

# Agenda

## Las Vegas, NV · April 11–13

### Wednesday, April 11

	Registration	
	Continental Breakfast	
	<b>Keynote</b> —Douglas Reeves <i>Courageous Leadership: Innovative Strategies and Timeless Truths</i>	
	Break	
	<b>Breakouts</b>	
	Lunch (on your own)	
	<b>Breakouts</b>	
	Break	
	<b>Keynote</b> —Kenneth C. Williams <i>Starting a Movement: Moving Students Over the Bar</i>	

### Thursday, April 12

	Registration	
	Continental Breakfast	
	<b>Keynote</b> —Jay McTighe <i>Creating an Understanding-Based Curriculum and Assessment System for 21st Century Learning</i>	
	Break	
	<b>Breakouts</b>	
	Lunch (on your own)	
	<b>Breakouts</b>	
	Break	
	<b>Panel Discussion</b> <i>Q&amp;A with keynote presenters who provide practical answers to your most pressing questions</i>	

### Friday, April 13

	Continental Breakfast	
	<b>Keynote</b> —Janel Keating <i>Doing the Right Work at the Right Time for the Right Reasons</i>	
	Break	
	<b>Keynote</b> —Anthony Muhammad <i>Leadership Matters: Moving Beyond “PLC Lite” and Nurturing Full Commitment</i>	

**Agenda is subject to change.**

## Breakouts at a Glance

Presenters & Session Titles	Wednesday, April 11		Thursday, April 12	
<b>Brian K. Butler</b>				
Is Your Culture Too Loose, Too Tight, or Just Right?	X			
What About Us? The PLC at Work Process in Early Childhood!		X		
Ensuring Teams Engage in the Right Work			X	
Our Students Are From 42 Birth Countries. What's an Elementary School to Do?				X
<b>Troy Gobble</b>				
Proficiency-Based Assessment: Process, Not Product	X			
Tight on Culture, Loose on Rules: Lessons From Leading Three Different PLCs		X		
Using Social Emotional Learning as the Vehicle to Drive School Improvement			X	
Why Before What: Creating a Clear and Constant Focus on What's Important				X
<b>Janel Keating</b>				
Are the Kids Learning and How Do We Know? Data-Based Decision Making in High-Performing Teams	X			
Bumps in the Road: Getting More Kids to Learn More at Higher Levels		X		
Women in Leadership: Navigating the Obstacles and Opportunities			X	
Tight-Loose Leadership: From Teacher Teams to Principals to the District Office				X
<b>Jasmine Kullar</b>				
Celebrate Our Employees: Creating an Effective Recognition Program	X			
Leaders Presenting With Charisma!		X		
How to Hire and Retain Good Teachers			X	
Teacher Leadership Teams: The Vehicle to Success				X
<b>Jay McTighe</b>				
Process Tools and Resources for Curriculum and Assessment Design			X	
<b>Anthony Muhammad</b>				
The Four Skills of a Transformational Leader	X			

Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!		X		
Transforming School Culture			X	
Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change				X
<b>Douglas Reeves</b>				
Rethinking Leadership Coaching	X			
Assessing Leadership Performance		X		
<b>Kenneth C. Williams</b>				
Status Quo Disruptor or Defender: Which Will You Choose to Be?	X			
12 Angry Men: The Impact of One, the Power of Team		X		
Everyday People			X	
How Guiding Coalitions Lead From the Front				X

## Session Descriptions

### **Brian K. Butler**

#### **Is Your Culture Too Loose, Too Tight, or Just Right?**

The continued success of 2016 DuFour Award recipient Mason Crest Elementary depends on the school constantly paying attention to its culture! During this session, participants learn how to embrace a culture of collective responsibility through staff collective commitments, administrative team structure and communication methods, and its hiring and retention practices. They discover what it means to recognize celebration as a norm and experience a place where professionals come to work, where every staff member has the opportunity to lead, and where all are expected to share their practices. Participants are reminded of the specific loose and tight elements that drive the work of schools and districts that embrace the PLC at Work framework. The question should not be: Are we too loose or too tight? The question should be: Are we simultaneously loose *and* tight? We can be distinctly both!

Learning outcomes include:

- Learning how to set the parameters for what should be tight and how much flexibility (loose) is appropriate within those parameters for freedom, creativity, and flexibility for staff
- Using multiple self- and team-reflection tools to assess elements of culture
- Acquiring strategies for how to constantly tend to the culture
- Understanding the questions needed to create consensus for a culture of collective responsibility
- Roleplaying different scenarios to gain experience and confidence to create a culture of collective responsibility that is simultaneously loose and tight

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

For years, schools have focused on implementing the PLC at Work process in the K–12 system. However, many preschool programs in elementary school buildings and stand-alone programs want to know how to make this process work for their schools and children, too. Can it be done? The resounding answer is *yes*, and 2016 DuFour Award recipient Mason Crest Elementary not only answers this question but goes deeper. Through the powerfully collaborative and data-driven process of PLCs, the school combined a preschool special education class with a general education preschool Head Start class and dispelled the myth that students with early learning challenges could not achieve developmental milestones. Indeed, they could even exceed them.

Learning outcomes include:

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

## **Ensuring Teams Engage in the Right Work**

Taking a page (literally) 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. As Kramer and Schuhl state, “The best way to describe, clarify, and monitor the task of teams is to delineate the products that they would create from answering the four questions of learning” that drive the work of collaborative teams (p. 22). Participants gain absolute clarity on what this looks, feels, and sounds like at the team level.

Learning outcomes include:

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

## **Our Students Are From 42 Birth Countries—What’s an Elementary School to Do?**

With so many English learners requiring explicit language instruction and support throughout their entire school day, schools need all teachers to be English language teachers. Abandoning the idea of one English language teacher attempting to meet all the needs of hundreds of students, Mason Crest Elementary’s English language teachers work collaboratively to take collective responsibility and make *all means all* a reality. In this session, administrators and teachers at the elementary level learn about a system and process based on collaboration and teamwork. This system and process can easily be implemented while building the capacity of all teachers to effectively support English learners through job-embedded professional development.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how to avoid flirting with dangerous detours and seductive shortcuts that do not align with a mission of “ensuring high levels of learning for students and adults.”
- Identify how to right the ship and create specific schoolwide structures needed to support collaboration among all staff members.
- Explore a variety of team meeting structures and purposes that enable teams to focus on planning for instruction, assessing student learning, planning for interventions for students requiring additional time, and planning for extensions for students who have already mastered the content, as well as the role of the English language teacher in these meetings.
- Discover and identify resources for building more collaboration at the schoolwide level.

## **Troy Gobble**

### **Proficiency-Based Assessment: Process, Not Product**

While educators’ knowledge of effective assessment practice has grown in the past few years, there is still a disconnect between the skills they aim to develop and the information their assessments provide. Troy Gobble asserts that assessments should have neither a formative nor summative purpose. Instead, they are experiences to help students meet and exceed proficiency expectations.

Participants in this session:

- Create learning targets and develop and scale proficiency-based goals.
- Build assessments that support student learning, serve instructional practice, and move students toward proficiency.
- Develop models of student reflection specifically aimed at meeting and exceeding learning expectations.

### **Tight on Culture, Loose on Rules: Lessons Learned From Leading Three Different PLCs**

In this session, Troy Gobble examines three different schools that worked to create and foster PLCs but obtained very different results. What were the keys to success? Participants explore real school experiences to provide specific and practical strategies for improving the effectiveness of collaborative work and building a PLC culture that is built to last.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand the role of leadership in supporting teachers' collaborative work.
- Explore practical ways to apply these lessons to refine the PLC process.
- Understand how to avoid common pitfalls in PLC implementation.

### **Using Social Emotional Learning as the Vehicle to Drive School Improvement**

How do we respond when students don't learn? The answer is often through expanded curricular support. But many students who struggle are missing key social and emotional skills they need to learn and grow, or they have them but require ongoing reinforcement to reach their full potential.

Participants in this session:

- Explore the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning's (CASEL) core SEL competencies: self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, and relationship skills.
- Learn strategies for the explicit instruction of these competencies.
- Understand how these competencies can impact student learning.

### **Why Before What: Creating a Clear and Constant Focus on What's Important**

The purpose of the PLC process can get lost as teachers wade through the forms and documents. But schools that develop a consistent and powerful answer to the simple question "Why PLCs?" can see past the forms and focus on what's important: learning. Participants learn to collaboratively develop a vision for why PLCs are critical to improving school culture and extending learning for all.

Participants can expect to:

- Develop clear distinctions between the why, how, and what of a PLC.
- Determine how to create a shared PLC vision with the entire faculty.
- Explore how PLCs can enhance the work of collaborative teams.

## **Janel Keating**

### **[KEYNOTE] Doing the Right Work at the Right Time for the Right Reasons**

Eliminate the knowing–doing gap and the expectation–acceptance gap by implementing the high-impact actions of continuously improving schools. Knowing leadership is important, and even

understanding leadership theory is not enough. Janel Keating shares specific leadership practices coupled with practical tools that will positively impact student learning, adult learning, and the work of the team. Janel provides essential next steps for participants to take back to their districts, schools, and teams to effectively do the right work at the right time for the right reasons.

### **Are the Kids Learning and How Do We Know? Data-Based Decision Making in High-Performing Teams**

The two reasons to look at data in a PLC are to determine whether kids are learning and to improve professional practice. This interactive session highlights how high-performing teams quickly examine their data to make decisions that impact kids in the classroom. Participants are provided an effective, user-friendly data analysis tool to facilitate this work.

### **Bumps in the Road: Getting More Kids to Learn More at Higher Levels**

The road to becoming a professional learning community is never smooth. There are bumps along the way. The issue is not how to avoid the inevitable bumps, but rather how to deal with them. Janel Keating shares some challenges to implementing PLCs and provides participants with a process for overcoming them.

### **Women in Leadership: Navigating the Obstacles and Opportunities**

The right work for improving learning for all students is the same for men and women. However, women in leadership positions frequently encounter obstacles and opportunities unique to their gender.

This session examines how successful women in education lead and offers suggestions and ideas for developing and honing these exemplary leadership practices. Janel Keating shares how she brings an instructional focus to leadership and strives for a balance between the personal and professional.

Learning outcomes include:

- Identifying the unique leadership obstacles and opportunities facing women in education
- Learning how successful women negotiate for what they need to be effective leaders
- Gaining new strategies for building and leading school and district leadership teams

### **Tight–Loose Leadership: From Teacher Teams to Principals to the District Office**

Leading the work of becoming a professional learning community requires leadership that is not only top-down and bottom-up but also loose and tight. These leaders empower individuals and teams and encourage personal autonomy (loose) within well-defined parameters (tight) that all are expected to honor. Janel Keating shares examples of tight and loose district, school, and team practices as well as processes that ensure more kids learn at higher levels. Discover the answers to these questions: What is the district loose on? What is it tight on?

## **Jasmine Kullar**

### **Celebrate Our Employees: Creating an Effective Recognition Program**

Recognizing school employees helps retain teachers and staff and builds morale in the building as people feel valued and respected for their work. Recognition should not just be formal, once-a-year celebrations but rather a daily part of school culture. As important as this is, leaders sometimes do not

have the time to recognize staff—or just don't know how to. Jasmine Kullar outlines the importance of recognition and reviews the components of an effective recognition program.

Participants can expect to:

- Review why recognition is necessary.
- Identify barriers to recognizing staff and outlining solutions.
- Explore a variety of strategies used in schools to recognize teachers and staff.

### **Leaders Presenting With Charisma!**

Public speaking creates anxiety and fear in many people. Yet for leaders, public speaking is a requirement, regardless of any potential fears. School leaders present or deliver training all the time. Whether it's at faculty meetings, facilitating a professional development session with the staff, or presenting to parents and the community, leaders must deliver with clarity and passion. How do leaders ensure they are engaging and also understood every time they present? Volunteers will apply what they learn and create a mini-presentation or speech while the audience provides feedback.

Participants can expect to:

- Review strategies that promote participant engagement and commitment.
- Study how to present with clarity.
- Create an engaging mini-presentation and receive feedback.

### **How to Hire and Retain Good Teachers**

Hiring good teachers can be difficult. Retaining new teachers can be even more challenging as teachers continue to leave our schools. Because of the time spent interviewing and selecting teachers, it can be upsetting when they decide to leave. Teachers leaving schools takes a huge toll on students and therefore student achievement. Jasmine Kullar briefly reviews how to hire and interview quality teachers and discusses strategies to keep them. Participants learn the many stressors new teachers face and discover solutions to minimize those stressors.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify good hiring and interviewing practices.
- Review factors that lead to teachers leaving.
- Find solutions to retain new teachers.

### **Teacher Leadership Teams: The Vehicle to Success**

School leaders need to spend time building and developing their teacher leaders because their leadership is vital to the school improvement process. Too often, we throw teacher leaders into their roles and expect them to lead, but many may not yet know how. Jasmine Kullar argues that teacher leaders' roles are more than just communicating information to their departments on behalf of the principal. Jasmine discusses how teacher leaders are selected, what they're supposed to do as teacher leaders, and how they receive training to be teacher leaders.

Participants can expect to:

- Discuss ideas to select teacher leaders.
- Create job descriptions for teacher leaders.
- Develop ideas for professional development for teacher leaders.

## **Jay McTighe**

### **[KEYNOTE] Creating an Understanding-Based Curriculum and Assessment System for 21st Century Learning**

Participants examine key ideas from Jay McTighe's book *Leading Modern Learning: A Blueprint for Vision-Driven Schools* (Solution Tree Press, 2015) for transforming academic standards and 21st century skills into a coherent curriculum that emphasizes understanding and long-term transfer.

Participants learn about:

- A conceptual framework for creating a guaranteed and viable curriculum and assessment system across grade levels
- Characteristics and examples of long-term transfer goals
- Characteristics and examples of overarching understandings and essential questions
- Characteristics and examples of cornerstone performance tasks
- A modern version of curriculum mapping
- The AMT (Acquire–Make Meaning–Transfer) instructional frame

### **Process Tools and Resources for Curriculum and Assessment Design**

This breakout goes deeper into the ideas presented in Jay McTighe's keynote session. Jay presents more examples of long-term transfer goals and practical approaches for identifying them. He demonstrates a process for "unpacking" academic standards and 21st century skills for identifying overarching understandings and essential questions. He illustrates a set of performance task frames for designing recurring cornerstone tasks and proposes how this curriculum blueprint supports important and impactful work by PLC teams. This session includes opportunities for participants' questions and answers.

Participants learn more about:

- The curriculum blueprint described in the keynote session
- Examples of long-term transfer goals and approaches to identifying them
- Examples of overarching understandings and essential questions and unpacking strategies to identify them
- Examples of cornerstone performance tasks and task frames for creating them

## **Anthony Muhammad**

### **[KEYNOTE] Leadership Matters: Moving Beyond "PLC Lite" and Nurturing Full Commitment**

Twenty years ago the first book on PLC at Work by Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker was published. 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 the reality of "PLC lite" still plague our profession? Without exception, the schools that use this model to successfully 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.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand the leadership challenges and lessons learned from 20 years of PLC practice.
- Learn the difference between leadership behaviors that undermine and promote the purpose of a PLC.
- Gain practical strategies that will improve their ability to lead others through the change process and build consensus.

### **The Four Skills of a Transformational Leader**

This session addresses the importance of transformational leadership. School culture provides the context for all good strategies. A leader who understands how to motivate, develop, and build consensus are invaluable to their organizations. This era of constant change requires leadership that understands the development of human capital. Anthony Muhammad leads an examination of four leadership competencies: communication, trust building, professional support, and accountability.

Dr. Muhammad guides participants in:

- Understanding the true meaning and value of school culture
- Recognizing the importance of developing consensus
- Acquiring practical skills that inspire others to embrace change

### **Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!**

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 discusses the issues of staff resistance to change, the leader's role in building consensus, creating a culture of collaboration, and how to build and sustain an environment where people embrace collective responsibility.

As a result of this session, participants can:

- Construct and sustain productive collaborative relationships.
- Create organizational coherence and ensure collaboration at all levels of the school community.
- Understand the balance between support and accountability.

### **Transforming School Culture**

This session addresses the issue of conflicting agendas within schools. A high-performing school has a very clear purpose: high levels of learning for all students. Participants examine the barriers to aligning individual agendas with the organization's agenda and what *all* parties must do to develop the synergy necessary to guarantee learning. They also examine the theoretical framework Anthony Muhammad developed in his book *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division* (Solution Tree Press, 2009) as the basis for developing a collaborative culture.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how staff division develops and how to prevent it.
- Acquire strategies that heal old social and professional wounds.
- Discover ways to create an environment where every professional can thrive.

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

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

Participants can expect to:

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

## **Douglas Reeves**

### **[KEYNOTE] Courageous Leadership: Innovative Strategies and Timeless Truths**

Douglas Reeves shares the latest research on leadership practices that inspire, challenge, and change individuals and systems. Combining the latest evidence from 2018 with a global synthesis of research, Dr. Reeves provides a blueprint for leaders at every level, from system-level leaders to the power of “inside-out” transformative leaders. Neuroscience has dramatically improved our understanding of how leaders and the schools they serve create immediate and significant change, but many ineffective and popular leadership practices remain all too common. This presentation helps leaders engage in courageous conversations that challenge prevailing leadership mythology and chart a new course for the great impact for teaching and learning.

### **Rethinking Leadership Coaching**

It’s time to reevaluate coaching. Although strong evidence suggests that some types of coaching can improve individual and organizational performance, little consensus exists on what the term *coaching* really means. Participants join Douglas Reeves as he considers the essential differences between different coaching techniques and provides an action plan for both giving and receiving effective coaching.

### **Assessing Leadership Performance**

We know what makes for effective assessment feedback in the classroom. It must be FAST—fair, accurate, specific, and timely. Yet too often assessment for educational leaders remains stubbornly stuck in the 20th century with feedback that is late, ambiguous, and unrelated to improving teaching and learning. In this session, Douglas Reeves shares the 2018 version of the Leadership Performance Matrix, a development tool that can be used by veteran leaders and emerging leaders alike.

## **Kenneth C. Williams**

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

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

Learning outcomes include:

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

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

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

Learning outcomes include:

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

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

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

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

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

Learning outcomes include:

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

## Everyday People

A collaborative culture is critical in ensuring learning for all. However, characteristics of “everyday people” often get in the way of maximizing the talent and deepening collaboration on teams. Do you know how to work with everyday people? Do you know how to engage in productive conflict in order to achieve team goals and ultimately improve school culture? How many of these characters from everyday people do you recognize in yourself and others?

1. The Tank
2. The Firehose
3. The Town Crier
4. The Slacker
5. The Showboat

These are the people we work with, collaborate with, and depend on. Learn to recognize these and other characters, empower yourself, and deal with them confidently. Join Kenneth C. Williams on an engaging journey of self-reflection and productive action.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand the difficult people in your life.
- Know how to communicate with difficult people.
- Acquire techniques and strategies to use in specific situations when dealing with difficult people in the workplace.
- Become less of a target for difficult people by teaching them how to treat you.

## How Guiding Coalitions Lead From the Front

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

Participants can expect to:

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