

PLC at Work Institute Agenda

Lincolnshire, IL • July 31–August 2, 2023

Monday, July 31

6:30–7:50 a.m.	Registration	Field House
	Continental Breakfast	
7:50–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Mike Mattos <i>The Urgency of the Moment</i>	Performing Arts Center
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–6.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	Field House
12:30–2:00 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–6.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	Panel Discussion — <i>Presenters answer your most pressing questions.</i>	Performing Arts Center
4:00–5:30 p.m.	Reception at the Lincolnshire Marriott Resort	Grand Marquee Pavilion

Tuesday, August 1

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Field House
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Anthony Muhammad <i>The Way Forward: PLC at Work and the Bright Future of Education</i>	Performing Arts Center
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–6.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	Field House
12:30–2:00 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–6.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	Team Time — <i>Presenters aid in your collaborative team discussions.</i>	Field House
7:30–11:30 p.m.	Karaoke Night at the Lincolnshire Marriott Resort	Grand Marquee Pavilion

Wednesday, August 2

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Field House
8:00–9:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–6.
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	Keynote —Eric Twadell <i>Relentless: Initiating and Sustaining the PLC at Work Process</i>	Performing Arts Center

Agenda is subject to change.

Breakout Sessions at a Glance

Presenters & Titles	Monday, July 31		Tuesday, August 1		Wednesday, August 2
	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.
Jack Baldermann					
How Westmont High Became a Most-Improved School and Won the DuFour Award	6116–6118				
Motivating Disengaged Students: Supporting Champions of Hope and Learning for All		6116–6118			6116–6118
PLCs, Strategic Leadership, and Outstanding Results			6116–6118		
Successful Implementation Plans and Ideas for Fledgling PLCs				6116–6118	
Tim Brown					
Building a Commitment to Learning in Students	5044				5044
How to Build Student Ownership, Motivation, and Efficacy Through the Four Questions of a Collaborative Team		5044			
Activating the Keys of Formative Assessment to Create a Culture of Learning			5044		
Grading: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly				5044	
Daniel Cohan					
Why Is It So Confusing? Defining Team Structures and Responsibilities in a PLC	5124			5124	
PLC Continuous Improvement: Tools and Techniques to Keep Your PLC Moving Forward		5124	5124		
Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Persevering Through Resistance, Challenges, and Setbacks					5124

Presenters & Titles	Monday, July 31		Tuesday, August 1		Wednesday, August 2
	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.
Luis F. Cruz					
Task Forces: The Secret Weapon PLCs Use to Close Opportunity Gaps in Learning	2206 (West Building)				
Embracing the Five Vessels: Learning the Non-Negotiables to Becoming a High-Functioning PLC		2206 (West Building)			
English Learners and PLCs			2206 (West Building)		
Taping Before Painting: Blending the PLC and RTI Processes to Collectively Respond When Students Don't Learn				2206 (West Building)	
I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful					2206 (West Building)
Heather Friziellie					
Yes We Can: Collaboration by All, for All!	Performing Arts Center				
The Conundrum: Balancing Life and Leadership		Performing Arts Center			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools			Performing Arts Center		
Inclusive Instruction: Learning for All!				Performing Arts Center	
Braving Difficult Conversations					Performing Arts Center
Timothy D. Kanold					
Your Physical and Mental Wellness: Thriving at Work and at Home!	2104 (West Building)				
Leading the PLC Life: Eliminating Barriers by Teaching the Loose-Tight Culture!		2104 (West Building)			
Your PreK–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great Instruction and Tasks!			2104 (West Building)		

Presenters & Titles	Monday, July 31		Tuesday, August 1		Wednesday, August 2
	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.
Mindfulness, Relationships, and Trust: Strategies for Living the PLC Life!				2104 (West Building)	
Heart & Soul: Living a Fully Engaged, High-Energy, Well-Balanced Professional Life!					2104 (West Building)
Cheyana Leiva					
From Data Meetings to Data Conversations	5120			5120	
The Invisible Fifth Question of a PLC		5120			5120
Guiding Coalitions: The Key to Effectively Implement a PLC			5120		
Michelle Marrillia					
The Case for Coaches in a Professional Learning Community	6108		6108		
Do Common Formative Assessments Change Your Practice? Turning Data Into Successful Secondary Classroom Instruction		6108			
Building a High-Impact Coaching Program				6108	6108
Mike Mattos					
Are We a Group or a Team?	4100				
Taking Action: How to Create a Highly Effective, Multitiered System of Supports		4100			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools			4100		
Behavior Solutions: Leveraging the PLC at Work Process to Teach Essential Behaviors				4100	
Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC at Work Process					4100

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Anthony Muhammad					
Transforming School Culture: New Insights	4200				
Bringing the Four PLC Questions to Life: Systems That Ensure All Students Learn		4200			
Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change			4200		
Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!				4200	
Beyond Test Scores! The PLC at Work Process and Serving the Whole Child					4200
Maria Nielsen					
Show Me What Ya Got: Student Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Learning	6110				6110
The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!		6110		6110	
Elementary ELA Strategies to Keep Your Students on Track			6110		
Regina Stephens Owens					
The <i>Why</i> Effect: Intentional Systems Drive Inspirational Cultures	5128				
Small Schools and Singletons: Wired for Rigor and Relevance		5128			
Data Discussion for Instructional Leaders: From Data to Design to Demonstration of Learning			5128		
Leveraging Technology for Learning in a PLC				5128	
Coaching Competence, <i>Not</i> Compliance: Preparing Teachers to Lead by Learning					5128

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Will Remmert					
Championship Behaviors: The Journey to Greatness From <i>Community to Learning to Professional</i>	6104				6104
Collective Responsibility: Label-Free Kids!		6104		6104	
Window or Mirror: What Viewpoint Will You Choose for Student Success?			6104		
Eric Twadell					
Social and Emotional Learning in a PLC at Work	5132				5132
Through New Eyes: Examining the Culture of Your School		5132			
Leadership by Design: Four Essential Conversations for District, School, and Team Leaders			5132	5132	

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Session Descriptions—Day 1

KEYNOTE

Mike Mattos

The Urgency of the Moment

As educators, we face one of the most historically challenging times in our nation's history. The years-long impact of the global pandemic has exacerbated inequities in academic achievement while creating unprecedented needs in student social-emotional health. And while more students face significant gaps in their learning, the academic rigor that all students must master for future success have never been greater. How we respond to this moment in time—this convergence of need and necessity—will have a generational impact on our students and our collective prosperity.

Fortunately, there has never been greater professional consensus on the best way to close learning gaps and ensure high levels of learning for all students: Schools and districts should function as a professional learning community. In this opening keynote, Mike Mattos sets the stage for our learning by creating a shared vision of the essential elements, thinking, and vocabulary that drive a true professional learning community.

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Jack Baldermann

How Westmont High Became a Most-Improved School and Won the DuFour Award

Jack Baldermann shares the ideas, programs, strategies, and tools that Westmont High School (a Title I school in Illinois) used to become the most improved and one of the top-performing schools in the nation. In every student achievement category, Westmont has achieved exceptional and sustained results.

Westmont's student-to-teacher trust score has been the highest in Illinois for the last five years, and their collaborative teacher score has also been the highest in the state. Jack shares specific ideas and programs that led to these powerful relationships.

The specific and practical action steps that led to these student learning performance gains are shared along with useful examples. Participants leave this session with a framework to successfully implement PLC and RTI concepts that will lead to real student success.

Tim Brown

Building a Commitment to Learning in Students

The educators in a learning-centered school deliberately identify strategies for building and communicating high expectations with their students. The importance of this is reinforced by Anthony Muhammad's research for his book, *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division* (2017). Muhammad discovered that students will learn more and be more successful in an

environment where all educators believe they can learn at high levels, and those educators work together to convince the students they can achieve lofty academic goals teachers set for them.

This session is designed to engage the audience in a thoughtful examination and exploration of four practical and proven strategies that engage students in building a commitment to learning.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand the importance of regularly communicating high expectations to students to develop a culture of learning throughout the school.
- Gain effective learning strategies to communicate and establish a learning-centered classroom culture.
- Recognize the important role celebrations play in reinforcing and sustaining a focus on learning for all.
- Explore various strategies for engaging students in goal setting to take greater ownership of their learning.

Daniel Cohan

Why Is It So Confusing? Defining Team Structures and Responsibilities in a PLC

Traditional schools and PLC schools have various teams and structures. Small and large schools and districts striving to become PLCs must have clear team structures and responsibilities that work interdependently to ensure all students learn at high levels. The difference in team makeup, functionality, specific responsibilities, and actions—as well as how teams are monitored—distinguishes traditional schools from highly effective PLC schools. Singletons, vertical teams, intervention teams, building leadership teams, content- and grade-level teams all have a place in PLCs. This session explores the expectations and responsibilities of each.

Participants in this session learn key factors of teams in a PLC model, including:

- How different teams function individually and interdependently in a PLC
- The definition of a true *team* and how this compares to your existing teams
- Effective structures and practices for singleton teachers and vertical teams
- The interconnected roles and responsibilities of guiding coalitions/building leadership teams, teacher teams, vertical teams, and RTI teams

Luis F. Cruz

Task Forces: The Secret Weapon PLCs Use to Close Opportunity Gaps in Learning

A strong and focused PLC ensures high levels of learning for all students. To achieve this goal, PLCs acknowledge that achievement gaps result when traditional school systems don't give historically marginalized students the opportunity to learn. Task forces assemble teams of educators to confront systemic barriers that hinder English learners, students with individual education plans, and economically disadvantaged students, to name a few disenfranchised student cohorts. Luis F. Cruz

shares how task forces redesign systems in seven steps to ensure all students learn at high levels, including those traditionally excluded from optimal opportunities.

Participants in this session learn:

- Why our traditional school system was designed to produce achievement gaps
- How collective leadership in the form of a task force initiates the required action to effectively address gaps in learning
- How the PLC process is synonymous with equity and redesigning a system never originally designed for today's definition of *all*

Heather Frizellie

Yes We Can: Collaboration by All, for All!

When teams commit to collaborating in the PLC process dedicated to high levels of learning for *all* students, a key critical step is to examine their personal and systemic beliefs about students, themselves, and learning. Then, ensure that all systems align, bringing this vision to life. Participants in this session are provided with strategies and protocols to examine mindsets and collaborative processes to drive action planning that ensure higher levels of learning for all students. This session is designed for both general and special educators.

Participants in this session:

- Examine best practices for ensuring all means *all*.
- Learn strategies to bring each of these best practices to life in your local context.
- Reflect on local current practices and policies that do and do not align with the belief that all students can learn at high levels and identify key next steps for moving forward.

Timothy D. Kanold

Your Physical and Mental Wellness: Thriving at Work and at Home!

In this decade, teaching and leading in pursuit of improved student achievement is hard to do well day in and day out. The work at hand takes its toll physically and mentally. During this highly interactive, sometimes funny, sometimes serious, and always engaging session, Timothy D. Kanold, uses the Wellness Solutions for Educators™ framework to take a deep dive into the physical and mental wellness challenges that exist in the daily life of an educator. Improved sleep and rest, food and hydration, and movement are interwoven together as a result of daily decision making and intentionally planning. Participants will be (re)invigorated, (re)inspired, and (re)connected to the benefits of a sustainable and thriving home and work life.

Dr. Kanold leads participants in:

- Discovering brain research associated with sleep, rest, hydration, movement, and decision fatigue

- Considering specific strategies for incorporating improved sleep, rest, hydration, movement, and decision-making routines into daily life
- Exploring a concrete plan for reducing, automating, and regulating decisions to avoid decision-fatigue and mental exhaustion as part of educator renewal

Cheyana Leiva

From Data Meetings to Data Conversations

Schools have utilized data for years and teams have discussed data in various forms throughout their teaching careers, but it hasn't moved the bar for students. This session helps participants learn how the PLC process shifts teams from talking about numbers to discussions around student skills, instructional practices, and next steps to ensure all students learn.

Participants in this session:

- Build shared knowledge around highly effective data conversations.
- Learn specific steps to improve instructional practice and student achievement through data conversations.

Michelle Marrillia

The Case for Coaches in a Professional Learning Community

Successful instructional coaches understand the balancing act of working with teams to help ensure the fidelity of the three big ideas of a PLC while also providing the time and support to individual teachers who need it. In this session, learn how a tiered instructional coaching model can help drive the collaborative culture in your school to increase better outcomes for all students. Participants leave with sample coaching schedules and weekly plans for training team leaders, specific support systems for struggling teams, and instructional leadership team protocols.

Participants in this session:

- Define the role of coaches in PLCs.
- Apply practical coaching strategies to develop and support team leaders in a PLC.
- Determine next steps in building and sustaining an effective coaching model to support collaborative teams.

Mike Mattos

Are We a Group or a Team?

Collaborative teacher teams are the engine that drives a professional learning community. When these teams are highly engaged in the right work, student learning accelerates ... and when they are not, learning sputters and stalls. Because teachers have traditionally been required to attend grade-level or departmental team meetings, schools often mistakenly assume that merely renaming these gatherings "PLC time" represents teacher collaboration. The act of meeting together does not make a team, but instead, merely a group.

Participants in this session:

- Assess if they are currently part of a group or a team.
- Review the essential work of teacher teams in a PLC.
- Learn how to successfully navigate team disagreements.
- Leave with specific action steps to improve your teacher team.

Anthony Muhammad

Transforming School Culture: New Insights

In this session, Anthony Muhammad addresses the issue of conflicting agendas within schools. A high-performing school has a very clear purpose—high levels of learning for all students. Participants examine the barriers to aligning individual agendas with the organization’s agenda and what *all* parties must do to develop the synergy necessary to guarantee learning. The theoretical framework developed by Anthony in the book *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division, 2nd Edition* (Solution Tree, 2018) is examined as the basis for developing a collaborative culture.

Participants can expect to learn:

- How staff division develops and how to prevent it
- Strategies that heal old social and professional wounds
- To create an environment where every professional can thrive

Maria Nielsen

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.

Regina Stephens Owens

The *Why* Effect: Intentional Systems Drive Inspirational Cultures

Organizational purpose, collective beliefs, and commitments affect building systems at all levels. How can we ensure that all practices and procedures are intentional and personify organizational beliefs? It all begins with the *why*. Regina Stephens Owens shares strategies to move cultures from an attitude of compliance, coercion, and fear to one that is respectful, responsive, and reflective.

Participants can expect to:

- Promote high standards of achievement for all.
- Create a collective, rather than individual, leadership focus.
- Design and sustain a values-driven culture that is evidenced by trust, transparency, reflection, and responsiveness.

Will Remmert

Championship Behaviors: The Journey to Greatness From *Community* to *Learning* to *Professional*

When schools and districts begin the process of becoming a PLC at Work, they often leap to learning to raise test scores before developing the foundational beliefs and dispositions of their school community. While ensuring high levels of student learning for all is the pinnacle for a PLC at Work, we must intentionally incorporate championship behaviors within our community to ensure all students and educators are *learning* at high levels, ultimately creating interdependent teams of *professionals* dedicated to this life-changing profession.

In this session, Will Remmert breaks down the individual constructs of *professional*, *learning*, and *community* (PLC) working with participants to reassemble the terms in order to create a collective understanding and action steps to solidify their foundation back at their campus. Through self-analysis and application, participants reflect on their individual and collective behaviors on their *journey to greatness* and begin applying championship behaviors to ensure high levels of learning for all and becoming true professionals.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify areas for advancing their individual and collective journey to greatness.
- Determine initial steps to develop and enhance the championship behaviors needed to ensure high levels of learning for all.

Eric Twadell

Social and Emotional Learning in a PLC at Work

In most schools, social and emotional learning (SEL) is little more than canned programs that highlight cliché-driven posters and flyers. Schools that take SEL seriously learn quickly that we can teach and assess SEL just like any other subject and content area. In this session, Eric Twadell explores the CASEL social-emotional learning competencies and develops strategies and best practices for teaching and learning.

Participants in this session:

- Explore the CASEL social-emotional learning competencies—self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills.
- Learn strategies for the explicit assessment of these competencies.
- Understand how these competencies can impact student learning.
- Learn how to assess the impact of social and emotional learning instruction.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Jack Baldermann

Motivating Disengaged Students: Supporting Champions of Hope and Learning for All

Jack Baldermann shares the findings of leading researchers and practitioners in education, including new research based on more than 300 interviews with students identified as underperforming. He shows the results of specific programs that are making a substantial difference in student achievement and facilitates a discussion about how to reach and engage unmotivated students.

Participants in this session:

- Learn about and discuss current research and best practices in education that positively impact the lives of all students.
- Examine research on why students disengage from the learning process and what educators can do to help them become more successful.
- Explore ideas and solutions that work in harmony with PLCs.
- Gain information and strategies to implement at their schools or districts.

Tim Brown

How to Build Student Ownership, Motivation, and Efficacy Through the Four Questions of a Collaborative Team

Many students struggle in school because they lack the dispositions associated with high self-efficacy. Studies show that self-efficacy is one of the most significant factors in student motivation and engagement and that educators are the key contributor to a student's academic self-efficacy. Participants in this session examine how the four questions of collaborative teams, when done well, positively influence a student's efficacy judgment.

Participants can expect to:

- Clarify and delineate the dispositions that we want to develop in our students to ensure greater success.
- Learn about the four keys and five essential actions that influence a student's efficacy judgment.
- Understand how the four questions of collaborative teams influence a student's efficacy judgment.
- Explore products and processes that collaborative teams are developing and using to positively influence their students' efficacy judgements.

Daniel Cohan

PLC Continuous Improvement: Tools and Techniques to Keep Your PLC Moving Forward

Are you asking these questions about your PLC and collaborative teams: Why isn't our PLC showing results? Why aren't our collaborative teams more effective? Why are we stuck? How do we set and monitor short- and long-term PLC implementation goals?

School and district improvement plans have long existed, but are they effective? Impactful? Connected to the daily work? Improvement plans can be a powerful tool but they must be clear, aligned to the everyday work and progress monitored. Professional learning communities are a continuous improvement process, but we must define, model, and monitor what is “loose” and what is “tight.” Progress monitoring your collaborative teams and schoolwide PLC implementations are essential for continuous improvement along the PLC journey.

In this interactive session, attendees learn how to progress monitor their PLC to keep moving forward and explore how and why progress monitoring plans are an essential component of continuous improvement. Daniel Cohan reviews common obstacles and solutions to use with your school or district.

Participants in this session:

- Establish their PLC current reality.
- Learn how to effectively progress monitor what is loose and what is tight.
- Practice with PLC progress monitoring plans.
- Explore effective strategies, tools, and models to keep moving forward.
- Understand the relationship between trust, achievement, and celebration.

Luis F. Cruz

Embracing the Five Vessels: Learning the Non-Negotiables to Becoming a High-Functioning PLC

If a school or district is committed to becoming a professional learning community, then adult behaviors need to shift away from those found in a traditional school system. What behaviors are those found within the context of a PLC? What are five main behaviors that need to be embraced for successful transformation to a PLC. Join Luis F. Cruz as he explains what Rick Dufour called the five non-negotiables schools must embrace to become PLC right and avoid becoming PLC lite.

Dr. Cruz shows participants:

- The specific adult behaviors needed to change to become a PLC
- The five big behaviors that shift all necessary adult behaviors to become a PLC
- The difference between becoming a PLC and embracing the PLC process

Heather Friziellie

The Conundrum: Balancing Life and Leadership

Participants examine leadership by studying powerful leaders and connecting their journeys to the challenges of leading while also fulfilling other roles in their lives. Participants engage in structured conversations and tasks that focus on current realities and strategically plan how to move forward with greater balance while still spinning all the plates!

Participants in this session:

- Hear and reflect on stories of leadership.
- Share stories of leadership experiences and lessons learned en route.
- Identify ways we can all more effectively support each other in educational leadership.

Timothy D. Kanold

Leading the PLC Life: Eliminating Barriers by Teaching the Loose-Tight Culture!

School-site administrators and leaders, guiding coalition members, instructional coaches, school district or central office administrators, and leaders face the challenge of guiding others into PLC life expectations. They help those they lead to overcome obstacles for a sustained daily implementation of the PLC process.

Timothy D. Kanold reveals how to become dynamic and inspiring decision makers others will want to follow. As participants identify primary barriers to the PLC life, Dr. Kanold facilitates dialogue to find meaningful solutions based on understanding what is “loose” and “tight” in a PLC at Work culture. He reveals how to use a loose-tight vision to impact positive change. And, he examines how to effectively monitor the quality of the PLC process, by celebrating actions that advance the shared values (commitments) of your leadership life.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify school-site and district-level barriers to full PLC process implementation.
- Use a loose-tight PLC at Work model to overcome barriers and focus collective teacher efficacy and improvement.
- Use excessive and radical celebration as the antidote to a culture of continuous improvement.

Cheyana Leiva

The Invisible Fifth Question of a PLC

The PLC process leads teacher teams to answer these four critical questions:

1. What do we expect students to learn?
2. How will we know if they learn it?
3. How do we respond when students experience difficulties in learning?
4. How do we respond when students do learn?

Embedded in each of those questions is the question of *instruction*. How do teachers design their instruction to support the four questions? Teams must explicitly discuss instruction as they answer the four critical questions. In this session, Cheyana Leiva helps participants learn how to ensure teams address high-quality instructional practices while collaborating on these questions.

Participants can expect to:

- Build shared knowledge around how instruction is a key component of PLCs.
- Connect instructional practices to prevention, intervention, and acceleration.

Michelle Marrillia

Do Common Formative Assessments Change Your Practice? Turning Data Into Successful Secondary Classroom Instruction

School systems are increasingly data-rich, but educators often struggle to use this data to differentiate instruction and provide timely feedback to meet the needs of every student. This session details practical approaches for effective and easy-to-implement reteaching strategies in multiple content areas in secondary classrooms. Michelle Marrillia provides specific examples of creating a system of regrouping and differentiated instruction based on assessment data.

Participants in this session discover:

- How a collaborative team can use data to implement reteaching strategies for students who do not learn the first time
- A stoplight regrouping method for differentiated instruction
- How to incorporate embedded academic advising for timely feedback

Mike Mattos

Taking Action: How to Create a Highly Effective, Multitiered System of Supports

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, educators face an unprecedented challenge: how to close the learning gaps created by months of school closures and uneven access to learning opportunities. In this breakout, Mike Mattos discusses specific steps that schools can take to create a highly effective, multitiered system of supports to target learning gaps and show how the PLC at Work process creates the larger, schoolwide framework required to successfully intervene.

Participants in this session:

- Gain an understanding of the guiding principles behind a multitiered system of interventions.
- Learn the essential actions that collaborative teams must complete at Tier 1 to effectively respond when students don't learn.
- Explore how to target preventions, interventions, extension, and remediation.
- Prioritize resources to best meet student needs.

Anthony Muhammad

Bringing the Four PLC Questions to Life: Systems That Ensure All Students Learn

Anthony Muhammad focuses on the systemic implementation of a PLC at Work's four critical questions. Participants learn what it takes to move from theory to practical, systemic implementation. Dr. Muhammad's strategies are immediately usable when participants return to their schools.

Participants in this session:

- Practice developing essential standards and student outcomes.
- Learn to create valuable and valid common assessments.
- Discover how to establish an intervention system that meets all students' needs.

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.

Regina Stephens Owens

Small Schools and Singletons: Wired for Rigor and Relevance

Singleton teachers are accustomed to seeking solutions and understanding opportunities as they arise. Operating efficiently and effectively within a PLC can be challenging. Team members must collaborate on common denominators, work with peers to improve professional practices and student learning, leverage technology, and authentically engage in the PLC at Work process.

Regina Stephens Owens shows how to use best practices in collaboration, and participants learn how to design action plans supporting the work of schools and singleton teachers in a PLC.

Participants can expect to:

- Gain clarity on connecting in a PLC.
- Seek solutions for successful partnering.
- Learn to function effectively in a PLC.

Will Remmert

Collective Responsibility: Label-Free Kids!

Educators who collaborate and learn together are more likely to provide their students with the skills and dispositions necessary to learn at high levels. In order to effectively answer the four critical questions of a PLC, three critical teams must be established: teacher collaborative teams, guiding coalitions, and intervention teams. This session examines the work of the intervention team, or what one school deemed the problem-solving team.

Will Remmert offers strategies, structures, and frameworks to shift the mindsets and practices of educators to best meet the needs of *all* students through a collective and strengths-based attitude to student success.

Participants can expect to:

- Examine their current practices and structures to create a more equitable and strengths-based system for student and adult learning.
- Review a tool designed to utilize the strengths of the professionals on campus to best meet the needs of all students.

Eric Twadell

Through New Eyes: Examining the Culture of Your School

The PLC at Work process is all about culture—not structure. A school culture is founded upon the assumptions, beliefs, values, expectations, and habits that drive its day-to-day work and share how its people think, feel, and act. This session provides participants with the opportunity to examine the culture of two very different schools and explores common practices and conventional wisdom with a critical eye.

Participants in this session:

- Examine the culture of two different schools and the experiences of a student.
- Assess the practices and procedures of a traditional school versus a school that works as a professional learning community.
- Develop an understanding of the important difference between culture and structure in initiative and sustain the PLC at Work process.

Session Descriptions—Day 2

KEYNOTE

Anthony Muhammad

The Way Forward: PLC at Work and the Bright Future of Education

The impact of COVID-19 will have long-lasting effects on every facet of our society. Very few institutions were more disrupted than schools. The pandemic affected staffing, funding, morale, and the continuity of student learning. Anthony Muhammad explores the history of the field of education and examines why the tenets of the PLC at Work process were important before the global pandemic and why they will be even more important after the pandemic. This is not the time to back away from PLCs; this is the time to reinforce the foundation of the PLC at Work process.

Participants in this session learn that:

- Developing the profession of education has always been evolving. Utopia never existed.
- The principles of PLC at Work are timeless.
- The PLC at Work process is essential in order to repair and advance the field of education.

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Jack Baldermann

PLCs, Strategic Leadership, and Outstanding Results

Jack Baldermann, 2017 Illinois Principal of the Year and 2018 Finalist for National Principal of the Year, shares specific programs, ideas, plans, and tools used to transform schools. After four years of implementing PLC concepts, Westmont High School (a Title I school) became the most improved high school in Illinois in 2014 and 2015 with a graduation rate of 99 percent, a graduation rate of 100 percent for Latino and African American students, double-digit increases on every NCLB exam, a dramatic reduction in suspensions, achievement of adequate yearly progress for the first time in seven years, and one of the most improved advanced placement programs in the country. Riverside Brookfield High School achieved similar results using PLC concepts and employing strategic leadership.

Participants gain:

- Specific strategies to implement PLC concepts that are proven to result in significant student achievement
- Practical tools to help establish a high-functioning PLC school
- Useful information and inspiration to improve students' academic performance

Tim Brown

Activating the Keys of Formative Assessment to Create a Culture of Learning

Formative assessment can have an amazing impact on learning and is especially beneficial for students who struggle. If you have students who struggle in your school, being great at formative assessment is crucial. Participants in this session examine their current assessment practices in comparison to the five

keys and nine principles of assessment for learning. Practical examples and strategies are shared throughout the session.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the relationship between formative assessment and student achievement.
- Evaluate important considerations in the assessment process.
- Examine tools, scenarios, and processes from the field that demonstrate that the five keys and nine principles are doable in every classroom, at every level.

Daniel Cohan

PLC Continuous Improvement: Tools and Techniques to Keep Your PLC Moving Forward

Are you asking these questions about your PLC and collaborative teams: Why isn't our PLC showing results? Why aren't our collaborative teams more effective? Why are we stuck? How do we set and monitor short- and long-term PLC implementation goals?

School and district improvement plans have long existed, but are they effective? Impactful? Connected to the daily work? Improvement plans can be a powerful tool but they must be clear, aligned to the everyday work and progress monitored. Professional learning communities are a continuous improvement process, but we must define, model, and monitor what is "loose" and what is "tight." Progress monitoring your collaborative teams and schoolwide PLC implementations are essential for continuous improvement along the PLC journey.

In this interactive session, attendees learn how to progress monitor their PLC to keep moving forward and explore how and why progress monitoring plans are an essential component of continuous improvement. Daniel Cohan reviews common obstacles and solutions to use with your school or district.

Participants in this session:

- Establish their PLC current reality.
- Learn how to effectively progress monitor what is loose and what is tight.
- Practice with PLC progress monitoring plans.
- Explore effective strategies, tools, and models to keep moving forward.
- Understand the relationship between trust, achievement, and celebration.

Luis F. Cruz

English Learners and PLCs

Luis F. Cruz shares how schools use PLC strategies to help English learner populations flourish. By effectively using PLC components, administrative and teacher leaders close achievement gaps for students learning English as an additional language. Dr. Cruz shows how EL task-force leaders reculture and restructure, while introducing best practices to increase learning outcomes for all students.

Participants in this session learn:

- Why students learning English as an additional language are an asset and not a deficit
- How teacher-led task forces increase academic performance for students learning English as an additional language
- How the PLC process is tweaked to more effectively address the learning needs of EL students

Heather Frizellie

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 guarantee students additional time and support for learning when they need it. After examining the key components of systematic intervention and enrichment, participants examine protocols and criteria to assess their own schools' responses and an action-planning template for next steps in raising the bar and closing the gap in the local context.

Participants examine strategies and structures to collaboratively:

- Examine the essential core beliefs that relate to all means *all*.
- Review and reflect on the essential elements of Tiers 1, 2, and 3 intervention.
- Consider high-leverage usage of resources (human, material, structural) to meet the needs of all learners.
- Examine the most common RTI mistakes.
- Reflect on critical reminders regarding process and criteria.
- Apply a current reality assessment tool while learning.

Timothy D. Kanold

Your PreK–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- and higher-level-cognitive-demand tasks and classroom discourse combined with meaningful formative feedback during instruction.

Dr. Kanold shares research-affirmed lesson design criteria essential to student perseverance, development of self-efficacy, 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:

- Examine research-affirmed teaching actions that maximize student learning during a mathematics lesson.
- Consider how to use prior knowledge activities effectively.
- Examine the balanced use of lower- and higher-level-cognitive-demand tasks during class.

- Embrace the balanced use of small-group student discourse as part of a formative feedback process that encourages student perseverance, engagement, effort, efficacy, and participation during the lesson.

Cheyana Leiva

Guiding Coalitions: The Key to Effectively Implement a PLC

John P. Kotter states that failure is usually associated with underestimating the difficulties in producing change. Leaders cannot create systemic change on their own; they must have a team to support this change. A guiding coalition, composed of teacher leaders and administrators, is the key to building and sustaining the work of PLCs in schools. In this session, Cheyana Leiva gives participants the keys to creating and guiding the work of guiding coalitions.

Participants in this session:

- Build shared knowledge around the work of guiding coalitions.
- Learn characteristics of a strong guiding coalition member.
- Learn focused action steps to increase the effectiveness of PLC work through guiding coalitions.
- Determine what they celebrate.

Michelle Marrillia

The Case for Coaches in a Professional Learning Community

Successful instructional coaches understand the balancing act of working with teams to help ensure the fidelity of the three big ideas of a PLC while also providing the time and support to individual teachers who need it. In this session, learn how a tiered instructional coaching model can help drive the collaborative culture in your school to increase better outcomes for all students. Participants leave with sample coaching schedules and weekly plans for training team leaders, specific support systems for struggling teams, and instructional leadership team protocols.

Participants in this session:

- Define the role of coaches in PLCs.
- Apply practical coaching strategies to develop and support team leaders in a PLC.
- Determine next steps in building and sustaining an effective coaching model to support collaborative teams.

Mike Mattos

Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools

If the fundamental purpose of being a professional learning community is to ensure all students learn at high levels, then there must be time embedded during the school day to provide students extra time and support to succeed. In this session, Mike Mattos provides real examples showing how to create time for supplemental and intensive interventions.

Participants learn specific steps to implement a flexible secondary intervention period, including how to:

- Learn specific steps to implement a flexible intervention period.
- 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.

Anthony Muhammad

Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change

Anthony Muhammad explores the connection between personal and institutional mindsets and academic achievement gaps. The issue of inequality in student learning outcomes has been studied and debated for many years, but this session seeks to establish that the primary culprit in the fight to overcome the achievement gap is our thinking.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand the true meaning and value of school culture.
- Understand the power of mindsets and their influence on educator effectiveness.
- Understand how to shift from damaging mindsets (Superiority and Inferiority) to high levels of efficacy (Liberation mindset).

Maria Nielsen

Elementary ELA Strategies to Keep Your Students on Track

Maria Nielsen takes educators on an interactive journey to gain new and exciting ELA and writing strategies as a team. In this fast-paced session, elementary teachers gain clarity about ELA standards and explore how reading and writing go hand in hand for increased student learning. Participants also learn how to focus on year-long essential standards while using a district-prescribed curriculum.

Participants in this session:

- Gather tools and graphic organizers to connect reading and writing.
- Understand learning progressions on literacy-focused instruction and assessment.
- Overlay essential standards with district-prescribed curricula.
- Examine research-based teaching strategies to improve classroom instruction.

Regina Stephens Owens

Data Discussion for Instructional Leaders: From Data to Design to Demonstration of Learning

In a time of tremendous focus on data, it is imperative to grow a rich collaborative culture through dialogue and data protocols—moving from a deficit mindset to a growth mindset. Participants in this session discover ways to create this culture, use data as information, and increase team capacity and student learning.

Participants can expect to:

- Focus on results through the lens of data.
- Move from data to demonstration of learning.
- Ensure their beliefs and behaviors align as they utilize data.

Will Remmert

Window or Mirror: What Viewpoint Will You Choose for Student Success?

Educators are human. We aren't perfect—we are imperfect. We engage in very little physical heavy lifting, yet our emotional labor is intense, exhausting, and paralyzing. When emotions are depleted, we tend to retreat to the safety of the four walls of our classroom and begin looking through the *window* for external justification for our weariness.

In this session, Will Remmert walks participants through the current reality of education and helps them look in the *mirror* at the things we *must* do to best impact student learning.

Participants can expect to:

- Examine current practices and professional behaviors to become more effective.
- Create an action plan of mirror viewpoints to implement personally and collectively as a team or campus.

Eric Twadell

Leadership by Design: Four Essential Conversations for District, School, and Team Leaders

District, school, and team leaders play an important role in developing PLCs. This session explores the essential characteristics and roles of leaders in creating and sustaining a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility in a PLC.

Participants in this session:

- Take part in four leadership conversations that focus on building coherence and clarity for the work of leaders in a PLC.
- Discover how effective leaders facilitate a culture of shared responsibility.
- Examine strategies effective leaders must utilize to develop a learning-centered culture in districts, schools, and teams.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Jack Baldermann

Successful Implementation Plans and Ideas for Fledgling PLCs

Jack Baldermann provides innovative ideas and a step-by-step process for successful PLC implementation for educators whose schools are starting the PLC process or need a reboot. As a principal, Jack worked with his team to successfully develop PLCs in three schools, and he has consulted and supported effective PLC implementation at schools throughout the country. Participants can expect to receive practical information to launch or relaunch the PLC process and start designing a strategic plan to integrate PLC concepts.

Tim Brown

Grading: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

When schools make the shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, they must be willing to examine beliefs, assumptions, policies, guidelines, and practices to ensure everything we do that affects learning is aligned to the mission of the school. Because of the effect grading has on student learning, a discussion about grading practices must be part of the reflective and learning effort by staff. In this session, Tim Brown shares strategies and resources to help staff engage in a collaborative process that examines some of the more prevalent fixes that need to happen with grading if staff is going to be true to a mission that promotes high levels of learning for all students.

Participants can expect to:

- Answer the question, Where should we begin in our discussion about grading?
- Discuss the importance of crafting a statement about what a grade represents.
- Examine four notable fixes in our grading practices in light of a standards- or evidence-based approach to learning: homework, 100% scales, formative assessment, and averaging scores.
- Reflect on grading practices and guidelines that have been successfully implemented in schools at every level.

Daniel Cohan

Why Is It So Confusing? Defining Team Structures and Responsibilities in a PLC

Traditional schools and PLC schools have various teams and structures. Small and large schools and districts striving to become PLCs must have clear team structures and responsibilities that work interdependently to ensure all students learn at high levels. The difference in team makeup, functionality, specific responsibilities, and actions—as well as how teams are monitored—distinguishes traditional schools from highly effective PLC schools. Singletons, vertical teams, intervention teams, building leadership teams, content- and grade-level teams all have a place in PLCs. This session explores the expectations and responsibilities of each.

Participants in this session learn key factors of teams in a PLC model, including:

- How different teams function individually and interdependently in a PLC

- The definition of a true *team* and how this compares to your existing teams
- Effective structures and practices for singleton teachers and vertical teams
- The interconnected roles and responsibilities of guiding coalitions/building leadership teams, teacher teams, vertical teams, and RTI teams

Luis F. Cruz

Taping Before Painting: Blending the PLC and RTI Processes to Collectively Respond When Students Don't Learn

Luis F. Cruz shows how to embrace the power of the word *and* versus the tyranny of the word *or*. It's not PLC or RTI, but instead, embracing both the PLC and RTI processes to become a professional learning community. Dr. Cruz showcases how educators use effective collaborative processes (taping the room) to ensure a collective response when students do not learn (painting the room). Hence, participants learn how the PLC and RTI processes complement each other in increasing academic achievement for all students.

Participants in this session learn:

- How effective teacher teams collaborate and respond when students do not learn
- How to incorporate the five non-negotiable vessels of the PLC Process
- How to gauge collaborative practices via seven stages
- How teacher teams implement structures and processes that will allow for a collective response when students do not learn

Heather Friziellie

Inclusive Instruction: Learning for All!

When we dig into the research, it's pretty easy to identify two things: We can't keep doing what we've always done and expect to get better results, *and* there are some clear high-leverage strategies we can employ to lead to higher levels of learning for *all* students.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Building an understanding of key research findings
- Using these findings to identify five essential instructional strategies that—regardless of grade level or content area—*will* help more learners learn at higher levels than ever before!

Timothy D. Kanold

Mindfulness, Relationships, and Trust: Strategies for Living the PLC Life!

The PLC at Work story is a relationship story of learning how to effectively respond to daily emotions and events. How do you become the type of person others will want to be with in community? How do you respond emotionally and socially to experiences of adversity and triumph? Creating and sharing new knowledge with others is at the heart of the PLC life. Educators are expected to emotionally and socially adapt, shift, alter, adjust, and subsequently thrive.

In this active and inspiring session, Timothy D. Kanold reminds participants how their daily positive emotional and social presence directly impacts their relationship and trust-building actions with others. Dr. Kanold highlights mindfulness, trust, and relationship routines from the Wellness Solutions for Educators™ framework and provides strategies for improving trust, relational intelligence, and emotional regulation while decreasing stress and anxiety.

Participants can expect to:

- Embrace the emotional wellness routine of mindfulness to build atomic habits that stick.
- Understand how to use the social wellness routines of trust and relationships to develop friendships and effectively collaborate with others.
- Discover ways to improve emotional and relational intelligence.
- Consider how their daily work life feeds into their greater purpose as educators.

Cheyana Leiva

From Data Meetings to Data Conversations

Schools have utilized data for years and teams have discussed data in various forms throughout their teaching careers, but it hasn't moved the bar for students. This session helps participants learn how the PLC process shifts teams from talking about numbers to discussions around student skills, instructional practices, and next steps to ensure all students learn.

Participants in this session:

- Build shared knowledge around highly effective data conversations.
- Learn specific steps to improve instructional practice and student achievement through data conversations.

Michelle Marrillia

Building a High-Impact Coaching Program

An impactful coaching program can lead to increased teacher efficacy and collaboration as well as improved student outcomes. In this session, Michelle Marrillia discusses how instructional coaches can partner with principals to determine the vision for a school's coaching program. Participants examine coaching traits and dispositions that lead to cultivating a powerful learning community that fosters differentiated support for all teachers.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss three essential components to a successful coaching plan.
- Determine critical checkpoints to ensure coaches are providing the necessary support to improve instruction.
- Create action steps for implementing a thriving coaching program.

Mike Mattos

Behavior Solutions: Leveraging the PLC at Work Process to Teach Essential Behaviors

The fundamental purpose of a professional learning community is to ensure high levels of learning for all students. To achieve this mission, we know that some students will need support mastering the behaviors needed to succeed in school and beyond. Every school knows this universal truth, but many schools lack the systematic processes to achieve this outcome. In this breakout, Mike Mattos demonstrates how a school can leverage the PLC at Work process to identify, teach, assess, and intervene when students lack essential academic and social behaviors.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how the entire school—the entire PLC—must work together to teach essential behaviors.
- Apply the four critical questions of the PLC at Work process to identify, teach, assess, and intervene around essential behaviors.
- Consider systematic, tiered supports to target behavior interventions.

Anthony Muhammad

Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!

This session addresses the collaborative characteristics of a high-performing PLC. Learn how teachers, support staff, school administrators, and central office all work together to improve school performance. Anthony Muhammad addresses the issue of staff resistance to change and the leader's role in building consensus. Two key areas are explored: creating a culture of collaboration and creating an environment in which people embrace collective responsibility.

Participants in this session learn:

- How to construct and protect productive collaborative relationships
- How to create organizational coherence and ensure collaboration at every level of the school community
- The balance between support and accountability

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.

Regina Stephens Owens

Leveraging Technology for Learning in a PLC

In the changing world of education, whether face-to-face or virtual environments, learning must happen. Regina Stephens Owens provides strategies to leverage technology to ensure high levels of learning for all learners, adults and students.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand how to leverage technology in support of teamwork.
- Leverage web resources with four essential questions of a PLC.
- Utilize technology for continuous improvement and to build collective capacity.

Will Remmert

Collective Responsibility: Label-Free Kids!

Educators who collaborate and learn together are more likely to provide their students with the skills and dispositions necessary to learn at high levels. In order to effectively answer the four critical questions of a PLC, three critical teams must be established: teacher collaborative teams, guiding coalitions, and intervention teams. This session examines the work of the intervention team, or what one school deemed the problem-solving team.

Will Remmert offers strategies, structures, and frameworks to shift the mindsets and practices of educators to best meet the needs of *all* students through a collective and strengths-based attitude to student success.

Participants can expect to:

- Examine their current practices and structures to create a more equitable and strengths-based system for student and adult learning.
- Review a tool designed to utilize the strengths of the professionals on campus to best meet the needs of all students.

Eric Twadell

Leadership by Design: Four Essential Conversations for District, School, and Team Leaders

District, school, and team leaders play an important role in developing PLCs. This session explores the essential characteristics and roles of leaders in creating and sustaining a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility in a PLC.

Participants in this session:

- Take part in four leadership conversations that focus on building coherence and clarity for the work of leaders in a PLC.
- Discover how effective leaders facilitate a culture of shared responsibility.
- Examine strategies effective leaders must utilize to develop a learning-centered culture in districts, schools, and teams.

Session Descriptions—Day 3

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Jack Baldermann

Motivating Disengaged Students: Supporting Champions of Hope and Learning for All

Jack Baldermann shares the findings of leading researchers and practitioners in education, including new research based on more than 300 interviews with students identified as underperforming. He shows the results of specific programs that are making a substantial difference in student achievement and facilitates a discussion about how to reach and engage unmotivated students.

Participants in this session:

- Learn about and discuss current research and best practices in education that positively impact the lives of all students.
- Examine research on why students disengage from the learning process and what educators can do to help them become more successful.
- Explore ideas and solutions that work in harmony with PLCs.
- Gain information and strategies to implement at their schools or districts.

Tim Brown

Building a Commitment to Learning in Students

The educators in a learning-centered school deliberately identify strategies for building and communicating high expectations with their students. The importance of this is reinforced by Anthony Muhammad's research for his book, *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division* (2017). Muhummad discovered that students will learn more and be more successful in an environment where all educators believe they can learn at high levels, and those educators work together to convince the students they can achieve lofty academic goals teachers set for them.

This session is designed to engage the audience in a thoughtful examination and exploration of four practical and proven strategies that engage students in building a commitment to learning.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand the importance of regularly communicating high expectations to students to develop a culture of learning throughout the school.
- Gain effective learning strategies to communicate and establish a learning-centered classroom culture.
- Recognize the important role celebrations play in reinforcing and sustaining a focus on learning for all.
- Explore various strategies for engaging students in goal setting to take greater ownership of their learning.

Daniel Cohan

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Persevering Through Resistance, Challenges, and Setbacks

Like cultivating a garden, cultivating a highly effective PLC requires preparation, perseverance, and continuous monitoring and nurturing. Ongoing challenges and new variables inevitably arise, leading to setbacks, derailment, or paralysis. Leading PLCs is a delicate balance of attending to *culture* and *structure* at the same time. Educators must understand and remind themselves that staff resistance and complex challenges are part of the continuous improvement cycle. Protocols, clear expectations, and research-based strategies to handle resistance will help. Cultural change occurs as a result of changes in behavior. In this interactive session, Daniel Cohan provides strategies to stay the course and overcome obstacles and resistance. Participants learn from one another about how to maintain momentum in their PLCs.

Participants can expect to:

- Establish the current state of their school or district along the PLC journey.
- Learn protocols to ensure team focus and productivity.
- Explore the causes of resistance and practice techniques to change behavior.
- Develop strategies to overcome passivity and inaction while improving culture.
- Study examples from schools that have overcome common obstacles and setbacks.

Luis F. Cruz

I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful

As educators initiate the PLC process, they need practical tools to begin and enhance the journey. However, educators might discover that their staff needs convincing when it comes to embracing and implementing PLC at Work. Luis F. Cruz shares resources, movie clips, and a powerful activity to convince administrative and teacher leaders why implementation of the PLC process must become and continue to be a priority.

Participants in this session learn:

- Why resistance to the PLC process is to be expected
- Resources from *Learning by Doing* that act as powerful resources.
- Practical actions to accelerate PLC at Work
- The four schools activity

Heather Frizziellie

Braving Difficult Conversations

All leaders face situations in which difficult conversations must occur to ensure necessary progress and improvement. Participants in this session define crucial conversations and practice engaging in both sides of the dialogue to build toolboxes and increase comfort levels with this task moving forward.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the *what* and *why* of a brave conversation.
- Learn about essential steps for having brave conversations.
- Practice these steps during a structured activity, taking time to reflect and plan for action moving forward.

Timothy D. Kanold

Heart & Soul: Living a Fully Engaged, High-Energy, Well-Balanced Professional Life!

Education is a profession of “emotional labor,” and it is easy to experience fatigue from the daily noise and intense, often quick-changing expectations of the educators’ work life. Giving “heart and soul” to the professional life is fulfilling. Yet, it can also take its toll at work and at home.

Timothy D. Kanold notes, “Off and on, I have lost contact with the joy of my work life. So, it is for you. Sooner or later, the world of your professional life stretches you beyond your limits. But there are ways to sustain and regain your happiness at work.” The secret lies in understanding how to live a well-balanced daily life.

Participants examine the difference between being busy and being hurried, and they consider how to maintain high positive daily energy and joy, as they ruthlessly eliminate the hurry from their lives based on the energy quadrants from Dr. Kanold’s award-winning book, *HEART! Fully Forming Your Professional Life as a Teacher and Leader* (Solution Tree, 2017). Participants walk away feeling the power of their professional journey.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand and embrace happiness as a high positive energy state.
- Ruthlessly eliminate hurry from their life.
- Avoid emotional exhaustion through the demonstration of self-compassion.
- Avoid the natural drift to a high negative energy state of being.
- Choose a daily, well-balanced life.

Cheyana Leiva

The Invisible Fifth Question of a PLC

The PLC process leads teacher teams to answer these four critical questions:

1. What do we expect students to learn?
2. How will we know if they learn it?
3. How do we respond when students experience difficulties in learning?
4. How do we respond when students do learn?

Embedded in each of those questions is the question of *instruction*. How do teachers design their instruction to support the four questions? Teams must explicitly discuss instruction as they answer the

four critical questions. In this session, Cheyana Leiva helps participants learn how to ensure teams address high-quality instructional practices while collaborating on these questions.

Participants can expect to:

- Build shared knowledge around how instruction is a key component of PLCs.
- Connect instructional practices to prevention, intervention, and acceleration.

Michelle Marrillia

Building a High-Impact Coaching Program

An impactful coaching program can lead to increased teacher efficacy and collaboration as well as improved student outcomes. In this session, Michelle Marrillia discusses how instructional coaches can partner with principals to determine the vision for a school's coaching program. Participants examine coaching traits and dispositions that lead to cultivating a powerful learning community that fosters differentiated support for all teachers.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss three essential components to a successful coaching plan.
- Determine critical checkpoints to ensure coaches are providing the necessary support to improve instruction.
- Create action steps for implementing a thriving coaching program.

Mike Mattos

Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC at Work Process

Becoming a professional learning community will not happen by luck, chance, or hope; it requires focused and effective leadership. In this breakout, Mike Mattos provides guiding principles, practical examples, and targeted tools to help leaders—site or district administration and teacher leaders—successfully support teacher teams.

Participants learn how to:

- Create an effective site leadership team.
- Develop and enforce team norms.
- Monitor and support the work of collaborative teams.

Anthony Muhammad

Beyond Test Scores! The PLC at Work Process and Serving the Whole Child

The PLC at Work process is committed to a focus on *learning*. Learning does not have to be narrowly defined by academic standards and state test scores. Anything that we want students to learn—including social and emotional health, resilience, citizenship, entrepreneurship, and civility—can all be facilitated through the four PLC questions. If the COVID-19 pandemic taught anything, it is that human beings are complex and our holistic well-being is important.

Participants can expect to learn:

- How to strategically plan to define, assess, and address nonacademic student traits
- Strategies to engage counselors, social workers, and other nonacademic staff members in the PLC at Work process
- How to prioritize and promote student needs beyond test scores and student labels

Maria Nielsen

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.

Regina Stephens Owens

Coaching Competence, *Not* Compliance: Preparing Teachers to Lead by Learning

In a time of great change and instability, educators and administrators more than ever need to become empowered learners. Let’s move from telling to teaching and from unsupported expectations to unmatched experiences that ensure educators are prepared for continuous learning.

Participants can expect to:

- Design and develop culture for learning.
- Learn to coach competency, not just compliance.
- Build collective capacity through shared responsibility of learning.
- Invest in personal mastery that results in increased capacity, collective responsibility, and increased achievement.

Will Remmert

Championship Behaviors: The Journey to Greatness From *Community* to *Learning* to *Professional*

When schools and districts begin the process of becoming a PLC at Work, they often leap to learning to raise test scores before developing the foundational beliefs and dispositions of their school community. While ensuring high levels of student learning for all is the pinnacle for a PLC at Work, we must intentionally incorporate championship behaviors within our community to ensure all students and educators are *learning* at high levels, ultimately creating interdependent teams of *professionals* dedicated to this life-changing profession.

In this session, Will Remmert breaks down the individual constructs of *professional, learning, and community* (PLC) working with participants to reassemble the terms in order to create a collective understanding and action steps to solidify their foundation back at their campus. Through self-analysis and application, participants reflect on their individual and collective behaviors on their *journey to greatness* and begin applying championship behaviors to ensure high levels of learning for all and becoming true professionals.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify areas for advancing their individual and collective journey to greatness.
- Determine initial steps to develop and enhance the championship behaviors needed to ensure high levels of learning for all.

Eric Twadell

Social and Emotional Learning in a PLC at Work

In most schools, social and emotional learning (SEL) is little more than canned programs that highlight cliché-driven posters and flyers. Schools that take SEL seriously learn quickly that we can teach and assess SEL just like any other subject and content area. In this session, Eric Twadell explores the CASEL social-emotional learning competencies and develops strategies and best practices for teaching and learning.

Participants in this session:

- Explore the CASEL social-emotional learning competencies—self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills.
- Learn strategies for the explicit assessment of these competencies.
- Understand how these competencies can impact student learning.
- Learn how to assess the impact of social and emotional learning instruction.

KEYNOTE

Eric Twadell

Relentless: Initiating and Sustaining the PLC at Work Process

The first step in the never-ending journey of continuous improvement of a PLC at Work is building a strong foundation on the three big ideas: learning, collaboration, and results. The second step is doing that same work over and over and over again. In this keynote, Eric Twadell highlights the work that Adlai E. Stevenson High School (the “birthplace of the PLC at Work process”) has done to stay focused on the fundamental components of their PLC at Work culture and drive a steady increase in student learning and achievement.