

Agenda

September 22–24 • Singapore

Friday, September 22

8:30–9:00 a.m.	Registration	Middle School Cafeteria
	Continental Breakfast	
9:00–9:30 a.m.	Opening Address —Chip Kimball <i>Setting the Stage for Professional Learning Communities at Work</i>	eSpace
9:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	Singapore American High School School-Guided Practice of Professional Learning Communities at Work. Educators choose a particular strand below and join a small group of peers for an in-depth look at how the different strands of a PLC operate within Singapore American School.	
	Strand 1: PLC at Work Practice —facilitated by Steve Meade	
	<i>Focus on the implementation of PLC at Work. Begin with a conversation on PLCs and move to an observation of PLC in Singapore American School. Includes a panel discussion with a PLC leader, administrator, and coach.</i>	I-214
	Strand 2: RTI Practice —facilitated by Cindy Watters	
	<i>Focus on structures for supporting learning. Includes a panel with teachers and learning support and classroom visits.</i>	I-311
	Strand 3: The Four Cs —facilitated by Jennifer L. Sparrow	
	<i>Focus on structures to support critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity.</i>	M-301
9:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	Strand 4: Innovative Practices and Places —facilitated by Treena Casey	
	<i>Focus on Early Learning Center, Quest, Catalyst, The Loft, and libraries.</i>	H-301
12:00–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	Middle School Cafeteria
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Keynote —Nicole Dimich Vagle <i>PLCs and RTI: Collaboration to Deepen Student Learning and Investment</i>	Auditorium
2:30–3:30 p.m.	Team Time <i>A collaboration time for your team. Presenters are available for help in team discussions.</i>	Middle School Cafeteria

Saturday, September 23

7:15–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Middle School Cafeteria
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	(See page 3.)
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:15 a.m.	Keynote —Tom Schimmer <i>Redefining Student Accountability</i>	Auditorium
11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	Middle School Cafeteria
12:15–1:45 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	(See page 3.)
1:45–2:00 p.m.	Break	
2:00–3:30 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	(See page 3.)

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Sunday, September 24

7:15–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Middle School Cafeteria
8:00–9:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	(See page 3.)
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:15 a.m.	Keynote —Eric Twadell <i>From Good to Great: Laying the Foundation of a PLC at Work</i>	Auditorium

Agenda is subject to change.

Breakouts at a Glance

Presenter & Title	Saturday, September 23			Sunday, September 24
	8:00–9:30 a.m.	12:15–1:45 p.m.	2:00–3:30 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Treena Casey				
Change Leadership: How Do We Get There?	I-311			I-311
Unpacking Learning Targets – Question One		I-311		
Darin L. Fahrney				
An Introduction to Response to Intervention (RTI)	H-301		H-301	
Pyramid of Acceleration: A Roadmap to High Levels of Learning for All Students				H-301
David Hoss				
Building Responsibility for PLC Leadership	I-214		I-214	
Tom Schimmer				
Five Keys to Effective Feedback	Auditorium			
Instructional Agility		Auditorium		
Repurposing Homework			Auditorium	
Jennifer L. Sparrow				
A Focus on PLC Leadership		H-301		
How Will We Know When Students Have Learned It?			I-311	
Assessing 21st Century Learning Skills				M-301
Nicole Dimich Vagle				
Investing Students in the RTI Process	M-301		M-301	
Tiered Assessment: Ensuring Rigorous Work for All Students		M-301		
Putting It All Together: Linking Instruction, Assessment, and Intervention				Auditorium
Amanda Wood				
Planning Data Reviews to Inform Interventions		I-214		I-214

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Singapore American School

Singapore American School

Keynote Descriptions

Day 1

PLCs and RTI: Collaboration to Deepen Student Learning and Investment

Nicole Dimich Vagle

The PLC process creates a culture where students invest in their learning and experience a personalized education. This learning-focused culture taps the expertise and strengths of individual educators and, through collaboration, generates new knowledge and innovative strategies to ensure all students learn at high levels. There is an integral connection between collaboratively designing and ensuring learning (the work of a PLC) and responding and intervening (RTI) to accelerate and enrich learning.

This keynote addresses key beliefs, research, and practices that ground the relationship between PLCs and RTI in a high-performing context, such as a clear learning pathway, a balanced assessment approach, a spirit of inquiry into the impact of our work on student learning and confidence, and the role students play in crafting this culture.

Day 2

Redefining Student Accountability

Tom Schimmer

The need for students to be held accountable is often cited as a reason why some hesitate to implement more sound grading practices. Tom Schimmer focuses on the systems, structures, and routines that redefine accountability and reshape a school's culture. Rather than using zeros, late penalties, or other traditional punitive grading practices, participants see how real accountability can be achieved without compromising the integrity of a student's proficiency grade.

Participants will:

- Identify the perils of punitive grading and subsequent inaccuracies to reporting that undermine student proficiency results.
- Understand an alternative, more productive definition of *accountability* within the context of learning.
- Explore the multiple systems required to create a culture of true accountability that leave students' optimism and hope intact.

Day 3

From Good to Great: Laying the Foundation of a PLC at Work

Eric Twadell

The first step in the never-ending journey of continuous improvement in a PLC is building a strong foundation on the three big ideas: 1) shifting from a teaching culture to a learning culture, 2) creating and sustaining a culture of collaboration, and 3) focusing on results. This session focuses on *why* schools need to reculture as PLCs to effect substantive improvement.

Breakout Session Descriptions

Day 2 - Morning

***Change Leadership: How Do We Get There?**

Treena Casey

Implementing a PLC culture within a large, multifaceted, high-achieving international school was challenging. From a change management perspective, what did the administrative and teacher leaders at Singapore American School learn on this journey? What processes and practices were most useful and have proven to be sustainable? Treena Casey demonstrates how change literature informed school strategies and shares lessons the staff learned after making an institution-wide commitment to building a highly effective PLC.

Participants will:

- Understand change leadership and management processes.
- Learn useful strategies for implementing PLCs.
- Engage in a reflective process to apply change theory to their own contexts.

***An Introduction to Response to Intervention (RTI)**

Darin L. Fahrney

Discover the alignment between three powerful ideas: Mastery Learning (Bloom), Professional Learning Communities at Work (DuFour, et al.), and RTI at Work (Buffum & Mattos). Rather than asking how we can raise our scores, collaborative teams should ask what students specifically need to master and how we, as a team, can construct a plan for instruction, intervention, and enrichment to accomplish our goal of mastery for every student.

Participants will:

- Learn the connections between these three powerful ideas in education and how they work together as one seamless approach.
- Discover that they have already been incorporating many of these strategies for years.
- Interact with colleagues to learn how they have incorporated this thinking into their schools and classrooms.

***Building Responsibility for PLC Leadership**

David Hoss

Successful, sustainable PLC leadership is created by a collection of people in the organization committed to the idea of learning for all. Participants learn how to help staff become committed to a collective vision for using the PLC process to improve learning. School-level leadership teams, administrators, and teacher leaders learn how to set clear expectations for teams and then celebrate, support, and ensure these teams are responsible for doing the work that matters.

Participants will:

- Examine the model used at Singapore American School that supports and enhances effective PLC teams.
- Learn strategies to foster key leadership skills within their PLCs.

* = Session repeats

Breakout Session Descriptions

Day 2 - Morning

Five Keys to Effective Feedback

Tom Schimmer

While the research on feedback is rich and robust, success with effective feedback is often nuanced and contextual. Tom Schimmer highlights five key strategies and focal points to ensure feedback fulfills its promise to improve student performance. By balancing universal truths with necessary autonomy, teachers find the sweet spot within their feedback routines. Participants discover that providing effective feedback need not be overwhelming or time consuming. Effective feedback can accelerate and deepen the willingness to continue learning and establish an efficient pathway to proficiency.

Participants will:

- Explore the universal truths and limitations of current research on feedback.
- Understand five key questions that can be used to audit feedback practices and ensure a learning-centered foundation.
- Explore effective and balanced feedback strategies that facilitate student ownership of their learning.

***Investing Students in the RTI Process**

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Too often, adults take ownership of having all students learn but fail to productively bring them into the process. How are students able to articulate what they are learning, their strengths and next steps? How are students learning from and acting on specific feedback given during instruction and on assessments? How do students track their progress on essential standards? For students' reflections on learning to be most meaningful, consider how the culture of the classroom positively influences a student's disposition and beliefs about how he or she can learn. Teachers can help students understand *why* they need an intervention and build their confidence by instilling that they learn most when they are invested in the process.

Participants will:

- Identify characteristics of a classroom culture focused on learning.
- Recognize powerful student feedback processes.
- Explore ways for students to reflect through self-regulation and tracking.

* = Session repeats

Breakout Session Descriptions

Day 2 - Early Afternoon

Unpacking Learning Targets – Question One

Treena Casey

The first critical question of a PLC asks us to determine what we want students to be able to learn. How do we establish a viable curriculum? How do we determine what is essential in a crowded curriculum? How do we then unpack expectations to create aligned common assessments? How do we ensure clarity and consistency among team members? This session addresses these questions and provides tools for teacher teams to confidently define learning targets for their students.

Participants will:

- Understand how a team can clearly articulate what it wants students to learn.
- Understand the reasons for unpacking and deconstructing standards into learning targets.
- Practice using tools to unpack standards to inform their teaching practice.

Instructional Agility

Tom Schimmer

Being instructionally agile means making seamless instructional adjustments at a moment's notice. Tom Schimmer reestablishes the core fundamentals of classroom assessment on the basis of this agility. Rather than creating assessment events that require teachers to stop teaching to conduct formative assessments, the focus is on the more organic process of infusing assessment experiences into any activity or strategy. Participants learn three non-negotiable characteristics that transform any activity into an assessment and several practical strategies to blur the lines between assessment, instruction, and feedback.

Participants will:

- Identify and explore three essential aspects that can transform any activity into an assessment.
- Explore instructional agility and what it looks like in a classroom.
- Examine several practical strategies that meld assessment, instruction, and feedback.

A Focus on PLC Leadership

Jennifer L. Sparrow

An effective PLC leader helps promote collaboration and prevent *coblaboration*. This session illustrates strategies to ensure the focus stays on learning and to attend to different team dynamics. PLC leaders walk away with tools they can apply to their contexts to help their teams collaboratively focus on and ensure student learning.

Breakout Session Descriptions

Day 2 - Early Afternoon

Tiered Assessment: Ensuring Rigorous Work for All Students

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Students walk through our school doors and bring with them a variety of skills, experiences, beliefs, and learning habits. Tiered assessment is a way of designing assessment and instruction so that all students are engaged in work that is on grade level, aligned to standards, and pushes them to grow. When expectations are high, students perform at higher levels. When students struggle, it can be difficult to keep expectations high. This session focuses on how to design tiered standards-based assessments. Grounded on student strengths and challenges, tiered assessments provide structures and supports to get students working at and beyond grade level. Teachers, principals, and teams learn how to determine the type of structures and support needed to design tiered assessments.

Participants will:

- Learn key components of designing tiered assessments.
- Acquire skills to design various structures and support based on students' strengths and challenges, including strategies for students who are English learners, have special needs, and who need acceleration or enrichment.
- Receive templates and strategies for designing tiered assessments.

***Planning Data Reviews to Inform Interventions**

Amanda Wood

One of the challenges teachers face is what to do when students have not mastered specific learning targets. Additionally, how do teachers extend learning for students who have mastered targets at the start of the unit? This session provides practical ideas and protocols to reflect on student data and plan targeted interventions and extensions.

Participants will:

- Identify protocols to sort and review learning data.
- Identify protocols to plan interventions and extensions for student learning.
- Plan processes to intensify layers of intervention and extension.

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Breakout Session Descriptions

Day 2 - Late Afternoon

***An Introduction to Response to Intervention**

Darin L. Fahrney

Discover the alignment between three powerful ideas: Mastery Learning (Bloom), Professional Learning Communities at Work (DuFour, et al.), and RTI at Work (Buffum & Mattos). Rather than asking how we can raise our scores, collaborative teams should ask what specifically students need to master and how we, as a team, can construct a plan for instruction, intervention, and enrichment to accomplish our goal of mastery for every student.

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Participants will:

- Examine the model used at Singapore American School that supports and enhances effective PLC teams.
- Learn strategies to foster key leadership skills within their PLCs.

Repurposing Homework

Tom Schimmer

Few aspects of the school experience generate as many diverse perspectives as the topic of homework. This session focuses on repurposing homework as practice and ways that teachers can transform homework into a productive part of the instructional experience. Specifically, this session highlights 1) reasons why grading homework can compromise the integrity of proficiency grades, 2) questions teachers can use to audit their homework routines, and 3) alternative homework strategies that increase student engagement and relevance.

Participants will:

- Understand why grading homework contributes to inaccurate grades.
- Identify ways in which homework can be used more productively by students and teachers.
- Explore alternative, differentiated homework strategies that increase engagement, relevance, and purpose.

* = Repeated session

Breakout Session Descriptions

Day 2 - Late Afternoon

How Will We Know When Students Have Learned It?

Jennifer L. Sparrow

To answer the second critical question, *How will we know when students have learned it?*, PLCs must utilize quality assessment practices. This session illustrates how a simple, effective tool can be used to improve the validity and reliability of classroom assessments and ensure formative and summative assessments are appropriately balanced.

***Investing Students in the RTI Process**

Nicole Dimich Vagle

Too often, adults take ownership of having all students learn and fail to productively bring them into the process. How are students able to articulate what they are learning, their strengths and next steps? How are students learning from and acting on specific feedback given during instruction and on assessments? How do students track their progress on essential standards? For students' reflections on learning to be most meaningful, consider how the culture of the classroom positively influences a student's disposition and beliefs about how he or she can learn. Teachers can help students understand *why* they need an intervention and build their confidence by instilling that they learn most when they are invested in the process.

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Day 3 - Morning

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Pyramid of Acceleration: A Roadmap to High Levels of Learning for All Students

Darin L. Fahrney

The fourth, and often overlooked, critical question of professional learning communities is how to respond when some students have already learned. PLCs and RTI should never be undertaken at the expense of our highest-achieving students. Do your school's traditional practices hold your students back from maximizing their learning potential?

Darin L. Fahrney discusses the Singapore American School's Pyramid of Acceleration, based on PLC at Work and RTI at Work principles which provide a systematic approach to ensure every student has avenues and advocates to maximize their learning potential. Participants leave with proven tools to map out their school's student acceleration efforts and the mechanisms that permit them to do "whatever it takes" to meet their students' learning needs.

Participants will:

- Learn key attributes of quality, talent-development programming.
- Identify low-cost solutions to ensure acceleration occurs.
- Create the framework for their school's own pyramid of acceleration system.
- Connect with other international schools working to maximize learning for *all* students.

Breakout Session Descriptions

Day 3 Morning

Assessing 21st Century Learning Skills

Jennifer L. Sparrow

Character, collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, and cultural competency are the skills that comprise the foundation of a 21st century education. While many schools implicitly address these concepts, few have figured out how to assess them. This session focuses on strategies for assessing these imperative skills in professional learning communities.

Putting It All Together: Linking Instruction, Assessment, and Intervention

Nicole Dimich Vagle

For the RTI process to be effective and efficient for collaborative teams, teachers need to purposefully link instruction, assessments, and interventions. The most frequently asked question is *how*? This session looks at ways to tease out learning targets from prioritized standards and design quality assessments that lead to meaningful interventions. Nicole Dimich Vagle shares practical tools, protocols, and examples and allows time for participants to practice and begin planning for this work back at their sites.

Participants will:

- Discover ways to determine learning targets from prioritized standards.
- Learn to identify methods of assessment that offer quality information on student learning.
- Identify key elements of assessment design that provide for meaningful interventions and student investment.

***Planning Data Reviews to Inform Interventions**

Amanda Wood

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