Agenda
Omaha, NE • July 20–22

Monday, July 20

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration
	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*
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.*

Tuesday, July 21

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration
	Continental Breakfast
8:00–9:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Sarah Schuhl *Ready, Set, Go! Ensuring Student Learning in a PLC at Work*
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.*

Wednesday, July 22

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast
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*

Agenda is subject to change.

Breakouts at a Glance

Presenters & Titles	Monday, July 20		Tuesday, July 21		Wednesday, July 22
	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.
Mandy Barrett					
Becoming Crystal Clear About Question One	x				
Building Buy-In for True PLCs at Work		x			x
Yes We Can! An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve Special Education Outcomes			x		
Learning Targets: What Are We Aiming For?				x	
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		
Scott Carr					
Learning Leaders: Creating a Personalized Professional Development Program	x				
Earning Doesn't Always Equal Learning in Secondary Schools		x		x	
Innovation That Leads to Learning: Engaging Students in Authentic Experiences			x		x
William M. Ferriter					
Integrating Opportunities for Student Self-Assessment in Your Classroom	x				

We're Meeting. Now What? Explicitly Structuring the Work of Learning Teams		x			x
Digital Tools for Differentiation			x		
Small Schools and Singletons: Structuring Meaningful Professional Learning Teams for Every Teacher				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
Maria Nielsen					
The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!	x				x
Show Me What Ya Got: Student Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Learning		x		x	
Help Your Team: Overcoming Common Collaborative Challenges in a PLC			x		
Sarah Schuhl					
Mathematics Lessons That Matter: Formative Assessment Processes for Learning Every Day	x				
When Content Isn't Enough: Strategies to Help Students *Really* Learn Mathematics (K–5)		x			
Data, Data, Data: What Do Teams Need? What Do Teams Do With It?			x		

Mathematics Assessment in Action				x	
Focusing Teams and Students With Learning Targets					x
W. Richard Smith					
Moving From "Just Doing" to High Performing: Fresh Ideas and Approaches for PLCs	x				
Wow! So This Is What We Should Be Doing: Best PLC Practices in Action		x		x	
Differentiation Isn't a Dirty Word, but a Great Way to Ensure Learning			x		x

Session Descriptions

Mandy Barrett

Becoming Crystal Clear About Question One

Question one of a PLC sets the foundation for the three other questions. It is vital that teams become "crystal clear" on exactly what students must know and be able to do throughout grade-level curricula. This session delves into the importance of identifying REAL (relevant, enduring, assessed, leveraged) standards and takes participants through the process of unwrapping these standards.

Participants in this session:
- Gain an understanding of the *why* behind identifying essential standards.
- Step through the process of unwrapping essential standards.
- Leave with tools to implement this process with their teams.

Building Buy-In for True PLCs at Work

This session details strategies to create and support an atmosphere of commitment, trust, and engagement as the PLC journey continues within the school community. Participants will leave with easy-to-use team-building ideas to move collaboration forward at a faster pace, allowing for learning to be the central focus of the PLC.

Participants in this session:
- Discover how to move schools away from adult-centered behavior to student-centered learning.
- Determine the importance of a collaborative culture within a school community.
- Engage in activities that support teachers in committing to the importance of working as a PLC.

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. Mandy Barrett 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

Learning Targets: What Are We Aiming For?
Unwrapping essential standards reveals many levels of skills and concepts for teams to target throughout instruction and assessment. This session begins by unwrapping a standard together to gain knowledge of the specific learning targets being addressed. From there, participants work through the process of developing a strong instructional response to assure that the necessary time and additional support given to students meets their learning needs. By thoughtfully designing assessments aimed at specific learning targets, along with gathering and analyzing student data, teams are able to know exactly what their students have learned and areas that still need support.

Participants in this session:
- Discover the importance of identifying learning targets.
- Walk through the process of designing common formative assessments.
- Learn the significance of receiving timely information to guide instruction.

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

Scott Carr
Learning Leaders: Creating a Personalized Professional Development Program
In order to lead learning, educators must first commit to being learning leaders. Teachers and administrators must constantly grow their craft to have the greatest impact on student learning. Scott Carr provides creative ways to design job-embedded professional learning opportunities for all staff. Participants look at systems such as micro-credentialing, walkthroughs, externships, and co-teaching to support ongoing learning and developing teacher leaders in their schools. The power of collaboration and a focus on learning allow educators to escape from one-size-fits-all professional development and shift to personalized professional learning.

Outcomes from this session include:
- Reviewing research on the impact professional learning has on student achievement
- Discovering ways to develop a culture of personalized professional learning in schools
- Exploring programs that can be used to create job-embedded opportunities for professional learning

Earning Doesn't Always Equal Learning in Secondary Schools
Like Mario running through a Nintendo game, students spend a great deal of their time in school chasing points and prizes. How many times have teachers heard, "How much is this worth?" or "What extra credit do you offer?" Are points the currency for learning in your classroom? Do your grades truly reflect what students have learned, or do your grades show what they have completed? Participants look at alternative ways to motivate students to be learners and creators rather than point-gatherers, and explore how PLC teams can support true growth and learning through the use of evidence-based grading and effective feedback strategies.

Outcomes from this session include:
- Reflecting on current practices and comparing them to the research behind best practices
- Exploring how great feedback can promote learning and student success
- Discovering how an evidence-based approach can engage students in their learning

Innovation That Leads to Learning: Engaging Students in Authentic Experiences
The term *innovation* is often associated with technology and digital tools. True innovation comes when we enhance an experience by thinking and believing differently. To improve students' learning experiences, we have to think and believe differently about the learning process. Participants in this session look at two specific strategies—project-based learning and design thinking—to create engaging experiences that challenge and motivate students to create and discover. Participants also make connections between these methods and the context of collaborative practices in a PLC to create a powerful learning experience for all students.

Outcomes from this session include:
- Exploring the basic structures of project-based learning experiences and design thinking frameworks
- Brainstorming project ideas that tie into essential content outcomes
- Using the leverage of PLC collaboration to support project-based learning and innovative teaching ideas

William M. Ferriter
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.

We're Meeting. Now What? Explicitly Structuring the Work of Learning Teams
For many teachers, professional learning team meetings can be nothing short of overwhelming. Unaccustomed to making collective decisions, teams struggle to organize their work together and begin to question the benefit of a school's decision to restructure as a professional learning community. In this session, participants explore the kinds of tangible structures learning teams must have in place to make their meetings successful.

Participants in this session:
- Learn how personalities influence the successes and struggles of learning teams.
- Discuss the role that clear norms and expectations for behavior play in the successful work of a learning team.
- Explore practical tools and products designed to structure the work of learning teams over time.

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.

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.

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

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

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

Sarah Schuhl

[KEYNOTE] Ready, Set, Go! Ensuring Student Learning in a PLC at Work
A professional learning community works to ensure high levels of learning for every student. How can school and districtwide teams effectively accomplish this lofty objective? The key is to address the four critical questions of a PLC at Work that guide the process. Collaborative teams must build a shared understanding of standards to intentionally link instruction, assessment, and student re-engagement as needed.

This work can seem daunting without a roadmap or vision for how to effectively and efficiently create the materials needed and respond to the data gathered. In this keynote, Sarah Schuhl clarifies the essential work of collaborative teams through concrete examples, practical tools, and proven protocols.

Mathematics Lessons That Matter: Formative Assessment Processes for Learning Every Day
How will you know if students are learning the content and process standards for mathematics in daily lessons and units? Which effective tasks further develop student learning and how should they be used in class? Participants in this session explore the six elements of high-quality mathematics lesson design and how collaborative teams use lesson design to formatively assess student learning.

Outcomes from this session include:
- Understanding the daily formative assessment process in mathematics classes
- Learning the six critical elements of quality lesson design

When Content Isn't Enough: Strategies to Help K–5 Students Learn Mathematics
Explore ways to engage students in content using strategies focused on the standards for mathematical practice. How can student knowledge be deepened through inferences, multiple representations, or strategies to solve tasks? Which literacy strategies might also be effective in teaching mathematics? Determine key elements of lesson design to meet the needs of mathematics students.

Participants in this session:
- Explore mathematics strategies to engage K–5 learners.
- Learn the critical components of quality lesson design when teaching mathematics.
- Investigate the use of high-level tasks during mathematics instruction.

Data, Data, Data: What Do Teams Need? What Do Teams Do With It?
The third big idea of a professional learning community is to focus on results. How do collaborative teams use data to 1) make informed decisions about assessment and instruction, 2) determine whether or not students have learned, and 3) involve students in the learning process? Participants in this session explore ways to collect and organize data and consider how to respond to the results obtained. They also learn a protocol for analyzing assessment data in a PLC collaborative team.

Mathematics Assessment in Action
How can common assessments motivate and engage every learner? How can they be used to assess the critical thinking required of students learning mathematics? High-quality assessments, when intentionally designed, inform teachers and students about what has been learned and what has not yet been learned. It is much bigger than a grade on a test. Sarah Schuhl leads a discussion on the team actions needed to create a meaningful assessment process.

Participants in this session:
- Learn criteria essential to quality mathematics assessment design.
- Explore strategies and tools for reflection and goal-setting to enable students to learn from assessments.
- Examine how to plan and respond to assessments with students.

Focusing Teams and Students With Learning Targets
How can students articulate what they are learning? How can assessments be created to determine whether students are learning? Learning targets bring clarity to students and teachers about outcomes expected in each course or subject area. Participants in this session gain insight into writing clear learning targets from standards. Sarah Schuhl discusses strategies for using learning targets to help students self-assess their progress and for collaborative teams to create and analyze common assessments.

Outcomes from this session include:
- Examining how to write effective learning targets
- Developing strategies for using targets to involve students in their learning
- Discovering ways to create and analyze tests using learning targets

W. Richard Smith

Moving From "Just Doing" to High Performing: Fresh Ideas and Approaches for PLCs
W. Richard Smith provides a step-by-step approach to make any PLC function at a high level. Participants learn the critical nuts and bolts to ensure teams make the most of their PLC time. They gain fresh ideas and approaches proven to be successful for teams of all sizes and at all grade levels.

Outcomes from this session include:
- Discovering tools and activities that promote successful collaboration
- Exploring the relationship between the four critical questions of a PLC and the actions that make PLCs effective, efficient, and meaningful
- Gaining access to pragmatic activities and actions that make schoolwide and districtwide PLCs purposeful and impactful

Wow! So This Is What We Should Be Doing: Best PLC Practices in Action
When attending a Solution Tree PLC at Work institute, participants gain a wide array of valuable information, but they may wonder how all this will play out back at their own schools. W. Richard Smith presents a real-time look at the work of a PLC team. The PLC process comes to life with clarity and purpose as participants review data and see the efforts and best practices of successful teacher teams.

Participants leave this session with:
- Best practices to consider for their own PLC teams
- Clarity about the impact of data and instructional best practices
- Structures and practices that help guide teams as they respond to the four critical questions of a PLC

Differentiation Isn't a Dirty Word, but a Great Way to Ensure Learning
Differentiated instruction is often misunderstood or seen as impractical. W. Richard Smith presents differentiated instruction as doable practices that maximize learning for *all* students. He discusses best practices and strategies to address students' diverse learning needs through five key areas: content, process, product, environment, and affect.