organizational beliefs? It all begins with the *why*. Participants learn how to move from compliance, coercion, and fear to cultures that are respectful, responsive, and reflective. Regina Stephens Owens dives into frameworks of intentionality—promoting leadership that promotes global dispositions ensuring students are prepared and systems promote readiness for college, career, and life.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding how to promote high standards of achievement for all
- Discovering how to create collective commitment rather than an individual leadership focus
- Articulating the essential role of diversity in decision making
- Utilizing global dispositions to promote cultural responsiveness

### **Designing and Developing Culture in High-Performing Schools**

Culture is simply every intentional and unintentional act that occurs in school. Participants learn to be intentional in the development of culture by exploring the five keys of imagination, individualization, personalization, acculturation, and celebration.

Learning outcomes include:

- Discovering how design and development of culture is connected and communicated through the mission, vision, and values of learning organizations
- Leveraging individualization and personalization in maintaining school or classroom culture
- Utilizing acculturation and celebration to ensure an inclusive and responsive culture

### **#CultureCan**

How is your leadership impacting your school or district culture? Leadership at the campus and central office level is essential in transforming culture. Leaders at all levels must cultivate a culture of excellence and high expectations. Yet, in many learning organizations, this driver is slowed by deficit thinking, practices that are misaligned to school values, and misguided priorities. Regina Stephens Owens discusses how culture can be leveraged by leaders to ensure learning and challenge the status quo.

Learning outcomes include:

- Exploring the essential actions of leadership that influence cultural transformation
- Examining how to move forward in developing a culture that can be leveraged for high levels of learning
- Evaluating and gaining tools and techniques to develop school culture

### **With the World at Their Fingertips: What's Next?**

Can digital devices and technology tools be utilized to provide a level playing field for learning? Does access to technology translate to equity? Join Regina Stephens Owens in exploring how going beyond the technology can promote equitable access and an excellent education.

Learning outcomes include:

- Exploring the impact of the digital age on teaching and learning
- Engaging in the utilization of digital resources for instructional design that results in equity and high levels of learning
- Gaining tools and resources to promote equity and access with technology

### **Kenneth C. Williams**

#### **[KEYNOTE] Starting a Movement: Moving Students Over the Bar**

Discover how to quiet the noise and focus on research-based, high-leverage collective commitments that build a culture of learning for all. Learn how to *live* your posters and deliver on the promise education should offer every student. This session is not for the faint of heart or for defenders of the status quo. All others should prepare for a transformational experience.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding how school culture and structures are intertwined
- Learning how to build and strengthen a collaborative culture and make equity actionable
- Gaining clarity on what a learning-for-all culture looks like in practice

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

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

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the important differences between a traditional leadership team and a guiding coalition.
- Discover the six characteristics common among leaders who sustain improvement over time.
- Learn how to identify the right people for the guiding coalition.
- Understand the urgency of applying this new knowledge.

## **12 Angry Men: The Impact of One, the Power of Team**

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

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

The film explores consensus building techniques among a group of men whose diverse personalities create intense conflict. Kenneth shows how teams face and overcome similar challenges to collaborate and succeed. If four people agree on everything all the time, it makes three of those four teammates irrelevant. As a result of this principle, participants gain strategies for fostering good productive conflict and ideas for substantially improving team effectiveness.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding the value of productive conflict in uncovering ideas and new information
- Exploring the essential role of diversity in decision making
- Discovering ideas on how to improve the effectiveness of teams

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

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

## **Status Quo Disruptor or Defender: Which Will You Choose to Be?**

How do we prepare all students to compete and contribute to this new disruptive society? How schools use disruptive education to improve the classroom and the way they arrange teaching and learning will define the future. Assembly-line, one-size-fits-all education does not meet the needs of today's students. Albert Einstein shared, "No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it." Establishing a learning-for-*all* culture requires this type of mindset. Kenneth C. Williams makes the case for why teachers *and* leaders are best poised to leverage the power of assessment for this cause and be the game changers in the field. Walk in with an open mind, and walk out with a powerful choice.

Learning outcomes include:

- Identifying and dismantling some of the biggest barriers to effective teaching and learning
- Disrupting long-standing paradigms that stand in the way of leading a learning-for-*all* culture
- Acquiring the next steps to improve the culture of schools and districts