

# Agenda

## San Antonio, TX • July 14–16

### Tuesday, July 14

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

### Wednesday, July 15

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	x
	Continental Breakfast	x
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Mike Mattos <i>The Litmus Test of a PLC: Making Decisions Through the Lens of Learning</i>	x
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	<b>Breakouts</b>	
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	x
1:00–2:30 p.m.	<b>Breakouts</b>	
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	<b>Team Time</b> —Presenters are available to aid in your collaborative team discussions.	x

**Thursday, July 16**

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	x
8:00–9:30 a.m.	<b>Breakouts</b>	
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Robert Eaker <i>Would It Be Good Enough For Your Own Child?</i>	x

**Agenda is subject to change.**

## Breakouts at a Glance

Presenters & Titles	Tuesday, July 14		Wednesday, July 15		Thursday, July 16
	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.
<b>Tim Brown</b>					
Student Data Notebooks: Developing Ownership, Motivation, and a Growth Mindset	X			X	
Raising Questions and Finding Answers in Our Grading Practices		X			X
Getting on the Same Page: Establishing Collective Commitments About Learning and Collaboration			X		
<b>Luis F. Cruz</b>					
English Learners and PLCs	X				
I Like What I'm Hearing! So How Do We Initiate Our PLC Journey?		X			
Remembering Rick DuFour: Embracing the "Tight and Loose" of the PLC Process			X		
Taping Before Painting: Taking the Critical Steps to Respond Collectively When Students Don't Learn				X	
I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful					X
<b>Jennifer Deinhart</b>					
Identifying Essential Standards: Prioritizing Our Mathematics Curriculum	X				
The Work of Teams: Choosing High-Level Mathematics Tasks to Engage Students (K–5)		X			
Student Goal Setting in a PLC at Work			X		X
Instructional Coaching in a PLC at Work: Tips for Common Challenges				X	

<b>Robert Eaker</b>					
Friday Night in America: A Commonsense Approach to Improving Student Achievement	X				
A Focus on Learning: What Would It Look Like If We Really Meant It?		X			
Aligning the Work of a Professional Learning Community: Central Office, Schools, and Teams			X		
Developing a Stretch Culture				X	
<b>Heather Frizziellie</b>					
Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes	X				
Question One in an All-Means-All Culture		X			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools			X		
Maximizing Collaboration in a PLC: Tools for Teams				X	
Protocols for Results: Turning Data Into Information					X
<b>Mike Mattos</b>					
Are We a Group or a Team?	X				
Simplifying Response to Intervention: How to Create a Highly Effective, Multitiered System of Supports		X			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools			X		
Personalized Learning in a PLC at Work: Developing Student Agency Through the Four Critical Questions				X	
Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC Process					X

<b>Anthony Muhammad</b>					
Bringing the Four PLC Questions to Life: Systems That Ensure All Students Learn	x				
Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change		x			
Building Culture, Creating Purpose, and Overcoming Frustration on Your PLC Journey			x		
Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!				x	
Getting Started: Building Consensus and Responding to Resisters					x
<b>Maria Nielsen</b>					
The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!	x				x
Show Me What Ya Got: Student Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Learning		x			
Help Your Team: Overcoming Common Collaborative Challenges in a PLC			x		
Common Assessments: The Key to Uncommon Results for Student and Teacher Learning				x	
<b>Jamie Nino</b>					
Nothing More Than a Plate Full: A New PLC Game Plan	x				x
Unlocking the Power of Student Learning Communities		x		x	
Choosing to Make a Great Team: Collaboration at Its Finest			x		
<b>Regina Stephens Owens</b>					
The Why Effect: Intentional Systems Drive Inspirational Cultures	x				
Personify Your Mission, Vision, and Values		x			
Data Discussion for Instructional Leaders: From Data to Design to Demonstration of Learning			x		
Teams and Technology				x	
Collective Efficacy at Work					x

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## Session Descriptions

### Tim Brown

#### **[KEYNOTE] 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 for 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?

## **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* (2005), 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

## **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 task force leadership can reculture and restructure, while introducing best practices to increase learning outcomes for all students. Learn the seven steps an EL task force can initiate to ensure that students learning English as a second language are included in the “all means all” mantra that defines a school’s fundamental purpose of learning for every student.

Participants in this session discover how:

- Teacher-led task forces increase academic performance for English learners.
- PLC practices 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, lead to high levels of learning for every student. However, questions 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 in this session 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, 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. Luis F. Cruz honors the life of Dr. Rick DuFour by reminding audiences of Rick's message and his purpose of ensuring learning for *all* students.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding why adopting a collaborative culture is a “must do” in a successful PLC
- 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 in this session 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 in this session learn:

- The difference between rational and irrational forms of adult resistance and how to address each
- The art *and* science of effective leadership and how to maneuver in both directions
- Practical actions to accelerate the PLC process

### **Jennifer Deinhart**

#### **Elementary Student Goal Setting in a PLC at Work**

Explore how teams answer the four critical questions of learning through the lens of student goal setting. Through this work, teams dig deeply into the most essential standards and see how goal setting leads to more targeted instruction. Participants also learn how to engage students in being reflective of their own work and next steps in learning.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Exploring how teams learn content and develop progressions for learning around essential standards
- Developing skills in creating quality assessments, common scoring practices, and student self-reflection
- Learning how to have more purposeful data discussions that result in targeted instruction for students

### **Instructional Coaching in a PLC at Work: Tips for Common Challenges**

As instructional leaders, coaches are often at the center of the work of collaborative teams. Jennifer Deinhart presents strategies to overcome common challenges while staying true to the PLC process. Engage in an open dialogue about having effective collaborative team meetings and working with teammates who are resistant to change.

Participants in this session:

- Explore different meeting structures that support collaborative teams answering the four critical questions of learning.
- Use their own professional experiences to collectively brainstorm possible solutions for the challenges all instructional leaders face.
- Take time to plan agendas and structures for their next team meetings.

### **Identifying Essential Standards: Prioritizing Our Mathematics Curriculum**

In a Professional Learning Community at Work, it is important for collaborative teams to identify essential standards of learning within a mathematics curriculum. In order to implement a guaranteed and viable curriculum during core instruction, while also providing systematic and targeted interventions for students, we need to first determine which standards are most essential. Participants in this session will have an opportunity to put these ideas into practice and will leave with an understanding of the process as well as tools to use at their schools.

Participants in this session:

- Build common knowledge around key concepts and terms.
- Establish criteria for identifying essential standards and prioritize which standards are critical for high levels of learning.
- Preview next steps in unpacking essential standards.

### **The Work of Teams: Choosing High-Level Mathematics Tasks to Engage Students (K–5)**

Engaging students in cognitively demanding tasks often provides opportunities for teachers to facilitate rich discussions around mathematics. Using high-level tasks during instruction can also support student engagement in the Standards for Mathematical Practice. Explore how collaborative teams intentionally select appropriate tasks and design lessons that include questioning to guide students in productive discourse.

Participants in this session:

- Examine Standards for Mathematical Practice: 1) make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, 2) construct viable arguments, and 3) critique the reasoning of others.
- Identify high-level tasks that provide students with opportunities to justify their responses.
- Consider questioning and facilitating techniques that support productive talk in the mathematics classroom.

## **Robert Eaker**

### **[KEYNOTE] Would It Be Good Enough for Your Own Child?**

After five decades of strong and consistent research, it is no longer in doubt what an effective school looks like. The central question facing educational leaders is, “Are we committed to embedding practices for *all* students that are as effective as the educational practices we would want for our own child?” This session emphasizes research-based practices that comprise the Professional Learning Community at Work framework which, when implemented with specificity and fidelity, ensures high levels of learning for *all* students.

### **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, coaches, and other singletons 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 to achieve high academic benchmarks.

## **Heather Friziellie**

### **Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes**

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 Friziellie 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 where local practices may or may not align to the belief that all kids can learn at high levels.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding past realities regarding special education
- Learning strategies to build a school and district culture with a belief that all students can learn at high levels
- Examining collaborative structures to support high levels of learning for all
- Identifying instructional practices that lead to high levels of learning for all
- Reflecting on local current practices and policies that do and do not align with the belief that all students can learn at high levels

### **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 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.
- Identify and reflect on the essential elements of effective Tier 1, 2, and 3 instruction.
- Consider how and what data to use to drive intervention, including progress monitoring to drive action.
- 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.
- Examine the most common RTI mistakes.
- Review a tool for assessing the progress and opportunities for the district, school, or team when considering interventions.

### **Question One in an All-Means-All Culture**

This session begins by laying the groundwork for committing to the *why* of a guaranteed and viable curriculum, before delving into a process of prioritizing and unpacking. Then, participants engage in the

process—starting at the standards level—of using a team protocol to deeply understand, prioritize, and pace the learning standards into a meaningful progression that leads to student mastery. Participants then apply this learning to a data set to see how teams answer all four critical questions, keeping student mastery of the essential standards as the focus.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Exploring essential elements of a guaranteed and viable curriculum for *all*
- Applying a protocol for unpacking and prioritizing units at the team level, including scaffolding instructions to ensure success for all
- Connecting the four critical questions through the use of a data protocol to experience and deeply understand the work of collaborative teams

### **Maximizing Collaboration in a PLC: Tools for Teams**

Creating and sustaining high-performing teams is a challenging but worthwhile venture. Participants explore tools and processes to help teacher-leaders better facilitate the work of their teams and engage in a self-assessment process that can be used in any system to help teams determine their current condition and identify opportunities for improvement.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Reviewing research on the relationship between collaboration and student achievement
- Participating in a process for team self-assessment through the lens of PLC practices
- Examining tools to improve team collaboration and efficiency, while maintaining a focus on student learning

### **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, impact student learning, and 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.

### **Mike Mattos**

#### **[KEYNOTE] The Litmus Test of a PLC: Making Decisions Through the Lens of Learning**

The fundamental purpose of a professional learning community is to ensure high levels of learning for all students. To best achieve this mission, educators within the organization commit to making decisions based on a critical question: Will doing this lead to higher levels of learning? Practices and policies that improve learning are embraced and those that fall short are abandoned. In this keynote, Mike Mattos examines how professionals would apply this “learning litmus test” and identifies the actions proven to best serve our students.

## **Are We a Group or a Team?**

Collaborative teacher teams are the engine that drives a professional learning community. When these teams are highly engaged in the right work, student learning accelerates ... and when they are not, learning sputters and stalls. Because teachers have traditionally been required to attend grade-level or departmental team meetings, schools often mistakenly assume that merely renaming these gatherings “PLC time” represents teacher collaboration. The act of meeting together does not make a team, but instead, merely a group.

Participants in this session:

- Assess if they are currently part of a group or a team.
- Review the essential work of teacher teams in a PLC.
- Learn how to successfully navigate team disagreements.
- Leave with specific action steps to improve your teacher team.

## **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 from this session 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, administrators, and support staff in the RTI process

## **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.

## **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 graduate 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 from this session 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 transdisciplinary 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 agency and personalized learning opportunities required to thrive in a global economy

## **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 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 offices 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 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.

### **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.

### **Help Your Team: Overcoming Common Collaborative Challenges in a PLC**

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 book of the same title (Solution Tree Press, 2019), coauthored by Maria Nielsen and other educators who possess a wide range of backgrounds and experiences 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.

### **Jamie Nino**

#### **Nothing More Than a Plate Full: A New PLC Game Plan**

Participants in this session draw from new learning gleaned from this institute and come up with a game plan before returning to their sites. It is important to have a plan in place before the school year starts to fortify professional learning communities and to balance obligations and tasks. Setting goals and prioritizing new learning is significant when beginning a new school year.

Participants in this session:

- Organize learning from previous keynote and breakout sessions.
- Construct a plan with short-term and long-term goals.
- Recognize the balancing act of a PLC: What is "loose" and what is "tight"?
- Effectively balance the priorities within a classroom and school.

#### **Unlocking the Power of Student Learning Communities**

Participants in this session are introduced to student learning communities (SLCs). Just as adults build their own capacity, students need to do likewise. This high-leverage team action ensures that students are actively participating in their own learning. Student learning communities encourage students to have a growth mindset and hold one another mutually accountable for learning.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding how to establish goals with students
- Exploring new activities that help motivate students
- Examining how to establish a safe culture within a classroom so students are successful

#### **Choosing to Make a Great Team: Collaboration at Its Finest**

Great collaboration means getting all team members on the same page. It is key within a professional learning community that trust be established and members arrive at a consensus to make actionable

decisions that improve student learning. All members on a team must engage in the “right work” and be mutually responsible for achieving learning goals.

Participants in this session learn to:

- Build a vision.
- Arrive at a consensus.
- Establish norms.
- Develop collective commitments.

## **Regina Stephens Owens**

### **Data Discussion for Instructional Leaders: From Data to Design to Demonstration of Learning**

In a time of tremendous focus on data, it is imperative to develop a rich culture of collaboration through dialogue and data protocols and to move from a deficit mindset to a growth mindset.

Participants in this session discover ways to create a culture of collaboration, use various types of data protocols, and increase team capacity and student learning.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Examining ways to focus on results through the lens of data
- Obtaining tools, tips, and templates proven to impact team and student learning
- Learning strategies to move from data to demonstration of learning

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

Organizational purpose, collective beliefs, and commitments affect building systems at all levels. How can we ensure that all practices and procedures are intentional and personify organizational beliefs? It all begins with the *why*. Regina Stephens Owens shares strategies to design cultures that move from compliance, coercion, and fear to cultures that are respectful, responsive, and reflective.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding how to promote high standards of achievement for all
- Discovering how to create a collective, rather than individual, leadership focus
- Designing and developing cultures that are respectful, responsive, and reflective

### **Collective Efficacy at Work**

Leveraging the strengths of all community members can be challenging. Where do we start? How can we monitor and measure to ensure growth for staff and students? How do we work interdependently to accomplish goals? Regina Stephens Owens facilitates a collaborative discussion as participants discover ways to increase results through collective responsibility.

Participants in this session explore how to:

- Build a community of compassion where all stakeholders work interdependently to ensure students are ready for college, career, and life.
- Develop experiences where staff and students learn and grow, resulting in the alignment and achievement of individual and organizational goals.
- Invest in personal mastery that results in increased capacity, collective responsibility, and increased achievement.



### **Personify Your Mission, Vision, and Values**

Mission, vision, and values are much more than statements placed on a wall; they are the foundation of a learning community. They clarify a school's purpose, sustain its culture, and propel it toward future achievements. This session focuses on ways to ensure a community of learning is built on a solid foundation that sustains staff efforts and goes deeper into the PLC process.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding how to leverage mission, vision, and values in development of a successful learning community
- Learning the initial steps of the PLC process
- Utilizing PLC continuums to go deeper into the work and sustain improvements

### **Leveraging Technology to Strengthen Teams**

Effective teams are essential to the professional learning community process and continuous improvement. Participants in this session learn strategies to leverage technology in support of teamwork and ensure growth through collective inquiry and action research.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding ways to use technology as a motivator to advance the work of teams
- Discovering ways to leverage web resources to address the four essential questions of a PLC
- Considering the proven advantages of using technology to build collective capacity and ensure continuous improvement