

# High-Impact Teams in a PLC at Work Institute Agenda

## Irving, TX • July 27–29, 2022

### Wednesday, July 27

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	<b>ROOMS TBD</b>
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Janel Keating <i>Coming Soon!</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	<b>Team Challenges Forums</b>	

### Thursday, July 28

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	<b>ROOMS TBD</b>
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Jasmine K. Kullar <i>Your Team May Be Off the Rails If ...</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	<b>Team Time</b> — <i>Presenters aid in your collaborative team discussions.</i>	

**Friday, July 29**

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	<b>ROOMS TBD</b>
8:00–9:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —William M. Ferriter <i>Why This? Why Now? Why Bother? Exploring the Power and Purpose Behind PLCs</i>	

**Agenda is subject to change.**

## Breakouts at a Glance

Presenters & Titles	Wednesday, July 27		Thursday, July 28		Friday, July 29
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
<b>William M. Ferriter</b>					
Collaborative Tools for Learning Teams in a PLC at Work	X				
You Can Learn: Building Student Efficacy With the PLC at Work Process		X			
Small Schools and Singletons: Structuring Meaningful Professional Learning Teams for Every Teacher			X		
Making Tier 2 Interventions Meaningful				X	
How Will We Extend Learning When Students Are Already Proficient?					X
<b>Janel Keating</b>					
Daunting Yet Doable: The Role of a Principal Leading Collaborative Teams	X				
Are the Kids Learning and How Do We Know?		X			
Where It All Fits Together: A Well-Designed Unit Plan			X		
<i>Coming Soon!</i>				X	
<b>Jasmine K. Kullar</b>					
Working in Multi-Generational Teams	X				
Student Recognition or Criticism: What Does Your Team Engage In?		X			
Is Your Team Focused on Student Learning Or Maintaining Adult Happiness?			X		

Giving and Receiving Feedback as a Team Member				X	
The One Word Every Team Must Understand: Trust					X
<b>Maria Nielsen</b>					
The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!	X				
Help Your Team: Overcoming Common Collaborative Challenges in a PLC at Work		X			
Common Assessments: The Key to Uncommon Results for Student and Teacher Learning			X		
Show Me What Ya Got: Student Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Learning				X	
<i>Coming Soon!</i>					X
<b>Tesha Ferriby Thomas</b>					
Five Key Elements to Effective Team Meetings	X				
Clarity Before Competence		X			
Using Team Time to Engage in the “Right Work”			X		
Reflection Through Connection: Coaching Teams to Amplify Their Impact				X	
<i>Coming Soon!</i>					X

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# Session Descriptions

## William M. Ferriter

### **[KEYNOTE] Why This? Why Now? Why Bother? Exploring the Power and Purpose Behind PLCs**

If there is one thing that we know about improving schools, it's that nothing has a greater impact on student learning than organizing teachers into collaborative teams committed to studying their practice together. But ask teachers who have ever worked in a PLC at Work and they will tell you that studying practice together isn't always as easy as it sounds. Studying practice together—identifying essential outcomes, developing unit plans, creating assessments, analyzing results—requires more energy and effort than doing the same work on your own. It also requires close coordination, negotiation, and compromise.

So, if collaboration requires more energy and effort, why is it a practice that educators should even consider embracing? And more importantly, how can we make collaboration around practice both effective and efficient? Those are the key questions answered in this session by career classroom teacher and collaboration expert Bill Ferriter.

### **Collaborative Tools for Learning Teams in a PLC at Work**

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 and explicit tools that learning teams must have in place to make their collaborative meetings productive.

Participants in this session:

- Learn how personalities influence the successes or 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.

### **You Can Learn: Building Student Efficacy With the PLC at Work Process**

In her research on the reasons students dropout of high school, Deborah Feldman (2017) made a surprising discovery: Most kids who walked away before graduation could track their decision to specific moments of academic challenge that caused them to stop believing in “their ability to be a student.”

What are the implications of Feldman’s discovery for practitioners? It is imperative that we build both the confidence and capacity of every learner. This session will introduce participants to the steps that career classroom teacher and Solution Tree author William M. Ferriter has taken to use student-centered versions of the four critical questions of learning to do that work in his classroom.

Participants in this session will:

- Discuss the important role that student self-efficacy plays in learning.
- Be introduced to student-centered versions of the four critical questions of the PLC at Work process.
- Explore simple student self-efficacy building strategies that can be integrated into any classroom.

### **Small Schools and Singletons: Structuring Meaningful Professional Learning Teams for Every Teacher**

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

Participants in this session:

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

### **Making Tier 2 Interventions Meaningful**

The promise that teachers in a PLC make to their communities is to ensure that all students learn grade level essential standards at the highest levels. To meet that promise, collaborative teams work systematically to track the progress being made in their classrooms “by name and by need” -- and then to provide additional time and support designed to move every student forward. In this workshop, participants will learn more about the steps that they can take to make those intervention efforts meaningful.

Participants will:

- Review the three different tiers in the RTI at Work Intervention Pyramid.

- Understand the specific actions that classroom teachers and collaborative teacher teams take in the RTI at Work Intervention Pyramid.
- Explore specific steps that classroom teachers and collaborative teams can take to strengthen their work with intervention around grade-level essential standards.

### **How Will We Extend Learning When Students Are Already Proficient?**

For many learning teams, being prepared to provide additional time and support to every student who demonstrates the need means doing all we can to help struggling students master essential outcomes. However, the highest performing teams recognize that our moral obligation isn't only to help students master essential outcomes. Instead, our moral obligation is to help all students learn at the highest levels—including those “question four” students who are already working beyond grade level essentials.

In this session, participants:

- Identify their current readiness for extending learning for proficient students.
- Learn how to incorporate planning for extensions into weekly team meetings.
- Explore several practical tools that can be used to explicitly structure team extension efforts.

## **Janel Keating**

*Session Descriptions Coming Soon!*

## **Jasmine K. Kullar**

### **[KEYNOTE] Your Team May Be Off the Rails If ...**

Teamwork is at the core of professional learning communities. We can talk about the 4 questions, or the 3 big ideas of a PLC - but that work may not maximize our results if our ability to work in a team is mediocre. Working in a team can be challenging for so many reasons, but the benefits of teamwork make it worth investing in. Just like every person has room for improvement, every team has room for improvement too. Make your team the best team it can be to produce the best results for your students.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss why teamwork can be challenging
- Describe mediocre vs successful teams
- Identify 6 tips for strengthening teamwork

### **Working in Multi-Generational Teams**

We have more generations working together in schools than ever before. We could have teams in which there is a teacher from each of the following generations: Millennials, Generation X, and Baby

Boomers. This can lead to some differences that could present challenges on your team. In this fun, interactive session, participants learn more about the time period when each generation grew up to help have a better understanding of our differences. This session defines the different generations we could have on our teams, describes the time period when that generation grew up, establishes what challenges and strengths they can bring to the team, and finally, provides strategies to help work with all generations.

Participants in this session:

- Examine characteristics of the different generations.
- Discuss challenges and strengths of a multi-generational team.
- Identify strategies to work in a multi-generational team.

### **Student Recognition or Criticism: What Does Your Team Engage In?**

When teams collaborate, sometimes the conversation can go down the road of either making excuses for students, or being highly critical of them. Taking the time to recognize students' achievements may not be the norm, but we all know how recognition makes us feel, so imagine the impact it can have on students. Wouldn't it make your team more positive as well? If, as a team, you create a system or program to recognize your students, then it could increase the likelihood of your team thinking positively about them.

Participants in this session:

- Review characteristics of a comprehensive recognition program.
- Identify different methods of student recognition.
- Conduct a student recognition audit of your current school.

### **Is Your Team Focused on Student Learning Or Maintaining Adult Happiness?**

One of the big ideas of a PLC is to focus on learning, which means every practice, procedure, and policy is viewed from the lens of what is best for student learning. More often than not, teams continue their practices, procedures, and policies because they are comfortable. You may have heard "but this is how we've always done it!" This session explores a variety of examples of those practices that could exist in your team that have nothing to do with student learning, but everything to do with keeping the team comfortable.

Participants in this session:

- Explore examples of practices that do not align with student learning.
- Examine your own team's practices to see if they align with student learning.
- Discuss strategies for change.

### **Giving and Receiving Feedback as a Team Member**

Giving feedback to a colleague can be a very awkward and difficult thing to do. Isn't that the principal's job? How can we possibly tell a teammate that maybe their idea isn't the greatest or that we need them to contribute more in our team meetings? Nevertheless, highly effective teams hold each other accountable, which means team members feel comfortable giving feedback. Equally important is being able to receive feedback. As much as that might hurt our ego or pride, we must also learn to accept feedback from our teammates so we can continuously grow and get better.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss what makes feedback difficult to give and receive.
- Explore what makes feedback effective or ineffective.
- Identify strategies to give and receive feedback.

### **The One Word Every Team Must Understand: Trust**

If your team or a team at your school isn't producing the results it should, maybe it can be traced back to the trust that team has for each other. For true collaboration to take place, there has to be trust between all members of a team. This means, colleagues are comfortable being vulnerable with each other, being honest with each other and holding each other accountable. Trust doesn't always mean liking each other and getting along – trust means so much more and is a critical element needed for teams to be successful.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss the importance of trust
- Explore reasons for mistrust or lack of trust
- Identify strategies to build and strengthen trust on your team

## **Maria Nielsen**

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

This interactive session establishes, reboots, or re-energizes the work of collaborative teams. Schools nationwide 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.

### **Help Your Team: Overcoming Common Collaborative Challenges in a PLC at Work**

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 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 education levels.

Participants in this session:

- Identify common challenges that limit team 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 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.

### **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.

*Additional Session Coming Soon!*

## **Tesha Ferriby Thomas**

### **Five Key Elements to Effective Team Meetings**

There are five key elements that can dramatically increase the efficiency and effectiveness of collaborative team meetings. Join us as we explore these key elements in a highly interactive session with materials you can immediately implement at your school.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Discover the five key elements of effective team meetings.
- Engage in hands-on activities to deepen their understanding of the five key elements.
- Identify next steps to improve the effectiveness of collaborative teams.

### **Clarity Before Competence**

In order for collaborative teams to function at high levels, they must have a shared understanding about what constitutes success. A PLC Strategy Implementation Guide (SIG) defines in detail what teacher teams must do to fully implement the PLC process. We hope you will join us as we study a model SIG, walk through the process of creating a SIG specific to each school or district, and learn how to use it to improve the practice of collaborative teams.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Learn about the benefits of utilizing a PLC SIG.
- Practice developing a SIG unique to each district or school that will help teams develop clarity around their work.
- Engage in activities that demonstrate how the SIG can be used to improve the practice of collaborative teams.
  
- Walk away with concrete tools that will assist anyone who takes on a coaching role.

### **Using Team Time to Engage in the “Right Work”**

One of the biggest frustrations of teacher team members is that they feel meeting time is not spent wisely. With so many demands on teachers’ time, it is easy to veer away from the true work of PLCs. In other cases, teams are simply uncertain on what the “right work” is. This session will focus on how teams can use the Pathways tool to identify the “right work” and maintain their focus on the 4 critical questions of learning.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Learn about the Pathways and its connection to the essential practices of collaborative teams.
- Reflect on their team’s current practices and how they compare to the Pathways.

- Engage in hands on activities to discover the power of the Pathways tool and how it can help transform team meetings from PLC Lite to PLC Right.

### **Reflection Through Connection: Coaching Teams to Amplify Their Impact**

Implementing the PLC model is a complex process that takes thoughtful planning. When we add the intentional coaching of teacher teams to this plan, we significantly increase teams' odds of success. This session will focus on methods for coaching collaborative teams toward effective collaboration and increased reflection utilizing the cornerstones of clarity, feedback, and support.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Learn why coaching teams is an essential component to the PLC implementation process.
- Understand how using the cornerstones of clarity, feedback and support can strengthen collaborative teams and improve student outcomes.
- Engage in hands-on activities to practice utilizing the Amplify cornerstones for coaching collaborative teams.

*Additional Session Coming Soon!*