

PLC at Work Institute Agenda

Idaho Falls, ID • August 22–24, 2023

Tuesday, August 22

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Main Foyer
	Continental Breakfast	Cafeteria
8:00–9:45 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 2–5.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided) <i>*Overflow Seating Available in the Left Auxiliary Gym</i>	Cafeteria
12:30–2:00 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–5.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	Panel Discussion —Presenters answer your most pressing questions.	

Wednesday, August 23

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Main Foyer
	Continental Breakfast	Cafeteria
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 2–5.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided) <i>*Overflow Seating Available in the Left Auxiliary Gym</i>	Cafeteria
12:30–2:00 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–5.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	Team Time —Presenters aid in your collaborative team discussions.	

Thursday, August 24

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Cafeteria
8:00–9:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–5.
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	Keynote —Luis F. Cruz <i>Transformational Leadership: Effectively Addressing Resistance to PLC Process Implementation</i>	Performing Arts Center

Agenda is subject to change.

Breakout Sessions at a Glance

Presenters & Titles	Tuesday, August 22		Wednesday, August 23		Thursday, August 24
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
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Activating the Keys of Formative Assessment to Create a Culture of Learning			121		
Grading: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly				121	
Daniel Cohan					
PLC Continuous Improvement: Tools and Techniques to Keep Your PLC Moving Forward	118		118		
Why Is It So Confusing? Defining Team Structures and Responsibilities in a PLC		118		118	
Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Persevering Through Resistance, Challenges, and Setbacks					118
Luis F. Cruz					
Task Forces: The Secret Weapon PLCs Use to Close Opportunity Gaps in Learning	119				
Embracing the Five Vessels: Learning the Non-Negotiables to Becoming a High-Functioning PLC		119			
English Learners and PLCs			115		
Taping Before Painting: Blending the PLC and RTI Processes to Collectively Respond When Students Don't Learn				119	

Presenters & Titles	Tuesday, August 22		Wednesday, August 23		Thursday, August 24
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
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Aaron Hansen					
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How to Develop PLCs for Singletons and Small Schools		113			
Making Students the Hero in Their Learning Journey: Developing Hope, Self-Efficacy, and Motivation Through PLCs at Work				113	113
Timothy D. Kanold					
Your Physical and Mental Wellness: Thriving at Work and at Home!	Lecture Hall				
Leading the PLC Life: Eliminating Barriers by Teaching the Loose-Tight Culture!		Lecture Hall			
Your PreK–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great Instruction and Tasks!			Lecture Hall		
Mindfulness, Relationships, and Trust: Strategies for Living the PLC Life!				Lecture Hall	
Heart & Soul: Living a Fully Engaged, High-Energy, Well-Balanced Professional Life!					Lecture Hall
Mike Mattos					
Are We a Group or a Team?	Performing Arts Center				
Taking Action: How to Create a Highly Effective, Multitiered System of Supports		Performing Arts Center			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools			Performing Arts Center		

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Behavior Solutions: Leveraging the PLC at Work Process to Teach Essential Behaviors				Performing Arts Center	
Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC at Work Process					119
Anthony Muhammad					
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Maria Nielsen					
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The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!		Media Center			
Help Your Team: Overcoming Common Collaborative Challenges in a PLC at Work			Media Center		
Elementary ELA Strategies to Keep Your Students on Track				Media Center	
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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

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

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

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*

Aaron Hansen

Owning Their Learning: Rethinking Students' Role in Intervention and Extension

To reach the levels of rigor being demanded of them on high-stakes assessments and life in the innovation era, students must become owners of their learning. All too often, students sit passively in compliance doing assignments, but aren't really *learning* what is intended. Participants will be challenged to rethink their teaching stance to become more learner centered by embedding PLC and RTI concepts into their daily practice. Participants walk away with strategies they can use in their schools and classrooms tomorrow to empower students to own their learning.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn the difference between a delivery-centered stance and a learner-centered stance and how to apply these concepts to empower students.
- Walk away with self-generated strategies for empowering students to reach their true potential.
- Be reinspired!

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

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.

Jeanne Spiller

Move Your Collaborative Team From *Establishing* to *Flourishing*

In this session, Jeanne Spiller shows participants how to use a continuum to identify ways to move their team from *establishing* to *flourishing*. The continuum defines what it looks like when collaborative teams are intentionally focused on learning and results, and it provides next steps for teams and those who lead them to move team practice to *flourishing* so that more students learn at grade-level or higher.

Participants can expect to:

- Define the characteristics of high-functioning collaborative teams using a continuum of practice.
- Discover action steps collaborative teams can take to enhance their practices.

Tesha Ferriby Thomas

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. Participants 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.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

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

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

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

Aaron Hansen

How to Develop PLCs for Singletons and Small Schools

PLC concepts resonate with most educators, but making collaborative learning work in small schools or for singleton teachers can be challenging. Participants explore five models for creating meaningful

professional learning teams: 1) changing schedules to allow teachers to teach the same subjects, 2) vertical teaming, 3) cross-curricular teaming, 4) supporting roles, and 5) using electronic tools to pair teachers with peers in the same subject area.

Outcomes for this session include:

- Discussing common structural barriers that prevent singletons from joining collaborative teams and learning how others have overcome those challenges
- Gaining the understanding necessary to develop an action plan to incorporate singletons into the PLC process

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.

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.

Jeanne Spiller

Protocols for Results: Using Data Discussions to Lead to Higher Levels of Learning for All

Is your system overwhelmed with data? Using protocols to transform data into information is an efficient and effective way to achieve improved results. Participants examine tools that empower teams to use data to drive instruction, impact student learning, and identify specific processes to meet district needs.

Participants in this session:

- Review research related to and examples of data-driven decision making.
- Apply multiple protocols for data analysis.
- Reflect on their school or district's current reality, while identifying tools that can be used or modified to meet specified needs.

Tesha Ferriby Thomas

Hot HITS: High Impact Teaching Strategies and Their Connection to PLCs

The research of Marzano and Hattie show that some instructional strategies stand out above the rest. Tesha Ferriby Thomas demonstrates how these specific strategies are related to the four critical questions of a PLC and guides participants as they delve into methods for immediate implementation.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the HITS (high-impact teaching strategies) as researched by Marzano and Hattie.
- Engage in hands-on activities to deepen their understanding of the HITS.
- Identify next steps to implementing HITS in the classroom.

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

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

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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

Aaron Hansen

Owning Their Learning: Rethinking Students' Role in Intervention

To reach the levels of rigor being demanded of them on high-stakes assessments and life in the innovation era, students must become owners of their learning. All too often, students sit passively in compliance doing assignments, but aren’t really *learning* what is intended. Participants will be challenged to rethink their teaching stance to become more learner centered by embedding PLC and RTI concepts into their daily practice. Participants walk away with strategies they can use in their schools and classrooms tomorrow to empower students to own their learning.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn the difference between a delivery-centered stance and a learner-centered stance and how to apply these concepts to empower students.
- Walk away with self-generated strategies for empowering students to reach their true potential.
- Be reinspired!

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.

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, Eric Twadell 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

Help Your Team: Overcoming Common Collaborative Problems 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 briefly review the work of highly effective teams, consider scenarios showing common team challenges, and work collaboratively to identify strategies for moving a team forward. This session is based on a book of the same title (Solution Tree Press, 2019), coauthored by Bob Sonju and other educators who possess a wide range of backgrounds and experiences in all levels of education.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Understand the process of learning.
- Gain shared clarity on the essentials of student learning.
- Use targeted assessment to get to the student and skill.

Jeanne Spiller

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.

Tesha Ferriby Thomas

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. Participants 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.

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- 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.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

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

Aaron Hansen

Making Students the Hero in Their Learning Journey: Developing Hope, Self-Efficacy, and Motivation Through PLCs at Work

In this session, Aaron Hansen inspires teachers and leaders to rethink their roles and to accept the challenge of fundamentally shifting student mindsets from apathy, compliance, and even victimization to hope. Such shifts help students develop the courage to try, face failure, and try again. They learn they are capable and powerful individuals with the capacity for changing the trajectory of their lives and those of future generations to come. Teachers and leaders then experience fulfillment, renewed purpose, and excitement for their work as they use the seven-step framework for helping students develop self-efficacy, motivation, and ownership.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how to use the seven-step framework for helping students take ownership, set goals, become motivated, self-assess their progress, course correct, and engage in metacognition, all to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy and hope.
- Learn how the PLC process is the foundation for empowering kids.
- Become reinspired and recommitted to making a difference!

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.

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

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.

Jeanne Spiller

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.

Tesha Ferriby Thomas

Hot HITS: High Impact Teaching Strategies and Their Connection to PLCs

The research of Marzano and Hattie show that some instructional strategies stand out above the rest. Tesha Ferriby Thomas demonstrates how these specific strategies are related to the four critical questions of a PLC and guides participants as they delve into methods for immediate implementation.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the HITS (high-impact teaching strategies) as researched by Marzano and Hattie.
- Engage in hands-on activities to deepen their understanding of the HITS.
- Identify next steps to implementing HITS in the classroom.

Session Descriptions—Day 3

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

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

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

Aaron Hansen

Making Students the Hero in Their Learning Journey: Developing Hope, Self-Efficacy, and Motivation Through PLCs at Work

In this session, Aaron Hansen inspires teachers and leaders to rethink their roles and to accept the challenge of fundamentally shifting student mindsets from apathy, compliance, and even victimization to hope. Such shifts help students develop the courage to try, face failure, and try again. They learn they are capable and powerful individuals with the capacity for changing the trajectory of their lives and those of future generations to come. Teachers and leaders then experience fulfillment, renewed purpose, and excitement for their work as they use the seven-step framework for helping students develop self-efficacy, motivation, and ownership.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how to use the seven-step framework for helping students take ownership, set goals, become motivated, self-assess their progress, course correct, and engage in metacognition, all to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy and hope.
- Learn how the PLC process is the foundation for empowering kids.
- Become reinspired and recommitted to making a difference!

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.

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.

Jeanne Spiller

Intentional, Courageous Leadership Starts With You!

Implementing and sustaining the PLC process requires intentional, focused, and courageous school, district, and teacher leaders who persist in ensuring students learn at high levels, rely on evidence to make decisions, and foster a trusting, collaborative environment. Participants in this session reflect on their leadership habits and traits and learn strategies that help strengthen their leadership practices. This session is specifically designed for school leaders, but many of the concepts addressed either relate to or can be applied to educational leadership in general. This session is appropriate for school, district, and teacher leaders to attend as individuals or as school or district leadership teams.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how to become more intentional and courageous in order to ensure high outcomes for students.
- Examine the power of vulnerability in fostering trust and courageous habits.
- Reflect and practice with tools, strategies, and resources for implementing focused daily leadership actions.

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. Tesha Ferriby Thomas explores these key elements in a highly interactive session with materials participants can immediately implement at their schools.

Participants 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.

KEYNOTE

Luis F. Cruz

Transformational Leadership: Effectively Addressing Resistance to PLC Process Implementation

As a result of the pandemic, inequities revealed nationwide beg the question, Are we really all in this together? Since schools do not exist in a vacuum and have inherited social inequities, educators must embrace bold leadership approaches to ensure high levels of learning for all.

As we reimagine school leadership in a new and challenging context, we must accept that our PLC journey is ultimately fueled by changing adult behaviors. But what happens when well-intentioned adults in our schools refuse to commit to the necessary behaviors? Luis F. Cruz, a former elementary, middle, and high school principal, reveals insights from his best-selling book, *Time for Change: Four Essential Skills for Transformational School and District Leaders* (Solution Tree, 2019), to guide participants in the work of creating robust PLCs. In addition, Dr. Cruz reminds us of the moral imperative we all share that must act as the driving force for PLC implementation back home.