Agenda
San Antonio, TX • October 7–9

Wednesday, October 7

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Stars at Night Prefunction
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Tim Brown *Setting the Stage: Understanding the Big Ideas and Foundational Blocks of the PLC at Work Process*	Stars at Night Ballroom
9:45–10:15 a.m.	Break	
10:15–11:45 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	
11:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:15–2:45 p.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	
2:45–3:15 p.m.	Break	
3:15–4:15 p.m.	**Panel Discussion**—*Presenters provide practical answers to your most pressing questions.*	Stars at Night Ballroom

Thursday, October 8

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Stars at Night Prefunction
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Mike Mattos *The Litmus Test of a PLC: Making Decisions Through the Lens of Learning*	Stars at Night Ballroom
9:45–10:15 a.m.	Break	
10:15–11:45 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	
11:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:15–2:45 p.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	
2:45–3:15 p.m.	Break	
3:15–4:15 p.m.	**Team Time**—*Presenters are available to aid in your collaborative team discussions.*	x

Friday, October 9

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Stars at Night Prefunction
8:00–9:30 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	
9:30–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–12:00 p.m.	**Keynote**—Anthony Muhammad *Moving Beyond "PLC Lite": Nurturing Full Commitment to the PLC Process*	Stars at Night Ballroom

Agenda is subject to change.

Breakouts at a Glance

Presenters & Titles	Wednesday, October 7		Thursday, October 8		Friday, October 9
	10:15–11:45 a.m.	1:15–2:45 p.m.	10:15–11:45 a.m.	1:15–2:45 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Tim Brown					
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		
Dan Cohan					
Building a Professional Learning Community at the High School Level	X				
Why Is It So Confusing? Defining Team Structures and Responsibilities in a PLC		X		X	
Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Continuous Improvement Through Challenges and Setbacks			X		
Luis F. Cruz					
English Learners and PLCs			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

William M. Ferriter					
Digital Tools for Differentiation	X		X		
Integrating Opportunities for Student Self-Assessment in Your Classroom		X			X
Small Schools and Singletons: Structuring Meaningful Collaborative Teams for Every Teacher				X	
Timothy D. Kanold					
Heart and Soul: Living a Fully Engaged, High-Energy, Well-Balanced Professional Life!	X				X
The PLC Life of Central Office and School-Site Leadership!		X			
Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great Instruction and Tasks!			X		
Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Assessment, Homework, and Grading!				X	
Mike Mattos					
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

Anthony Muhammad					
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
Julie A. Schmidt					
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		
Capacity and Change				X	
Differentiation for Teams: Taking It to the Next Level					X
Bob Sonju					
What Is It We Want Them to Know? Getting Clarity on Essential Standards That Lead to Targeted Assessment	X			X	
The Essentials: What Effective Teams Do to Increase Learning		X			
Help Your Team: Overcoming Common Collaborative Challenges in a PLC			X		X

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

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 while preparing all children for graduation and their future. How can high school principals and staff meet these expectations while increasing learning and achievement for all students? The best hope is by adapting PLC practices and implementing strong RTI structures in our high schools.

Daniel Cohan draws from his experience teaching, leading, training, supervising, and supporting high schools of various structures, sizes, demographics, and philosophies to aid staff and administrators on their PLC and RTI journeys. He leads participants through strategies, tools, and techniques to facilitate the development of a highly effective PLC and provides tips and resources customized to the high school level.

Outcomes from this session include:
- Building demand for, and collective ownership of, a PLC culture at the high school level
- Gaining strategies to overcome obstacles and model effective PLC practices
- Creating structures to systematically provide interventions and enrichment to help all students reach higher levels of learning
- Exploring high school schedules and other products to aid school and district PLC journeys

Why Is It So Confusing? Defining Team Structures and Responsibilities in a PLC

Traditional schools and PLC schools have various "teams" and structures. Small and large schools and districts alike must have clear team structures and functions that work interdependently to be most effective. The difference in the makeup of the team, how the team functions, its specific responsibilities and actions, and how teams are monitored and measured distinguishes traditional schools from highly effective PLC schools. Student intervention teams, building leadership teams, content- and grade-level teams, and interdisciplinary teams all have a place in a PLC. This session explores teams' expectations and responsibilities.

Participants in this session learn key factors of PLC teams, such as:

- How teams in small and large schools function effectively within the PLC model
- The interconnected responsibilities among building leadership teams, teacher teams, and RTI teams
- The importance of focusing on collective inquiry and action research
- Basing effectiveness on results
- Developing next steps for their school or district

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

Like cultivating a garden, cultivating a highly effective PLC requires preparation, perseverance, and continuous monitoring and nurturing. Ongoing challenges and new variables inevitably arise, leading to setbacks, derailment, or paralysis. Leading PLCs is a delicate balance of attending to *culture* and *structure* at the same time. We must understand and remind ourselves that challenges are part of the continuous improvement cycle. Participants in this interactive session share their stories and learn from one another about how to maintain momentum in their PLCs.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Learning how to stay the course and maintain the essential elements of an effective PLC
- Exploring how 100-day plans can serve as a continuous improvement tool for your PLC
- Clearly defining individual and team responsibilities in your PLC
- Understanding the importance of short-term wins
- Reviewing examples from schools that have overcome common obstacles and setbacks

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.

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

William M. Ferriter

Digital Tools for Differentiation

If schools are truly working to ensure success for every student, learning experiences must be differentiated to meet the needs of individual students. The challenge, however, rests in making differentiation doable. While few teachers doubt the importance of differentiating, many struggle to make customized learning spaces a reality.

In this presentation, Solution Tree author and full-time classroom teacher Bill Ferriter introduces participants to a range of digital tools that can be used to:

- Track progress by student and by standard in a differentiated classroom.
- Provide structure for differentiated classrooms.
- Facilitate initial attempts at remediation and enrichment in a differentiated classroom.

Integrating Opportunities for Student Self-Assessment in Your Classroom

School assessment experts Rick Stiggins and Jan Chappuis once argued that creating opportunities for students—particularly those who struggle academically—to collect evidence that they are making progress toward mastering important outcomes is a moral imperative that we simply cannot ignore. "Are we skilled enough," they wrote, "to use classroom assessment to either keep all learners from losing hope to begin with or to rebuild that hope once it has been destroyed?" Their point was clear: In grade-driven spaces, many students never have the opportunity to feel successful in school. This session introduces participants to the tangible steps William M. Ferriter has taken to integrate opportunities for self-assessment into his classroom, ensuring that every student has the chance to see themselves as capable, competent learners.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss the important role self-assessment plays in learning.
- Learn about common challenges in integrating student self-assessment into the classroom.
- Explore simple self-assessment behaviors that can be integrated into any classroom.

Small Schools and Singletons: Structuring Meaningful Professional Learning Teams for Every Teacher
The PLC concept resonates with most educators, but making collaborative learning work in small schools or for singleton teachers can be challenging. In this session, participants explore four different models for creating meaningful professional learning teams for singletons and teachers in small schools: 1) the creation of vertical teams studying skills that cross content areas, 2) using interdisciplinary teams to focus on addressing the engagement levels of at-risk students, 3) designing class loads that allow teachers to teach the same subjects, and 4) using electronic tools to pair teachers with peers working in the same subject area.

Participants in this session:
- Discuss common structural barriers that make collaboration more difficult for singleton teachers or teachers in small schools.
- Examine four potential models for creating meaningful professional learning teams for singleton teachers or teachers in small schools.
- Develop the beginnings of an action plan for incorporating singleton teachers or teachers in small schools into the PLC process.

Timothy D. Kanold

Heart and Soul: 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 HEART: their relational happiness and how to become fully engaged in their work life.
- Discover ways to improve their relational intelligence and impact (heartprint) on others as part of the PLC culture.
- 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 of Central Office and School-Site Leadership!

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

Timothy D. Kanold bases this session on chapters 21–25 from his best-selling, award-winning book *HEART! Fully Forming Your Professional Life as a Teacher and Leader* (2018). He reveals how administrators, program leaders, and instructional coaches can become dynamic decision makers that others follow. As participants identify primary barriers to the PLC life, Dr. Kanold facilitates dialogue to find meaningful solutions based on what is "loose" and "tight" in a PLC at Work culture.

Dr. Kanold indicates, "As we become professionals, we tie our workplace heartprint and decision making to the *vision* for our work life actions and the results of our leadership wisdom, in order to promote coherence—and celebrate the difficult daily actions of others."

Participants learn how to:
- Use vision to lead, create, and inspire a sustainable, successful PLC life.
- Help others eliminate districtwide barriers to PLC process implementation by connecting daily actions to measurable outcomes.
- Commit to a simple leadership heuristic to avoid randomness, chaos, and incoherence when implementing the PLC culture.

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 math quizzes and tests.
- Consider using a protocol for the accurate scoring (grading) of all quizzes and tests.
- Develop formative strategies for student response, intervention, and ownership of learning during and at the end of a mathematics unit of study.
- Explore research and discussion tools to design highly effective mathematics homework routines and practices.

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

[KEYNOTE] Moving Beyond "PLC Lite": Nurturing Full Commitment to the PLC Process

More than twenty 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-plus 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 more than 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

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

Julie A. Schmidt

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. Julie A. Schmidt 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

Question One in an All-Means-All Culture

Participants first examine the what and why of establishing a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Then, they use a protocol any collaborative team could employ to deeply understand how standards drive the team conversation to plan for instruction and formative assessment to support all learners in reaching proficiency. Finally, participants use a data set and protocol to analyze and discuss formative assessment data to plan for instruction, intervention, and extension.

Outcomes from this session include:
- Exploring essential elements of a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all
- Becoming familiar with a protocol that facilitates deep learning around standards and targets
- Using the protocol for robust pre-instruction planning
- Using the protocol to analyze and discuss common formative assessment data to drive instruction and intervention

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.

Capacity and Change
Participants dig into the important work of a guiding coalition in a PLC and explore the teacher leader's role. Understanding the change process and knowing what to expect is paramount to the success of any school-improvement plan, and it is especially critical as an organization develops into a deeply embedded professional learning community.

Participants in this session:
- Consider leadership through the lens of their current roles.
- Examine what it takes to develop a guiding coalition.
- Understand the change process and what to expect along the way.

Differentiation for Teams: Taking It to the Next Level
Highly effective PLC practices are built on the foundation of high-functioning collaborative teams. These teams recognize that each team member brings different perspectives to the table. This session focuses on the dynamics of collaborative teams, understanding those dynamics, and various tools available to assess stages of development.
 Objectives for this session include:
- Defining the characteristics of high-performing teams
- Engaging in an activity to help build understanding for team members
- Exploring tools to assess a team's efficacy

Bob Sonju

What Is It We Want Them to Know? Getting Clarity on Essential Standards That Lead to Targeted Assessment

Do you want to make your interventions more effective? Do you want your common assessments to be more targeted? The first critical question of a PLC asks, What do we want our students to know? This requires a team to become absolutely clear on each essential standard. Not until teams get to a deep level of clarity on their essential standards and their shared agreement on common formative assessment results are they able to intervene effectively. This session guides participants through the work of clarifying what their students need to know.

Participants in this session:

- Gain an understanding of the *why* behind curricular priority.
- Utilize tools to help teams gain clarity on their essential standards.
- Practice deconstructing an essential standard in teams.

The Essentials: What Effective Teams Do to Increase Student Learning

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

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 Bob Sonju 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.