

Agenda

Salt Lake City, UT • October 28–30

Monday, October 28

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration	South Foyer
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Tim Brown <i>Setting the Stage: Understanding the Big Ideas and Foundational Blocks of the PLC at Work Process</i>	Grand Ballroom
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 5–7.
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 5–7.
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	Panel Discussion —Presenters provide practical answers to your most pressing questions.	Grand Ballroom

Tuesday, October 29

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration	South Foyer
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Mike Mattos <i>Challenging Educational Mythology: Proven Practices and Brutal Facts in Creating Great Schools</i>	Grand Ballroom
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 5–7.
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 5–7.
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	Team Time —Presenters are available to aid in your collaborative team discussions.	Grand Ballroom

Wednesday, October 30

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	South Foyer
8:00–9:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 5–7.
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	Keynote —Anthony Muhammad <i>Moving Beyond "PLC Lite": Nurturing Full Commitment to the PLC Process</i>	Grand Ballroom

Agenda is subject to change.

Breakouts at a Glance

Presenter & Title	Monday, October 28		Tuesday, October 29		Wednesday, October 30
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Tim Brown					
Student Data Notebooks: Developing Ownership, Motivation, and a Growth Mindset	Grand Ballroom			250 A	
Raising Questions and Finding Answers in Our Grading Practices		250 A			250 A
Getting on the Same Page: Establishing Collective Commitments About Learning and Collaboration			250 A		
Brian K. Butler					
What About Us? The PLC at Work Process in Early Childhood	254 B				
Collaborating in the Core in Elementary Schools		254 B		254 B	
Ensuring Teams Engage in the Right Work			254 B		254 B
Daniel Cohan					
Building a Professional Learning Community at the High School Level	150 D				
“It’s Just Not Working for Me.” Handling Resisters and Resistance		150 D		150 D	
Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Continuous Improvement Through Challenges and Setbacks			150 D		150 D
Aaron Hansen					
Commitment, Persistence, and Reinspiration	151 G			151 G	
How to Develop PLCs for Singletons and Small Schools		151 G			151 G
Owning Their Learning: Students as Partners in Reaching Next-Generation Rigor			151 G		
Tom Hierck					
Building Relationships: The Key to Growth for All	253 A				253 A
Starting a Movement: Authentic Alignment		253 A		253 A	
Seven Keys to a Positive Learning Environment in Your Classroom			253 A		

Breakouts at a Glance

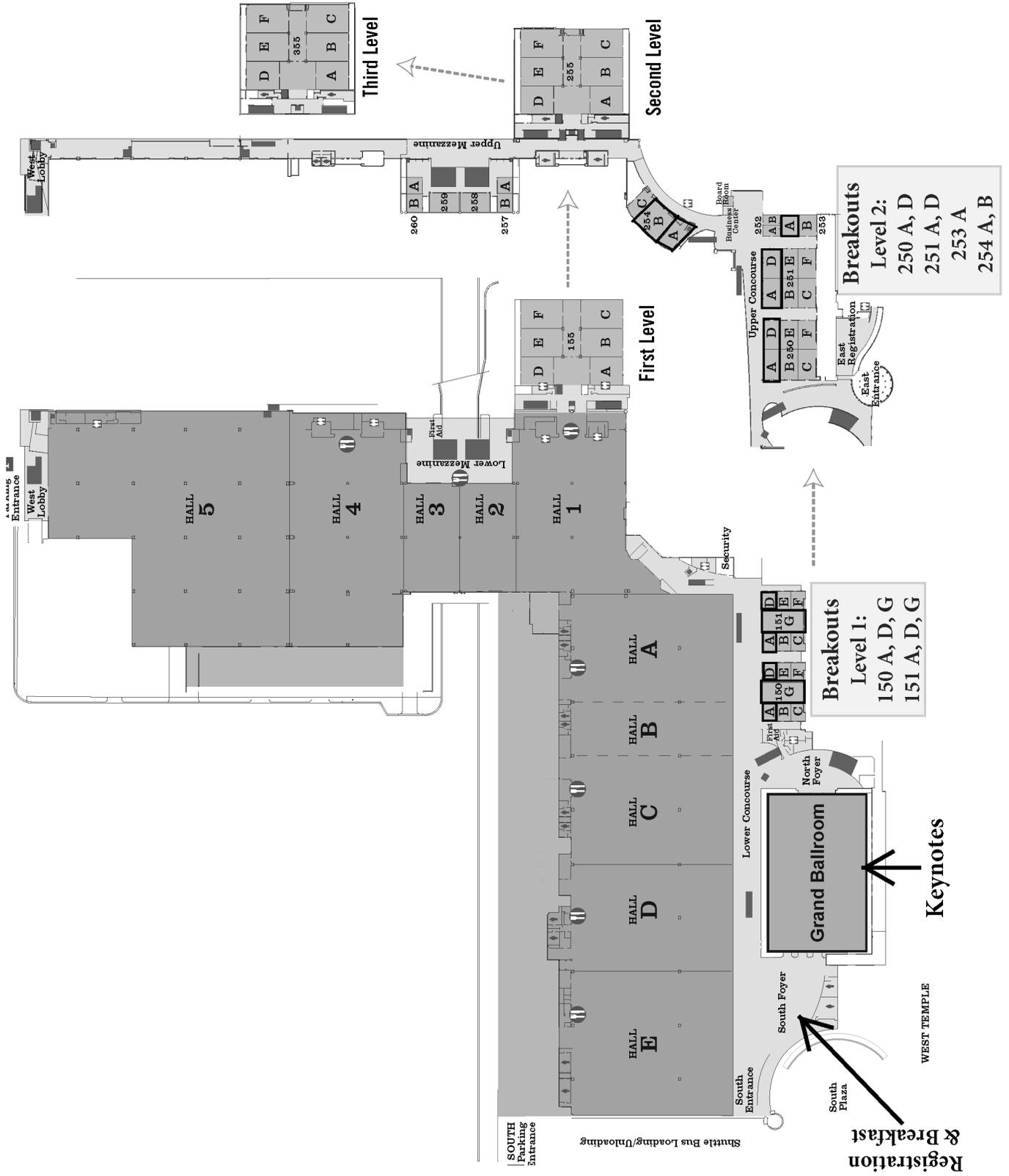
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	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Jason Hillman					
Blue Ribbon Journey: How a Failing School Transformed Through the PLC Process	150 A				150 A
What You Do Matters! Taking Charge of Your School's Culture!		150 A		150 A	
Don't Get Stuck! Getting the Most Out of Collaborative Team Meetings			150 A		
Timothy D. Kanold					
Heartprint: Living a Fully Engaged, High-Energy, Well-Balanced Professional Life!	250 D				250 D
The PLC Life Adventure of Central Office and School-Site Leadership!		250 D			
Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great Instruction and Tasks!			250 D		
Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Assessment, Homework, and Grading!				250 D	
Mike Mattos					
The Essential Work of Teacher Teams in a Professional Learning Community	250 A				
Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC Process		150 G			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools			Grand Ballroom		
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools				Grand Ballroom	
Personalized Learning in a PLC at Work: Developing Student Agency Through the Four Critical Questions					251 D
Anthony Muhammad					
Bringing the Four PLC Questions to Life: Systems That Ensure All Students Learn	251 D				
Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change		Grand Ballroom			
Building Culture, Creating Purpose, and Overcoming Frustration on Your PLC Journey			150 G		
Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!				251 D	
Getting Started: Building Consensus and Responding to Resisters					Grand Ballroom

Breakouts at a Glance

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Maria Nielsen					
The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!	251 A				251 A
Show Me What Ya Got: Student Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Learning		251 A			
Help Our Team! Working Together to Solve Common Team Challenges			251 A		
Common Assessments: The Key to Uncommon Results for Student and Teacher Learning				251 A	
Lisa M. Reddel					
PLCs: What's in It for Me as a Teacher?	151 A			151 A	
Facilitating Great Meetings		151 A			151 A
Second-Order Change: Moving Outside the Familiar to Build Lasting Cultures			151 A		
Mark Weichel					
Connecting PLCs to Personalized Learning	254 A				254 A
When They Already Know It: How to Extend and Personalize Student Learning in a PLC		254 A		254 A	
Building Your PLC Toolbox			254 A		

Agenda is subject to change.

Salt Palace Convention Center



Session Descriptions



Tim Brown

Setting the Stage: Understanding the Big Ideas and Foundational Blocks of the PLC at Work Process

This keynote is a call to action to energize individual and collective efforts to create schools of high expectations through the PLC process. In 1997, University of Tennessee researchers S. Paul Wright, Sandra P. Horn, and William L. Sanders reported, “As a result of analyzing the achievement scores of more than 100,000 students across hundreds of schools, the conclusion is that the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher.” More recent studies by Dr. John Hattie have concluded that not only are teachers the key contributors to student learning, but their impact is most profound when they work together to evaluate their effect on student learning. To attain high achievement in every classroom, unsurpassed collaboration must become a school’s priority.

Tim Brown sets the stage for the next two and a half days of learning by discussing the three big ideas of the PLC at Work process, their connection to beliefs and practices, and what it means to commit to a focus on learning, to work collaboratively, and to be accountable to a school’s mission, vision, values, and goals.

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?



= Keynote

Session Descriptions

Tim Brown

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 from this session 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 their K–12 systems, and many preschool programs want to know how to make this process work for their schools and children, too. Brian K. Butler, former principal of the 2016 DuFour Award-winning Mason Crest Elementary, discusses how his former school adapted the PLC model for its preschool students. By implementing collaborative and data-driven processes of PLCs, Mason Crest Elementary 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 only achieve developmental milestones, but even exceed them.

Outcomes from this session 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 provide 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 maximize their use of that time

Session Descriptions

Brian K. Butler

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 in your 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 in 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.

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 write, “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” that drive the work of collaborative teams. Participants gain absolute clarity on what this looks, feels, and sounds like at the team level.

Outcomes for this session include:

- Gaining an understanding of the impact that doing the right work has 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 a PLC
- Assessing team progress on each task
- Observing a team using artifacts and products to complete a task

Session Descriptions

Daniel Cohan

Building a Professional Learning Community at the High School Level

American high schools are charged with being comprehensive and individually focused, serving as the center of the community and as a springboard into postsecondary opportunities for students. How can principals and staffs meet these expectations while increasing learning and achievement for all students? Modeling exemplary PLC high schools with strong RTI structures is the best hope. Daniel Cohan draws on his experience as a teacher, principal, central administrator, and consultant for high schools of various sizes, demographics, and philosophies to guide staff and administrators in their PLC and RTI journeys.

Learning outcomes for this session include:

- Creating demand for, and collective ownership of, a PLC culture at the high school level
- Empowering all staff, including singletons, to work effectively in a PLC culture
- Examining high school schedules and structures for collaboration, systemic interventions, and enrichment
- Developing tools, techniques, and timelines to implement in classrooms and schools

“It’s Just Not Working for Me.” Handling Resisters and Resistance

Do these statements sound familiar: *This doesn’t apply to me—we collaborate all the time; I’m already working too hard; My team doesn’t work well together; Oh yeah, we do that; I need more training?* Collaborative teams are the fundamental structures of professional learning communities, and those who lead PLCs often face individual or group resistance that manifests in numerous ways.

Participants in this session:

- Explore *loose* and *tight* leadership with individuals and teams.
- Understand how changing behaviors leads to changing culture.
- Develop effective strategies to address resisters and resistance.
- Learn ways to counter passivity and inaction.

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Continuous Improvement Through Challenges and Setbacks

Like cultivating a healthy garden, establishing and sustaining a highly effective PLC requires preparation, perseverance, and continuous nurturing and monitoring. Ongoing challenges and other variables inevitably arise, leading to possible setbacks, derailment, or paralysis. Leading PLCs is a delicate balance of simultaneously attending to culture and structure. Participants in this interactive session share their stories and learn from one another about how to maintain momentum on their PLC journeys.

As a result of this session, participants:

- Gain clarity on their current PLC reality.
- Focus on staying the course and maintaining the essential elements of an effective PLC.
- Learn ways to change the culture by changing behaviors.
- Understand the importance of clear team structures, roles, and responsibilities.
- Explore examples from schools that have overcome common obstacles and setbacks.

Session Descriptions

Aaron Hansen

Commitment, Persistence, and Reinspiration

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 reinspired 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.

Owning Their Learning: Students as Partners in Reaching Next-Generation Rigor

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 from this session 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

Session Descriptions

Tom Hierck

Building Relationships: The Key to Growth for All

This session 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 become independent thinkers, mature enough to tackle academic and social challenges ahead?

Participants can expect to:

- Understand that what we do with students and how we do it is critical to their development.
- Learn that positive behaviors can be taught as part of building effective relationships.
- Gain strategies and activities to use in building and sustaining stronger relationships.

Starting a Movement: Authentic Alignment

Infuse energy back into the practices of your PLC. Explore the four-stage, authentic alignment model, which take participants through the *Why, Eye, How, and Now* of transforming their school's culture. In this inspiring session, participants discover how to bridge the gulf between principles and practice to cultivate an empowering environment 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.

Seven Keys to a Positive Learning Environment in Your Classroom

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. Tom Hierck shares relevant stories from teachers and presents classroom strategies to implement these keys.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how each key helps to establish a positive learning environment.
- Discover collaborative practices to establish common student expectations across classrooms and schools.
- Consider helpful strategies for fostering a healthy classroom culture.
- Learn how the effective use of data can minimize academic and behavioral challenges among students.
- Peruse essential practices that teachers should have in their classroom assessment toolbox.

Session Descriptions

Jason Hillman

Blue Ribbon Journey: How a Failing School Was Transformed Through the PLC Process

Nationally recognized principal Jason Hillman presents the action steps he took with his staff as their school transformed from a failing school to a National Blue Ribbon Award winner. Jason discusses the collaborative vision- and mission-building process his staff went through that ultimately changed the culture of the building. Participants in this session explore authentic PLC strategies and processes they will be able to employ within their own schools and classrooms and watch a video that illustrates collaboration with a focus on student and adult learning. This powerful story of Meadowlark Elementary School's transformation is instructional and motivational.

Learning outcomes from this session include:

- Establishing a practical approach to creating a shared vision and mission (or mantra)
- Discovering a process to create clear goals and developing a system to achieve continuous progress toward those goals
- Learning how to systematically embed professional development through the PLC process

What You Do Matters! Taking Charge of Your School's Culture

School culture has to be purposefully and systematically developed. If we as educators do not have a plan to develop the culture of our school, it will develop on its own—and it may not be the culture we want. In order to create a positive and productive culture, we need to get the voices of our positive and productive leaders in the room. Oftentimes, these leaders are not vocal and feel isolated. This session provides a practical approach—including activities—to develop and maintain a positive school culture.

Learning outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding school culture
- Gaining practical strategies to develop the culture in their schools.
- Ways to create and sustain a collaborative culture through shared leadership
- Clearly understanding the importance of their role in developing school culture

Don't Get Stuck! Getting the Most Out of Collaborative Team Meetings

A collaborative culture is one of the three big ideas in the PLC model, and collaborative teams are a cornerstone of the PLC process. Getting started and maintaining productive collaborative sessions can be a daunting task. This session provides real-world applications of strategies and tools to help get teams started and avoid getting stuck in the process. Jason Hillman discusses strategies and tools his teams use to aid them on their PLC journey and that ultimately propelled them to become a model PLC school.

Learning outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding the makeup of a positive and productive collaborative team session
- Gaining practical tools and strategies to help their collaborative teams get started and keep moving forward
- Learning how to systematically build collaboration throughout their buildings

Session Descriptions

Timothy D. Kanold

Heartprint: Living a Fully Engaged, High-Energy, Well-Balanced Professional Life!

Within the culture of a PLC school, the relational expectations, give and take, and sometimes chaotic noise of daily interactions can be overwhelming and exhausting. By understanding one's daily heartprint, educators are better able to inspire, engage with, and influence students and colleagues season after season.

Timothy D. Kanold draws from the wisdom of his book *HEART! Fully Forming Your Professional Life as a Teacher and Leader* (2018 IPPY Gold Medal winner) to provide research, insights, and tools from thought leaders inside and outside education. He examines ways for all educators to lead high-energy, happy, and well-balanced PLC professional lives each and every day.

Participants can expect to:

- Examine the H and the E elements of their HEARTs: 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 reflect upon, pursue, and sustain a well-balanced, high-energy personal and professional life that can positively affect students and colleagues.

The PLC Life Adventure of Central Office and School-Site Leadership!

School-site or central office PLC leaders face the challenge of leading others into the great adventure of the PLC life. Yet, they also must weave through and around obstacles that prevent full, ongoing implementation of the PLC life in their programs, schools, or districts.

Timothy D. Kanold bases this session on chapter 29, “The Great Adventure,” from his best-selling, award-winning book *HEART! Fully forming Your Professional Life as a Teacher and Leader* (2018). He reveals the practical nature of school leadership and how administrators can become heroes within their own PLC adventures.

Dr. Kanold invites participants to identify primary barriers that prevent full implementation of the PLC life. He then facilitates dialogue to help them find meaningful solutions.

Dr. Kanold indicates, “As we become fully formed professionals, we tie our workplace heartprint to the vision and results of our effort in order to promote coherence—and celebrate the difficult daily work of others.”

Participants learn how to:

- Lead, create, and inspire the great adventure of the PLC life.
- Help others eliminate barriers and then measure the impact of their daily actions on the PLC life.
- Avoid chaos, disorganization, and randomness that can prevent the coherence needed for full implementation of the PLC culture.

Session Descriptions

Timothy D. Kanold

Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great Instruction and Tasks!

Timothy D. Kanold explores how collaborative teams can improve student achievement in mathematics through the balanced use of lower-level- and higher-level-cognitive-demand tasks and classroom discourse combined with meaningful formative feedback during instruction. This session is based on his book *Mathematics Instruction and Tasks in a PLC at Work* from Solution Tree's *Every Student Can Learn Mathematics* series (2018).

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

Participants use the PLC mathematics lesson-design model to:

- Define the difference between relevant and meaningful mathematics.
- Consider the effective use of prior knowledge and academic vocabulary activities.
- Examine the balanced use of lower-level- and higher-level-cognitive-demand tasks during class.
- Consider the balanced use of in-class student discourse as part of formative assessment feedback when students get stuck during the lesson.

Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Assessment, Homework, and Grading!

Timothy D. Kanold explores how mathematics assessment and grading can either inspire or destroy student learning. This session is based on *Mathematics Assessment and Intervention in a PLC at Work* and *Mathematics Homework and Grading in a PLC at Work* (2018). Both are from Solution Tree's *Every Student Can Learn Mathematics* series.

Dr. Kanold reveals eight research-affirmed criteria for creating high-quality unit assessments (quizzes and tests) and the accurate scoring of those assessments. Participants also reflect on and answer the formative question “Now what?” when an assessment is returned to students. The session ends with a brief discussion about research-affirmed criteria for high-quality mathematics homework routines and practices.

Participants in this session:

- Use high-quality mathematics assessment-design criteria for evaluating the quality of current quizzes and tests.
- Develop a protocol for the accurate scoring of all quizzes and tests.
- 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.

Session Descriptions



Mike Mattos

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 educational myths that are holding us back.

Outcomes from this session 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

The Essential Work of Teacher Teams in a Professional Learning Community

Teacher teams are the engines that drive the PLC at Work process and student learning, but only if they focus on the right work. This session uses the book you’ve been given, *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work* (Solution Tree Press, 2016), to break down exactly what highly effective teacher teams do with their precious collaboration time. Mike Mattos, one of the book’s coauthors, shares valuable tools and practical examples.

Participants in this session:

- Understand how the four critical questions of the PLC at Work framework drive teacher team collaboration.
- Experience how teams use common assessment data to improve instruction and target interventions.
- Learn how to use specific tools to assist teams with the right work.
- Assess their current reality and leave with next steps.

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.



Session Descriptions

Mike Mattos

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

Identifying which students need help is not the biggest obstacle most secondary schools face in providing interventions; it is how to schedule the time needed to provide that help during the school day. This session provides real examples from a high-performing school showing how it creates 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 teachers' contractual obligations.

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 and structures to collaboratively:

- Examine core beliefs.
- Utilize resources (human, material, and temporal) to meet the needs of all learners, including developing a schedule to ensure that intervention is timely, systematic, and directive.
- Utilize data to drive intervention, with a focus on progress monitoring to drive actions.
- Examine the most common RTI mistakes.
- Review a tool for assessing the progress and opportunities for the district, school, or team in considering interventions.

Session Descriptions

Mike Mattos

Personalized Learning in a PLC at Work: Developing Student Agency Through the Four Critical Questions

Many schools and districts state in their mission the objective of creating “lifelong learners.” Because today’s average high school graduates will change *careers* at least four times by the age of 40, ensuring that all students master the skills and behaviors needed to guide their future learning is essential to ensuring their future success. A study of highly effective, learning-progressive schools across the world has found that these schools share two common elements: they operate as high-functioning professional learning communities with well-implemented RTI structures, and they promote student agency in the learning process.

Mike Mattos discusses how to build a highly effective school where students are engaged in personalized learning experiences and empowered to take ownership of the four critical questions of the PLC at Work process.

Outcomes include:

- Discussing the essential knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to “future-proof” our students
- Defining how to create collaborative teacher teams within the PLC at Work framework and foster teacher trans-disciplinary skills and behaviors
- Discovering how to use the four critical questions of a PLC to form pathways and progressions for personalized learning in the classroom
- Learning how schools utilize the RTI process to ensure every student develops student agency and personalized learning opportunities required to thrive in a global economy

Anthony Muhammad



Moving Beyond “PLC Lite”: Nurturing Full Commitment to the PLC Process

Thirty years ago, the first book on PLC at Work was published by Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker. The PLC at Work model has been celebrated and validated as the most promising way to improve student learning, yet so many schools remain stalled at the beginning stages of implementation. Why does this reality of “PLC lite” still plague our profession 20 years later? Without exception, schools that use this model to transform their practice have one thing in common: effective leadership. This session explores the keys to effectively transitioning a school or district into a model PLC.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding leadership challenges and lessons learned from 20 years of PLC practice
- Learning the difference between leadership behaviors that undermine and those that promote the purpose of a PLC
- Exploring practical strategies that improve participants’ ability to lead others through the change process and build consensus



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 has been studied and debated for years and commonly holds 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.

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 addresses these 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 have decided to move forward?

Outcomes from this session 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.

Help Our Team! Working Together to Solve Common Team 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. This session is based on a forthcoming book by the same title (Solution Tree Press, 2019) coauthored by eight educators with a wide range of backgrounds and experience in all levels of education.

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.

Session Descriptions

Maria Nielsen

Common Assessments: The Key to Uncommon Results for Student and Teacher Learning

The secret is out: Common formative assessments are the key to improving student learning! Formative assessments are powerful when teams of teachers create assessments in common then share and discuss the results. This collaborative process leads to a dramatic increase in student learning and improved teaching practices. Maria Nielsen provides proven tools to effectively use common assessments across grade levels and departments and illustrates practical strategies for implementing and using assessments to substantially improve student and adult learning.

Participants in this session:

- Examine the benefits of using common assessment as a grade level or department.
- Understand the balance between formative and summative assessments.
- Gain formative assessment tools to increase student and adult learning.
- Discover quick and easy ways to look at data and drill down to individual students.

Lisa M. Reddel

PLCs: What's in It for Me as a Teacher?

“PLCs sound great, but what's in it for me as a teacher?” Teacher autonomy and team accountability are balanced in a PLC. Collaborating effectively with others is a condition for membership in virtually all professions. Yet, teachers often work in isolation from one another. Participants in this session explore the balance of team responsibility and individual autonomy in the PLC process.

Learning outcomes for this session include:

- Examining how the simultaneously *loose and tight* culture in a PLC empowers teachers to make important decisions
- Understanding how team accountability and teacher autonomy can work together to benefit student learning
- Exploring strategies for bringing a collaborative culture and collective responsibility to classrooms and schools

Facilitating Great Meetings

Having productive, engaging, and efficient meetings about learning is the goal of every collaborative teacher team. Lisa M. Reddel offers guidance and strategies for facilitating meetings in a PLC that focuses on learning and results. Participants in this session delve into clarifying roles of team members, strategies to help teams and meetings become more organized and productive, and how to build consensus without winners and losers.

Learning outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding the difference between consensus and unanimity
- Examining roles within a team and methods to support a team's efforts
- Reviewing ways to keep teams organized, focused, and committed to continuous improvement

Session Descriptions

Lisa M. Reddel

Second-Order Change: Moving Outside the Familiar to Build Lasting Cultures

Culture eats structure for breakfast! Understanding the difference between first-order and second-order change helps any educator address cultural change within their school and district. Implementing and fostering cultural change in a PLC brings initial results in short order and, in time, lasting results. Building a PLC is a process, not a program. Participants examine how school cultures built to last must first go through cultural changes.

Learning outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding the difference between first-order and second-order change
- Examining how educators can apply “change” knowledge to their roles
- Acquiring a toolkit of strategies to manage second-order change

Mark Weichel

Connecting PLCs to Personalized Learning

Strategic plans in schools and districts often include the term *personalized learning*. Despite the growing popularity of personalized learning, it can be difficult to conceptualize and connect to existing structures, such as those in PLCs. Participants in this session learn about the five elements of personalized learning and see how this work can connect to and enhance the work of a PLC.

When They Already Know It: How to Extend and Personalize Student Learning in a PLC

A basic tenet of professional learning communities is ensuring that collaborative teams acutely analyze the four critical questions of a PLC. For some teams, the most challenging question to address is how to provide extension for students who have already learned stated targets. Participants in this session learn strategies and protocols for teams to consider when planning enrichment for students who already know the material.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Realizing the importance of addressing the fourth critical question of a PLC
- Gaining strategies for extending learning for high-ability and high-potential students
- Discovering how to personalize learning in the classroom
- Understanding how teamwork increases student engagement
- Receiving individual and collaborative team reflection tools

Building Your PLC Toolbox

PLC teams need to have a number of tools at their disposal to improve instruction and learning. This session provides materials to document PLC conversations, create common formative assessments and scoring methods, and use results to motivate students. Participants leave with a full toolbox to take back and immediately begin using in their schools and districts.