Agenda
Madison, WI • July 24–26, 2024

Wednesday, July 24

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Capitol Promenade
	Continental Breakfast	Grand Terrace
8:00–9:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Heather Friziellie *Building the House Where* All *Can and Will Learn: The Foundations of a Professional Learning Community*	Exhibit Hall AB
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See pages 2–4.
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See pages 2–4.
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	**Keynote**—Tom Schimmer *Assessment Is the Engine!*	Madison Ballroom B
	Panel Discussion—*Presenters answer your most pressing questions.*	Exhibit Hall AB

Thursday, July 25

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Capitol Promenade
	Continental Breakfast	Grand Terrace
8:00–9:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Anthony Muhammad *The Way Forward: PLC at Work and the Bright Future of Education*	Exhibit Hall AB
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See pages 2–4.
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See pages 2–4.
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	**Team Time**—*Presenters aid in your collaborative team discussions.*	Exhibit Hall AB

Friday, July 26

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Grand Terrace
8:00–9:30 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See pages 2–4.
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Eric Twadell *Beyond PLC Lite: Digging Deeper Into the Three Big Ideas of a Professional Learning Community at Work*	Exhibit Hall AB

Agenda is subject to change.

Breakout Sessions at a Glance

Presenters & Titles	Wednesday, July 24		Thursday, July 25		Friday, July 26
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Casey Ahner					
Are We Collaborating, Coordinating, Cooperating, or Coblaborating?	Hall of Ideas F–I			Hall of Ideas F–I	
Serving Special Education Students: As Easy As Riding a Bike		Hall of Ideas F–I			
Data Rules! Using Student Data to Inform Effective Instruction, Remediation, and Enrichment			Hall of Ideas F–I		Hall of Ideas F–I
Jack Baldermann					
Inspiring Your Team to a PLC Championship: Effective Implementation Ideas and Practices to Increase Student Learning and Staff Engagement	Madison Ballroom A		Madison Ballroom A		
Motivating Disengaged Students: Supporting Champions of Hope and Learning for All		Madison Ballroom A			Madison Ballroom A
PLCs, Strategic Leadership, and Outstanding Results				Madison Ballroom A	
Tim Brown					
Building a Commitment to Learning in Students	Madison Ballroom D				Madison Ballroom D
How to Build Student Ownership, Motivation, and Efficacy Through the Four Questions of a Collaborative Team		Madison Ballroom D			
Developing Shared Leadership: Forming Your Guiding Coalition			Madison Ballroom D		
Grading: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly				Madison Ballroom D	
Heather Friziellie					
Cultivating Educator Wellness for Leading and Living the PLC Life!	Madison Ballroom B				
The Conundrum: Balancing Life and Leadership		Madison Ballroom B			

Session					
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools			Madison Ballroom B		
Yes We Can! Moving Beyond Labels Through the Partnership Between General and Special Educators				Madison Ballroom B	
Braving Difficult Conversations					Madison Ballroom B

Aaron Hansen

Session					
Owning Their Learning: Rethinking Students' Role in Intervention and Extension	Hall of Ideas E–H				
Heroes Within: A PLC Framework for Empowering Students to Own Their Learning Journey Through Hope, Self-Efficacy, and Motivation		Hall of Ideas E–H			Hall of Ideas E–H
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools			Hall of Ideas E–H		
How to Develop PLCs for Singletons and Small Schools				Hall of Ideas E–H	

Michelle Marrillia

Session					
The Case for Coaches in a Professional Learning Community	Hall of Ideas G–J		Hall of Ideas G–J		
Rising to the Challenge: High Needs, Bold Impact		Hall of Ideas G–J			Hall of Ideas G–J
Do Common Formative Assessments Change Your Practice? Turning Data Into Successful Secondary Classroom Instruction				Hall of Ideas G–J	

Anthony Muhammad

Session					
Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!	Exhibit Hall AB				
Transforming School Culture: New Insights		Exhibit Hall AB			
From PLC *Lite* to PLC *Right*!			Exhibit Hall AB		
Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change				Exhibit Hall AB	
Building Commitment and Overcoming Frustration on Your PLC Journey					Exhibit Hall AB

Eric Twadell

Session					
Through New Eyes: Examining the Culture of Your School	Madison Ballroom C				

Social and Emotional Learning in a PLC at Work		Madison Ballroom C			
Grading and Reporting for Learning: The Five Stages of Evidence-Based Grading			Madison Ballroom C		
Using AI Tools to Facilitate Better Teaching and Learning				Madison Ballroom C	
Leadership Matters: Four Essential Conversations for District, School, and Team Leaders					Madison Ballroom C
Jonathan G. Vander Els					
Assess for Impact! Prioritizing the Essentials in a PLC	Meeting Room K–O				
The Foundation for Change: Focusing on the Four Pillars in a PLC at Work		Meeting Room K–O		Meeting Room K–O	
Getting Together, Sticking Together, and Advancing Learning Together			Meeting Room K–O		Meeting Room K–O

Agenda is subject to change.

Session Descriptions—Day 1

Heather Friziellie

Building the House Where *All* Can and Will Learn: The Foundations of a Professional Learning Community

No matter where you may be on your journey toward believing in and becoming a professional learning community, the *why* of professional learning communities has never been clearer. With students struggling more than ever both academically and emotionally, educator exhaustion at its highest rate in history, and the number of candidates coming into education growing smaller every year, the need to rejuvenate our systems to effectively and efficiently make sure *all* learn and that schools are where *all* feel valued is reaching a crisis state.

In this keynote, Heather Friziellie clarifies the *why* of PLC work in the current context and establishes the foundation to build or renovate a house where *all* truly do learn. Participants leave with a clear plan for the first next steps and perhaps a few things to stop doing. Most importantly, participants leave energized and ready to learn, collaborate, and grow.

Casey Ahner

Are We Collaborating, Coordinating, Cooperating, or Coblaborating?
Casey R. Ahner shows participants the essential actions of a team as they answer the four critical questions to determine what products teams can and should create when they do the *right* work. Participants learn protocols that will increase any team's efficiency and efficacy.

Jack Baldermann

Inspiring Your Team to a PLC Championship: Effective Implementation Ideas and Practices to Increase Student Learning and Staff Engagement
This session outlines proven practices that lead to effective professional learning community implementation, including how to inspire the entire team and create higher levels of staff and student engagement.

Jack Baldermann led Westmont High School to win the DuFour Award as the best PLC in the nation. For six years (2017–2023), the Westmont team scored the highest overall rating on the University of Chicago 5Essentials Survey, including the highest possible score for student-to-teacher trust (99), academic engagement (99), and the best overall rating in the state in the category of Collaborative Teachers.

The goal of this session is to leave participants fired up about the power of our work and how to inspire the entire team to PLC greatness.

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.

Heather Friziellie

Cultivating Educator Wellness for Leading and Living the PLC Life!

In an educational landscape marked by increasing demands, it's crucial to recognize that the well-being of educators directly impacts student success and teacher retention. This session is an immersive experience designed to equip educators with the tools, strategies, and routines they need to prioritize their well-being, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes and increased job satisfaction.

Utilizing the research-affirmed educator wellness framework built by Timothy D. Kanold and Tina H. Boogren, this session helps educators of all levels and backgrounds learn how to bring their very best selves to their students through the use of daily routines and strategies that can have a big impact on the achievement of educators and students alike. Participants leave this event feeling inspired, motivated, and rejuvenated!

Participants gain insight into:

- Foundational research, theory, and practice for daily educator wellness and well-being in order to enhance student achievement
- A research-affirmed educator wellness framework that can be utilized by individuals, teams, schools, or entire districts as part of their professional development plan
- Simple but powerful routines, strategies, and tools that can be implemented immediately to support the mental and emotional health of all educators

Aaron Hansen

Owning Their Learning: Rethinking Students' Role in Intervention and Extension
Students must become owners of their learning in order to truly reach the levels of rigorous learning being demanded of them. Participants are challenged to rethink the traditional role of a "teacher" who delivers lessons, and begin taking on the role of a leader of learning who coaches and leads learners … all by embedding PLC and RTI concepts into their daily practice.

Participants can expect to:
- Learn how to collect the type of information needed to make smart intervention decisions, how to help students track their own progress, and how to structure intervention so students have some voice, choice, and mobility in the intervention and extension process.
- Be reinspired!

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. Participants in this session learn how a tiered instructional coaching model can help drive the collaborative culture in their schools to increase better outcomes for all students. Participants leave with sample coaching schedules and weekly plans for supporting and providing meaningful feedback to teams.

Participants in this session:
- Define the role of coaches in professional learning communities.
- Create a doable coaching schedule that supports the work of collaborative teams.
- Discuss strategies for building an effective tiered coaching model to support a collaborative culture.

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

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.

Jonathan G. Vander Els

Assess for Impact! Prioritizing the Essentials in a PLC

The word *assessment* comes from the latin root *assidere*, which translates to *sit beside*. But are our current instruction and assessment practices truly aimed at developing clarity on what is essential for students to know and be able to demonstrate? Jonathan G. Vander Els led his own school in developing great clarity and focus on identifying the essential standards that would be taught, learned, and demonstrated at all grade levels and in each content area. Participants in this session gain a better understanding of the "throughline" between instruction and assessment related to essential standards, as well as actionable next steps to implement in their own schools.

Casey Ahner

Serving Special Education Students: As Easy As Riding a Bike

The individual actions to ride a bike are not difficult. Putting it all together is much tougher. The changing requirements and technology make education a challenge as well. Participants in this session look at how to best serve *all* students, especially students receiving special education support.

Participants can expect to:
- Explore how to make decisions based on best practice versus "the practice I like best."
- Determine how to adjust to the ever-changing fields of education and special education while doing what's best for students.

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 judgments.

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 one another in educational leadership.

Aaron Hansen

Heroes Within: A PLC Framework for Empowering Students to Own Their Learning Journey Through Hope, Self-Efficacy, and Motivation

All too often, students sit passively in compliance doing assignments, but they aren't really *learning* what is intended. Others refuse to even try. Participants learn how to shift students' mindsets from one of compliance, apathy, and even victimization, to a story of hope where they are the hero! It's a new story where students have the courage to try, face failure, and try again. It's also a new story for teachers and leaders. It's a story of renewed fulfillment, purpose, and excitement for their work as they use the seven-step framework for helping students develop self-efficacy and motivation.

Participants can expect to:
- Learn how to use the seven-step framework for helping students take ownership, set goals, develop the courage to try, self-assess and track their progress, course correct, engage in metacognition, and create a vision for the future, all to cultivate a strong sense of self-efficacy.
- Understand why the PLC process is the foundation that makes new stories possible about themselves and school.
- Become reinspired and recommitted to making a difference!

Michelle Marrillia

Rising to the Challenge: High Needs, Bold Impact

This session is a call to action for educators to rise above obstacles and confront challenges faced by schools with high needs populations. Discover bold, actionable strategies that pave the way for profound impact on student success. Join Michelle Marrillia for a journey of collaboration and visionary leadership that can empower educators and elevate the learning experiences for all students. Be prepared to be challenged, inspired, and equipped with the tools to move away from "PLC lite" and make a lasting impact in high-needs educational settings.

Participants gain insights into:

- How schools move away from adult-centered behavior to student-centered learning
- The conditions necessary for a collaborative culture to exist
- The ongoing support teachers need to maintain a thriving PLC

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

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.

Jonathan G. Vander Els

The Foundation for Change: Focusing on the Four Pillars in a PLC at Work

It can be tempting to bypass some of the "will" components of becoming a PLC. But you cannot jump into the deep end of the work without solidifying these key foundational structures. The four pillars are critical to developing collective focus, understanding, and ultimately direction for a school to follow. Jonathan G. Vander Els guides participants through a process in which the mission, vision, collective commitments, and goals aren't just words on paper but become the threads that bind the work of your PLC together.

AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

Tom Schimmer

Assessment Is the Engine!

Assessment is the engine that drives the PLC at Work process. Tom Schimmer highlights why investing in our assessment literacy is the most effective and efficient professional investment any educator or school can make. Whether implementing an RTI continuum, differentiating instruction, or teaching 21st century skills, assessment is the engine that drives and determines the fidelity with which these approaches are implemented. Tom highlights six assessment tenets that are universal, timeless, and critical to the successful support of all learners.

Participants learn:
- How sound assessment practices are the engine that drives systems, structures, routines, and practices in schools
- Assessment tenets that are timeless and universally applicable in all situations
- How to establish seamlessness between formative and summative assessment purposes.

Session Descriptions—Day 2

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.

Casey Ahner

Data Rules! Using Student Data to Inform Effective Instruction, Remediation, and Enrichment
Casey R. Ahner shows participants how to effectively use student data to improve professional practice and respond to student needs by name and by skill. Participants look at the data analysis process and response.

Jack Baldermann

Inspiring Your Team to a PLC Championship: Effective Implementation Ideas and Practices to Increase Student Learning and Staff Engagement
This session outlines proven practices that lead to effective professional learning community implementation, including how to inspire the entire team and create higher levels of staff and student engagement.

Jack Baldermann led Westmont High School to win the DuFour Award as the best PLC in the nation. For six years (2017–2023), the Westmont team scored the highest overall rating on the University of Chicago 5Essentials Survey, including the highest possible score for student-to-teacher trust (99), academic engagement (99), and the best overall rating in the state in the category of Collaborative Teachers.

The goal of this session is to leave participants fired up about the power of our work and how to inspire the entire team to PLC greatness.

Tim Brown

Developing Shared Leadership: Forming Your Guiding Coalition
Many guiding coalitions are slowed in their efforts to become highly effective because they skip the important "forming" stage of a team. With clear purpose, goals, roles, and commitments, the guiding coalition can accelerate their movement from a group to a team with a common goal. This session is designed to have attendees participate in a variety of processes that they can take back and do with their guiding coalition. Examples from the field are provided, but the design of the workshop is for participants to experience and reflect using tools that have been specifically designed to align a guiding coalition to a single purpose.

Participants can expect to:
- Develop an understanding of the forming stage as described in the four stages of teams by Bruce Tuckman.
- Participate in strategies to successfully form a guiding coalition or enhance your current guiding coalition.

Heather Friziellie

Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools
Schools that function as PLCs must ultimately do two things: 1) foster an all-means-all culture of collective responsibility, and 2) create structures and systems that guarantee students additional time and support for learning when they need it.

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.

Aaron Hansen

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. This session 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:

- 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.

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. Participants in this session learn how a tiered instructional coaching model can help drive the collaborative culture in their schools to increase better outcomes for all students. Participants leave with sample coaching schedules and weekly plans for supporting and providing meaningful feedback to teams.

Participants in this session:
- Define the role of coaches in professional learning communities.
- Create a doable coaching schedule that supports the work of collaborative teams.
- Discuss strategies for building an effective tiered coaching model to support a collaborative culture.

Anthony Muhammad

From PLC *Lite* to PLC *Right*!

The PLC at Work process has been accessible to educators for over 25 years. Schools and school districts have been enamored with the concepts, and many have attempted to implement the process at scale. Unfortunately, not nearly enough schools have fully implemented the process. Most settle for a modified, scaled-down version called *PLC Lite*. In this session, Anthony Muhammad explores the key leverage points that will guide any school into PLC excellence!

Participants in this session:
- Learn how to organize an effective guiding coalition to guide a school into the six "tight" elements of a PLC.
- Benefit from 25 years of PLC wisdom in the best practices used to secure full staff commitment to the process.
- Examine surveys and rubrics to measure and assess a staff's current reality in the PLC process.

Eric Twadell

Grading and Reporting for Learning: The Five Stages of Evidence-Based Grading

Standards-based grading has often been cited as the "third rail of school reform." And yet, this is an important destination on the journey to becoming a PLC that embraces assessment and grading practices and supports student learning. This session provides participants with a roadmap for differentiating professional development for teachers and teams interested in implementing standards-based grading.

Participants in this session:
- Gain an appreciation for using a learning map to differentiate professional development.
- Explore challenges associated with traditional grading practices and reporting results.
- Learn how to structure professional development and a learning map for teachers and teams specifically focused on standards-based grading and reporting.
- Explore the five stages of evidence-based grading and reporting.

Jonathan G. Vander Els

Getting Together, Sticking Together, and Advancing Learning Together

Supporting every student in a school is hard work—and virtually impossible to do alone. Jonathan G. Vander Els led his own school in developing a model of shared leadership that gained national recognition, and he currently assists other educators throughout the United States in developing similar models. Participants in this session learn how to create these structures in their own schools through processes that develop the culture, shared values, and mindsets necessary to successfully support all learners—together!

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Casey Ahner

Are We Collaborating, Coordinating, Cooperating, or Coblaborating?

Casey R. Ahner shows participants the essential actions of a team as they answer the four critical questions to determine what products teams can and should create when they do the *right* work. Participants learn protocols that will increase any team's efficiency and efficacy.

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

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.

Heather Friziellie

Yes We Can! Moving Beyond Labels Through the Partnership Between General and Special Educators
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 personal and systemic beliefs about students, themselves, and learning. Then, ensure that all systems align, bringing this vision to life.

Focused on closing the gaps between all students and students with identified needs, this session provides an overview of the core concepts and associated strategies in the work of inclusive practices.

Participants in this session:
- Examine the core concepts and aligned practices that strengthen a collective commitment and the shared ownership required to ensure high levels of learning for *all*.

- Reflect on current practices 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.

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

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

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).

Eric Twadell

Using AI Tools to Facilitate Better Teaching and Learning

ChatGPT—one of the most valuable technology tools for teachers and learners—became widely available in fall 2022. Since then, artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT have taken education by storm. Teachers are using these tools to create new content, differentiate their instruction, identify strategies for teaching and reteaching concepts to their students, and work more efficiently and effectively. Just as importantly, high school students are using these tools to improve their understanding of complex ideas, identify new paths of learning in their areas of personal interest, and receive targeted feedback on their work products. Because AI tools are changing how we work and learn, classroom teachers must reflect on their potential and understand their limitations.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Understand what artificial intelligence is and how it works.
- Discuss both the potential and limitations of artificial intelligence tools.
- Examine how teachers can use artificial intelligence tools to facilitate meaningful learning experiences.

Jonathan G. Vander Els

The Foundation for Change: Focusing on the Four Pillars in a PLC at Work

It can be tempting to bypass some of the "will" components of becoming a PLC. But you cannot jump into the deep end of the work without solidifying these key foundational structures. The four pillars are critical to developing collective focus, understanding, and ultimately direction for a school to follow. Jonathan G. Vander Els guides participants through a process in which the mission, vision, collective commitments, and goals aren't just words on paper but become the threads that bind the work of your PLC together.

Session Descriptions—Day 3

Casey Ahner

Data Rules! Using Student Data to Inform Effective Instruction, Remediation, and Enrichment

Casey R. Ahner shows participants how to effectively use student data to improve professional practice and respond to student needs by name and by skill. Participants look at the data analysis process and response.

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 judgments.

Heather Friziellie

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.

Aaron Hansen

Heroes Within: A PLC Framework for Empowering Students to Own Their Learning Journey Through Hope, Self-Efficacy, and Motivation

All too often, students sit passively in compliance doing assignments, but they aren't really *learning* what is intended. Others refuse to even try. Participants learn how to shift students' mindsets from one of compliance, apathy, and even victimization, to a story of hope where they are the hero! It's a new story where students have the courage to try, face failure, and try again. It's also a new story for teachers and leaders. It's a story of renewed fulfillment, purpose, and excitement for their work as they use the seven-step framework for helping students develop self-efficacy and motivation.

Participants can expect to:
- Learn how to use the seven-step framework for helping students take ownership, set goals, develop the courage to try, self-assess and track their progress, course correct, engage in metacognition, and create a vision for the future, all to cultivate a strong sense of self-efficacy.
- Understand why the PLC process is the foundation that makes new stories possible about themselves and school.
- Become reinspired and recommitted to making a difference!

Michelle Marrillia

Rising to the Challenge: High Needs, Bold Impact

This session is a call to action for educators to rise above obstacles and confront challenges faced by schools with high needs populations. Discover bold, actionable strategies that pave the way for profound impact on student success. Join Michelle Marrillia for a journey of collaboration and visionary leadership that can empower educators and elevate the learning experiences for all students. Be

prepared to be challenged, inspired, and equipped with the tools to move away from "PLC lite" and make a lasting impact in high-needs educational settings.

Participants gain insights into:
- How schools move away from adult-centered behavior to student-centered learning
- The conditions necessary for a collaborative culture to exist
- The ongoing support teachers need to maintain a thriving PLC

Anthony Muhammad

Building Commitment and Overcoming Frustration on Your PLC Journey
Anthony Muhammad addresses two vital stages in creating a PLC culture: 1) establishing philosophical agreement and building shared purpose, and 2) addressing staff frustration and reluctance to change. He leads an exploration of theories linking school culture and student learning, and participants leave with practical strategies to transform the culture at their schools.

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

Eric Twadell

Leadership Matters: 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.

Jonathan G. Vander Els

Getting Together, Sticking Together, and Advancing Learning Together
Supporting every student in a school is hard work—and virtually impossible to do alone. Jonathan G. Vander Els led his own school in developing a model of shared leadership that gained national recognition, and he currently assists other educators throughout the United States in developing similar

models. Participants in this session learn how to create these structures in their own schools through processes that develop the culture, shared values, and mindsets necessary to successfully support all learners—together!

Eric Twadell

Beyond PLC Lite: Digging Deeper Into the Three Big Ideas of a Professional Learning Community at Work

Moving beyond PLC lite is a never-ending journey of continuous improvement and growth and requires a deep commitment to the three big ideas of the PLC process: learning, collaboration, and results. 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.