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= Keynote

Agenda

Idaho Falls, ID • August 21–23

Wednesday, August 21

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Main Entrance Foyer
	Continental Breakfast	Cafeteria
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Tim Brown <i>Setting the Stage: Understanding the Big Ideas and Foundational Blocks of the PLC at Work Process</i>	Performing Arts Center
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 5–7.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	Cafeteria
12:30–2:00 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 5–7.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	Panel Discussion —Presenters provide practical answers to your most pressing questions.	Performing Arts Center

Thursday, August 22

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Main Entrance Foyer
	Continental Breakfast	Cafeteria
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Mike Mattos <i>Challenging Educational Mythology: Proven Practices and Brutal Facts in Creating Great Schools</i>	Performing Arts Center
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 5–7.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	Cafeteria
12:30–2:00 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 5–7.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	Team Time —Presenters are available to aid in your collaborative team discussions.	Cafeteria

Friday, August 23

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Cafeteria
8:00–9:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 5–7.
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	Keynote —Julie A. Schmidt <i>Yes We Can! All Really Does Mean All in a PLC</i>	Performing Arts Center

Agenda is subject to change.

Breakouts at a Glance

Presenter & Title	Wednesday, August 21		Thursday, August 22		Friday, August 23
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
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Breakouts at a Glance

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	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Mike Mattos					
The Essential Work of Teacher Teams in a Professional Learning Community	Performing Arts Center				
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Breakouts at a Glance

Presenter & Title	Wednesday, August 21		Thursday, August 22		Friday, August 23
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Agenda is subject to change.

Session Descriptions



Tim Brown

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

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

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

Student Data Notebooks: Developing Ownership, Motivation, and a Growth Mindset

Educators in schools with a focus on learning promote a strong sense of self-efficacy in their students. Several recent studies show this is one of the greatest factors of student motivation and engagement. Participants examine the essential characteristics for building student self-efficacy and a growth mindset through data notebooks. Tim Brown shares products teams have developed to engage and empower students in self-reporting and reflection.

This session addresses these questions:

- What are the key components of a highly motivated and engaged classroom?
- What products do teams create to improve student learning and ensure self-efficacy in the PLC process?
- How can teachers effectively use these products to help students own their learning?

Raising Questions and Finding Answers in Our Grading Practices

Talking about grading practices is often a touchy subject, full of emotions, opinions, and personal beliefs. However, when schools make the shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, they must be willing to examine policies, practices, and guidelines to see if they support the principles of learning. Tim Brown shows how a staff can engage educators in a collaborative process committed to grading practices that are aligned with learning outcomes.

Participants discuss these essential questions:

- What do principles of learning, student motivation, and grading have in common?
- What are the reasons and rationale behind changes in grading practices?
- What grading practices and guidelines do successful teams and schools implement?



= Keynote

Session Descriptions

Tim Brown

Getting on the Same Page: Establishing Collective Commitments About Learning and Collaboration

Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, argues that explicitly stated values are one of the most powerful steps teams can take toward becoming exemplary. Developing a common vision of instruction, assessment, and interventions at the classroom, team, and schoolwide levels are critical steps in the PLC process. Tim Brown shares strategies and provides helpful examples for developing collective commitments and common vision.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding the importance of developing explicit commitments with members of a team
- Participating in strategies for developing collective commitments as a team
- Exploring processes and protocols that make values more than a one-time event

Aaron Hansen

Commitment, Persistence, and Re-Inspiration

Author and educator Mike Schmoker calls it *the press*—the daily avalanche of reports, lesson plans, grading, parent inquiries, emails, and meetings that add to the enormous pressure teachers and leaders face. It is no wonder that educators often feel frustrated and are distracted from what is important. Aaron Hansen motivates participants through structured activities and stories that reiterate what is crucial: all students learning at high levels. Participants are re-inspired as they develop ways to keep staff members committed, persistent, and motivated.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how to connect each staff member's personal purpose to the organization's vision.
- Help staff members establish and sustain commitment and persistence to achieve high levels of learning for all students.
- Become re-inspired to make a difference at their sites and in their districts.

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

Let's aspire to more than merely leading students to pass the state test. Students who own their learning and know that it is meaningful will exceed expectations on high-stakes tests and be empowered to do more. Participants are challenged to get serious about what they really want students to learn to be successful in school and life instead of just on tests. They will learn how to supercharge their PLC practices—the most powerful model for changing schools—to blow through the low levels of thinking on most tests while enabling students to gain attributes, skills, and hope for an even more important test—the test of life.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Using PLC practices to empower kids to own their learning
- Helping kids develop metacognition and self-efficacy for passing the state test and much more
- Being reminded of the “moral purpose” of giving hope to students

Session Descriptions

Aaron Hansen

How to Develop PLCs for Singletons and Small Schools

PLC concepts resonate with most educators, but making collaborative learning work in small schools or for singleton teachers can be challenging. Participants explore five models for creating meaningful professional learning teams: 1) changing schedules to allow teachers to teach the same subjects, 2) vertical teaming, 3) cross-curricular teaming, 4) supporting roles, and 5) using electronic tools to pair teachers with peers in the same subject area.

Participants discuss common structural barriers that prevent singletons from joining collaborative teams and develop an action plan to incorporate singletons into the PLC process.

Marc Johnson

Okay, So We're a Team. Now What?

Focused collaboration is the key to high-performing teams. Rebecca DuFour states, "It's not, 'Did we spend time together?' but rather, 'Did the time we spent together impact our work?'" The aim is to ensure that teams stay focused on learning in a collaborative culture driven by results rather than intentions. This session explores ways to develop clarity on collaborative work and the flow of work required for teams to respond to the four critical questions of a PLC through their actions.

Participants in this session:

- Develop clarity in their work through team actions in response to the four critical questions of a PLC.
- Explore tools that help teams stay focused.
- Engage in the work of a collaborative team that connects adult actions to student outcomes.

So Who's Leading This Thing? I Guess We All Are!

Every high-performing team has a leader who influences and inspires it, but in systems where high-performing teams exist, leadership roles are also dispersed at all levels throughout the organization. No one person leads alone. Rather, team leaders exist at multiple levels of the organization. Understanding the role of leaders and having clarity around what is expected in that role are essential. As Mike Schmoker writes, "Clarity precedes competence." Marc Johnson helps clarify the leadership role in teams, how to develop a systemwide view of leadership, and how to develop leadership capacity.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss leadership characteristics and challenges.
- Explore the role of leadership at the district, site, and team level.
- Discover tools and strategies to strengthen teams and develop leadership capacity.

Session Descriptions

Marc Johnson

Collaboration Rocks!

Cultivating a culture of collaboration is the second big idea of a PLC at Work. All too often, educators treat shaping culture as little more than a feel-good moment at the start of a new school year. Guiding the development of an organization's culture requires deliberate, purposeful, ongoing action by leaders and team members at all levels. Marc Johnson provides an overview of elements that impact culture and essential contributions at all levels of the organization in shaping and guiding a collaborative culture.

Participants in this session:

- Develop an understanding of what most influences culture.
- Focus on the development of common intent through shared mission, vision, values, and goals.
- Experience a hands-on collaborative activity to help process the learning.

Timothy D. Kanold

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

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

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

Participants can expect to:

- Examine the H and the E elements of their HEARTs: their relational Happiness and how to become fully Engaged in their work.
- Discover ways to improve their relational intelligence and impact (heartprint) on others.
- Learn ways to reflect upon, pursue, and sustain a well-balanced, high-energy personal and professional life that can positively affect students and colleagues.

Session Descriptions

Timothy D. Kanold

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

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

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

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

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

Participants learn how to:

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

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.

Session Descriptions

Timothy D. Kanold

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

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

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

Participants in this session:

- Use high-quality mathematics assessment-design criteria for evaluating the quality of current quizzes and tests.
- Develop a protocol for the accurate scoring of all quizzes and tests.
- Develop formative strategies for student response, intervention, and ownership of learning during and at the end of a unit of study.
- Explore research and discussion tools to design highly effective mathematics homework routines and practices.

Janel Keating

Aligning the Work of a PLC: 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 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, Janel Keating describes how districts organize and align at each level to implement PLC concepts and practices systemwide. This session provides many practical examples and useful templates to assist any school or district in doing the work of a PLC.

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 these challenges.

This Is Where It All Fits! The Well-Designed Unit Plan: From Standards to Assessments, Unit by Unit

Unit planning is one of the most important activities in which collaborative teams engage. While there is no “right” way for teams to plan instructional units, there are a number of things teams must pay attention to in the process. Participants discuss examples and see video clips of teacher teams effectively planning units of instruction—from standards and learning targets to end-of-unit common formative assessments.

Janel Keating walks participants through each step of the PLC process. Teams learn to plan a unit of instruction from beginning to end and understand how a unit-of-instruction plan is tied to analyzing the data at the end of the unit. This session illustrates the continuous improvement cycle in action.

Session Descriptions

Janel Keating

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

The two important 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.



Mike Mattos

Challenging Educational Mythology: Proven Practices and Brutal Facts in Creating Great Schools

Becoming a professional learning community requires more than committing to the collaborative practices proven to best ensure learning. A PLC must also be willing to discontinue policies and procedures that are counterproductive to student success. Unfortunately, many schools stubbornly hold on to myths—widely held beliefs that are false—that justify teacher isolation and student failure. Mike Mattos discusses essential practices that are required to ensure high levels of learning for every student and challenges educational myths that are holding us back.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Learning the five essential practices of the PLC at Work process
- Identifying school myths and inaccurate beliefs that are counterproductive to collaboration and student learning
- Understanding how these myths lead to practices, policies, and procedures that inhibit student learning
- Beginning a “stop-doing” list for schools and districts
- Embracing a commitment and assurance that the academic success of every student is possible

The Essential Work of Teacher Teams in a Professional Learning Community

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

Participants in this session:

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



= Keynote

Session Descriptions

Mike Mattos

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.

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.

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

Session Descriptions

Mike Mattos

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

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

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

Outcomes include:

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

Anthony Muhammad

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.

Session Descriptions

Anthony Muhammad

Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change

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

As a result of this session, participants understand:

- The true meaning and value of school culture
- The power of mindsets and their influence on educator effectiveness
- How to shift from damaging mindsets (superiority and inferiority) to high levels of efficacy (liberation mindset)

Building Culture, Creating Purpose, and Overcoming Frustration on Your PLC Journey

This session addresses two vital stages in the process of creating a PLC culture: 1) establishing philosophical agreement and building shared purpose, and 2) addressing staff frustration and reluctance to change. Anthony Muhammad leads an exploration of the theories linking school culture and student learning, and participants leave with practical strategies to start the process of transforming the culture at their schools and districts.

Learning targets include:

- Addressing counterproductive belief systems and forming a cohesive team of student advocates
- Analyzing and managing staff frustration
- Understanding the balance between support and accountability

Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!

How is a culture of collaboration created? How can an environment be implemented in which people embrace collective responsibility? This session addresses the collaborative characteristics of a high-performing PLC. Participants learn how teachers, support staff, school administrators, and central office work together to improve school performance. Anthony Muhammad also discusses staff resistance to change and the leader's role in building consensus.

Participants in this session:

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

Session Descriptions

Maria Nielsen

The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!

This interactive session establishes, reboots, or re-energizes the work of collaborative teams. Schools across the country are using this simple learning–assessing process to connect the dots of a PLC. Maria Nielsen helps teams see the big picture of a PLC and put it all together in a recurring cycle of collective inquiry. The 15-day challenge is a practical way to bring the PLC process to life.

Participants in this session:

- Clarify the work of collaborative teams.
- Establish steps for a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- Explore the learning–assessing cycle in a unit of study.

Show Me What Ya Got: Student Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Learning

Maria Nielsen helps teachers move past “sit and get” in the classroom to a place where all students actively participate in learning. She shares engagement strategies to assess student understanding throughout a lesson or unit of study.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the *nifty nine* best teaching strategies.
- Learn how to assess student learning by implementing engagement strategies.
- Identify the differences among assessment questions, open questions, and engagement questions.

Help Our Team! Working Together to Solve Common Team Challenges

What should happen when a team starts to struggle? As teachers move toward becoming interdependent teams, challenges inevitably arise. Ensuring high levels of learning for every student requires a change in thinking and practice. Participants briefly review the work of highly effective teams, consider scenarios showing common team challenges, and work collaboratively to identify strategies for moving a team forward. This session is based on a forthcoming book by the same title (Solution Tree Press, 2019) coauthored by eight educators with a wide range of backgrounds and experience in all levels of education.

Participants in this session:

- Identify common challenges that limit a team’s efficacy.
- Collaboratively resolve specific challenges and share strategies to help teams progress.
- Practice specific coaching strategies designed to assist teams in their critical work.

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.

Session Descriptions



Julie A. Schmidt

Yes We Can! All Really Does Mean *All* in a PLC

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, they must then define what that looks like and how to get there. Julie A. Schmidt challenges participants to examine their professional beliefs before sharing ideas and examples that have resulted in improved outcomes for all students.

Participants examine the foundational principles of a professional learning community, renew commitment to the work, and understand high leverage strategies to get them there.

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.

Developing a Culture of Shared Learning Expectations: Bringing Critical Question One to Life on a Team

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



= Keynote

Session Descriptions

Julie A. Schmidt

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

Darwin Prater Spiller

Do You Have the Guts to Take on a PLC Fixer Upper?

Many schools claim to be a professional learning community. They may have teams and give lip service to the idea, but often they are just practicing "PLC lite." True PLCs build a strong foundation, have a shared vision of what exemplary looks like, and are committed to the journey to get there.

Participants in this session:

- Discover how to prioritize resources to achieve their dream school.
- Identify the expertise of team members and use best practices strategically.
- Gather evidence of success for major transformational PLC components.
- Acquire strategies to avoid building blunders.

More Than Baking Cookies: Making Parents Crucial Members of the Learning Team

All too often, parents are relegated to stapling, labeling, or baking as school volunteers. In reality, learning teams cannot fully communicate their high expectations to students or get to the high levels of learning they desire without parents on their teams as working partners outside school. Darwin Prater Spiller shares ideas, tools, and stories of how his staff built a learning community with parents as vital partners.

Participants in this session:

- Engage in discussion on national data trends regarding parental involvement.
- Collaboratively create a toolkit of evidence-based strategies.
- Learn how to assess and celebrate parents' unique abilities and experiences.

Session Descriptions

Darwin Prater Spiller

A Day in the Life: PLC at Work in Action

Most people would sooner experience a sermon than merely hear it. What does it really look like when our PLC processes are running smoothly? How do our roles change? Through videos, participants in this session experience highly effective school teams unpacking standards, evaluating student work, developing a schoolwide protocol, and see a clip showing a school building the capacity of PLC leaders. Bring your popcorn and be ready to discuss your current realities compared to those you observe here. Design your own best day in your site or district's PLC journey.

Participants in this session:

- Observe the action of a highly effective team as it works through the process of unpacking standards.
- Examine a team collaboratively evaluating student work.
- Recognize their current realities and plan next steps.