

# Agenda

## Charlotte, NC • July 15–17, 2024

### Monday, July 15

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Rooms/Locations TBD
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Heather Friziellie <i>Building the House Where All Can and Will Learn: The Foundations of a Professional Learning Community</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–4.
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–4.
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Tom Schimmer <i>Assessment Is the Engine!</i>	
	<b>Panel Discussion</b> —Presenters answer your most pressing questions.	

### Tuesday, July 16

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Rooms/Locations TBD
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Anthony Muhammad <i>The Way Forward: PLC at Work and the Bright Future of Education</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–4.
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–4.
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	<b>Team Time</b> —Presenters aid in your collaborative team discussions.	

### Wednesday, July 17

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Rooms/Locations TBD
8:00–9:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–4.
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Tim Brown <i>How to Make Our Promise a Reality</i>	

Agenda is subject to change.

## Breakout Sessions at a Glance

Presenters & Titles	Monday, July 15		Tuesday, July 16		Wednesday, July 17
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
<b>Tim Brown</b>					
Building a Commitment to Learning in Students	X				
How to Build Student Ownership, Motivation, and Efficacy Through the Four Questions of a Collaborative Team		X			
Developing Shared Leadership: Forming Your Guiding Coalition			X		
Grading: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly				X	X
<b>Scott Carr</b>					
What’s So Essential About Essential Standards?	X				
Finding Time for Intervention		X		X	
The Agile Teacher			X		X
<b>Erika Chapa</b>					
Implementing Effective Interventions Based on the Science of Reading	X				X
Social-Emotional Learning and Self-Awareness in English Learners		X		X	
Answering the Four Critical Questions Through an EL Lens			X		
<b>William M. Ferriter</b>					
Collaborative Tools for Learning Teams in a PLC at Work	X				
You Can Learn! Building Student Ownership, Motivation, and Efficacy With the PLC at Work Process		X			
Using AI Tools to Facilitate Better Teaching and Learning			X		
Small Schools and Singletons: Structuring Meaningful Professional Learning Teams for Every Teacher				X	

Presenters & Titles	Monday, July 15		Tuesday, July 16		Wednesday, July 17
	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.
Making Differentiation Doable					X
<b>Heather Frizzielle</b>					
Cultivating Educator Wellness for Leading and Living the PLC Life!	X				
Yes We Can! Moving Beyond Labels Through the Partnership Between General and Special Educators		X			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools			X		
The Conundrum: Balancing Life and Leadership				X	
Braving Difficult Conversations					X
<b>Michael J. Maffoni</b>					
Transforming PLCs in High-Needs Schools Through Strategic Action	X			X	
The Five Keys to Effective Team Meetings: Keeping Focused on the Right Work		X			
Energize Your Teams: Coaching Collaborative Teams From Next Practice to Best Practice			X		X
<b>Anthony Muhammad</b>					
From PLC <i>Lite</i> to PLC <i>Right</i> !	X				
Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!		X			
Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change			X		
Building Commitment and Overcoming Frustration on Your PLC Journey				X	
Transforming School Culture: New Insights					X
<b>Jamie Nino</b>					
Unlocking the Power of Student Learning Communities	X				X

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	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.
Aiming to Hit the Target: Why a Guaranteed Viable Curriculum Is So Important for Learning		X		X	
The Pathway to Excellence: High-Quality Common Formative Assessments			X		
<b>Sarah Schuhl</b>					
Acceleration: It Takes a Team!	X				
Coaching Teams and Teachers in a PLC at Work		X			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools			X		
Creating Common Assessments for Team and Student Learning				X	
Data, Data, Data: What Do Teams Need? What Do Teams Do With It?					X

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# Session Descriptions—Day 1

## MORNING KEYNOTE

### 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 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 professional learning communities 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.

## 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.

## Scott Carr

### **What's So Essential About Essential Standards?**

Identifying essential standards is only the first step toward improving student learning and teaching practices. Utilizing learning targets and success criteria can improve clarity and relevance in daily lessons. This can lead to both higher levels of student engagement and increased ownership of their learning.

Participants in this session:

- Uncover strategies for identifying and aligning learning targets and success criteria.
- Learn to incorporate learning targets and success criteria into daily lessons and formative assessments.
- Explore methods for using learning targets and success criteria to encourage students to reflect on their own learning and success.

## Erika Chapa

### **Implementing Effective Interventions Based on the Science of Reading**

Explore ways to determine appropriate reading interventions rooted in the science of reading. Dive into evidence-based strategies that decode the complexities of reading development. Elevate your teaching with tools that help bridge the gap between research and practice for enhanced literacy outcomes in both classroom and intervention settings.

Participants in this session:

- Uncover the neurological underpinnings of reading.
- Gain practical insights to implement targeted interventions that address root causes of reading difficulties.
- Explore interventions focused on phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

## William M. Ferriter

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

For many teachers, professional learning team meetings can be nothing short of overwhelming. Unaccustomed to making collective decisions, teams struggle to organize their work together and begin to question the benefit of a school's decision to restructure as a professional learning community. Participants in this session explore the kinds of tangible structures and explicit tools that learning teams must have in place to make their collaborative meetings productive.

Participants in this session:

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

## 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

## Michael J. Maffoni

### **Transforming PLCs in High-Needs Schools Through Strategic Action**

Moving from PLC "lite" to "right" requires a shift to strategic planning and away from random acts of improvement. This session, designed for educators in high-needs schools and relevant to any school aiming to improve teaching and learning, delves into strategic planning in PLCs. Participants enhance their understanding of implementation science and learn to align academic and PLC-specific SMART goals with their school's PLC process.

This session goes in depth on defining the essential elements required for crafting a 30-, 60-, and 90-day action plan that establishes clear short- and long-term benchmarks, crucial for actualizing SMART goals and achieving real results in high-need schools.

Attendees are equipped with practical tools to assess current PLC practices, strategize improvements, and develop a roadmap for guiding their school's coalition toward lasting, impactful changes.

Participants in this session:

- Interact with actionable tools to help schools assess current PLC practices and determine strategic next steps.
- Understand the connection between establishing academic and PLC-specific SMART goals and the development of actionable plans to change results in schools.
- Explore the crucial role of a guiding coalition in leading and managing change.

## **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

## **Jamie Nino**

### **Unlocking the Power of Student Learning Communities**

Participants in this session are introduced to student learning communities (SLCs). Just as adults build their own capacity, students need to do likewise. This high-leverage team action ensures that students are actively participating in their own learning. SLCs encourage students to have a growth mindset and hold one another accountable for learning.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding how to establish goals with students to foster a sense of purpose in their learning journey
- Examining how to establish a safe culture within a classroom so students are successful
- Developing a growth mindset to promote resiliency
- Introducing celebration to recognize and appreciate student achievement



## Sarah Schuhl

### **Acceleration: It Takes a Team!**

It can be frustrating when students do not advance to the next grade level or course having learned the standards required to be successful. What is your team to do? The answer is not remediation but acceleration. Accelerating student learning to grade level and beyond requires that teachers across a team determine how students will learn grade-level essential standards every day and simultaneously work to connect prior-knowledge standards through classwork, interventions, and extensions. In this session, Sarah Schuhl shares practical tools and strategies for planning and teaching in an acceleration model.

Participants in this session:

- Learn how to plan for acceleration.
- Explore instructional practices designed to accelerate student learning in core instruction.
- Consider how to accelerate learning through intentional and targeted interventions and extensions.

## 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 judgments.

### Scott Carr

#### **Finding Time for Intervention**

Meeting student needs with Tier 2 strategies can be challenging. A school's commitment to students and teachers should include providing protected time for intervention. Participants in this session

examine the logistics and collective commitments that go into creating and sustaining a weekly intervention time.

Participants in this session:

- Explore strategies for identifying students needing support and challenge.
- Discuss effective intervention strategies for reteaching and enrichment.
- Review flexible schedules and structures to provide time for additional student support.

## Erika Chapa

### **Social-Emotional Learning and Self-Awareness in English Learners**

In this session, Erica Chapa dives into cultivating self-awareness among ELs—emphasizing emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills—through vocabulary development and opportunities for discourse. Navigate strategies to enhance your vocabulary instruction to build a supportive classroom community where English learners feel empowered to express themselves and build positive relationships.

Participants in this session:

- Discover practical tools to integrate SEL seamlessly into language learning.
- Engage in activities that enhance language development, promoting a sense of belonging and confidence among ELs.
- Explore culturally responsive SEL strategies that bridge language gaps.

## William M. Ferriter

### **You Can Learn! Building Student Ownership, Motivation, and Efficacy With the PLC at Work Process**

In her research on the reasons students drop out of high school, Deborah Feldman (2017) made a surprising discovery: Most kids who walked away before graduation could track their decision to specific moments of academic challenge that caused them to stop believing in “their ability to be a student.” What are the implications of Feldman’s discovery for practitioners? It is imperative to build both the confidence and capacity of every learner. This session introduces participants to the steps that career classroom teacher and Solution Tree author William M. Ferriter has taken to use student-centered versions of the four critical questions of learning in his classroom.

Participants in this session can expect to:

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

## 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.

## Michael J. Maffoni

### **The Five Keys to Effective Team Meetings: Keeping Focused on the Right Work**

Team meetings should result in team members experiencing an energy gain—not an energy drain.

This session explores the five keys to effective team meetings and how focus, structures, roles, relationships, and processes play a different role in helping promote positive and productive team meetings. When team meetings become unproductive or burdensome, the root of the problem is likely related to the lack of implementation of one of the five keys of highly effective teams. Like diamonds, each of these keys are multifaceted and contribute to the team's productivity in different ways. When all are present, teams are more effective and efficient.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the five keys to effective teams and how they enhance team collaboration, effectiveness, and student learning.
- Reflect on how their team behaviors align with widely accepted best practice.
- Examine specific tools that can help provide clarity on the most common learning team tasks.

## 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

## Jamie Nino

### **Aiming to Hit the Target: Why a Guaranteed Viable Curriculum Is So Important for Learning**

Establishing a common guaranteed and viable curriculum (GVC) is foundational to student academic achievement. Schools that lack direction or focus usually do not have a GVC established or it may need to be fine tuned. Jamie Nino shares strategies that ensure equity, coherence, expectations, and balance through a GVC that can be easily replicated within a district or school through staff interdependency.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Establishing a guaranteed and viable curriculum through a collaborative approach
- Identifying priority standards by using consensus
- Developing a proficiency map as a team
- Unpacking standards into student learning targets to provide effective planning and assessment

## Sarah Schuhl

### **Coaching Teams and Teachers in a PLC at Work**

Instructional coaches support teachers and teams engaged in the PLC process. How can instructional coaches grow the learning of both teachers and collaborative teams in intentional coaching cycles? How is the time of instructional coaches spent to maximize teacher and student learning? Sarah Schuhl provides strategies to create meaningful and effective coaching cycles with a focus on improved student learning.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn listening strategies for effective coaching.
- Explore coaching plans for teams and teachers to use in coaching cycles.

## **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

### 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**

##### **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.

#### **Scott Carr**

##### **The Agile Teacher**

Educators can leverage a variety of evidence to guide daily instructional decisions and student support in order to serve the diverse needs of their students. The agile teacher responds rather than reacts to data. They are flexible and able to pivot their teaching based on student results and team input.

Participants in this session:

- Identify various methods for collecting data related to student learning and growth.
- Explore techniques for engaging students in the assessment process.
- Learn team strategies for reflection and decision making.

## Erika Chapa

### **Answering the Four Critical Questions Through an EL Lens**

Address the four pivotal PLC questions—what students should learn, how to measure success, interventions for those who struggle, and enrichment for those who excel—with a focused emphasis on EL needs. Navigate collaborative strategies that celebrate linguistic diversity and unlock the full potential of your PLC to empower every learner.

Participants in this session:

- Explore targeted approaches for language acquisition and cultural responsiveness.
- Establish steps for differentiated instruction based on linguistic needs of students.
- Gain actionable insights to ensure equitable and enriching experiences for ELs.

## William M. Ferriter

### **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.

## 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.

## Michael J. Maffoni

### **Energize Your Teams: Coaching Collaborative Teams From Next Practice to Best Practice**

It is clear, now more than ever, that effective implementation of a PLC at Work matters and is too important to be left to chance. Coaching collaborative teams provides the necessary bridge as they cross the knowing-doing gap.

Michael J. Maffoni helps participants strengthen their PLCs through effective coaching practices. Participants examine why coached teams go further faster than uncoached teams and explore how a proven team-coaching cycle, tools, and professional development modules from *Energize Your Teams: Powerful Tools for Coaching Collaborative Teams in PLCs at Work* (Solution Tree, 2021) provide resources for schools to make the shift from “PLC Lite” to “PLC Right.”

Participants in this session:

- Learn a proven, effective coaching cycle that fortifies collaborative team and school PLC practices.
- Engage in activities to apply the coaching tools, processes, and professional development to coach collaborative teams in a PLC.
- Explore professional development modules aligned to the five essential prerequisites of a PLC so teams receive just-in-time professional development based on their specific next steps.

## 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.

## Jamie Nino

### **The Pathway to Excellence: High-Quality Common Formative Assessments**

Common formative assessments (CFAs) are essential for schools to be able to work collaboratively, improve student achievement, and for teacher teams to glean their instructional impact on learning. Team-developed common assessments are powerful for teacher teams to be informed on instructional moves necessary for students to achieve!

Participants in this session:

- Learn strategies for fostering their PLC to share strategies and resources related to common formative assessments.
- Design high-quality CFAs that align with learning targets and inform instructional decisions.
- Evaluate better instructional strategies in response to CFAs.
- Examine different types of assessment tools to show student mastery.

## Sarah Schuhl

### **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.

## 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.

### Scott Carr

#### **Finding Time for Intervention**

Meeting student needs with Tier 2 strategies can be challenging. A school's commitment to students and teachers should include providing protected time for intervention. Participants in this session examine the logistics and collective commitments that go into creating and sustaining a weekly intervention time.

Participants in this session:

- Explore strategies for identifying students needing support and challenge.
- Discuss effective intervention strategies for reteaching and enrichment.
- Review flexible schedules and structures to provide time for additional student support.

### Erika Chapa

#### **Social-Emotional Learning and Self-Awareness in English Learners**

In this session, Erica Chapa dives into cultivating self-awareness among ELs—emphasizing emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills—through vocabulary development and opportunities for discourse. Navigate strategies to enhance your vocabulary instruction to build a supportive classroom community where English learners feel empowered to express themselves and build positive relationships.

Participants in this session:

- Discover practical tools to integrate SEL seamlessly into language learning.
- Engage in activities that enhance language development, promoting a sense of belonging and confidence among ELs.
- Explore culturally responsive SEL strategies that bridge language gaps.

## William M. Ferriter

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

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

Participants in this session:

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

## 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.

## Michael J. Maffoni

### **Transforming PLCs in High-Needs Schools Through Strategic Action**

Moving from PLC “lite” to “right” requires a shift to strategic planning and away from random acts of improvement. This session, designed for educators in high-needs schools and relevant to any school

aiming to improve teaching and learning, delves into strategic planning in PLCs. Participants enhance their understanding of implementation science and learn to align academic and PLC-specific SMART goals with their school's PLC process.

This session goes in depth on defining the essential elements required for crafting a 30-, 60-, and 90-day action plan that establishes clear short- and long-term benchmarks, crucial for actualizing SMART goals and achieving real results in high-need schools.

Attendees are equipped with practical tools to assess current PLC practices, strategize improvements, and develop a roadmap for guiding their school's coalition toward lasting, impactful changes.

Participants in this session:

- Interact with actionable tools to help schools assess current PLC practices and determine strategic next steps.
- Understand the connection between establishing academic and PLC-specific SMART goals and the development of actionable plans to change results in schools.
- Explore the crucial role of a guiding coalition in leading and managing change.

## **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).

## **Jamie Nino**

### **Aiming to Hit the Target: Why a Guaranteed Viable Curriculum Is So Important for Learning**

Establishing a common guaranteed and viable curriculum (GVC) is foundational to student academic achievement. Schools that lack direction or focus usually do not have a GVC established or it may need to be fine tuned. Jamie Nino shares strategies that ensure equity, coherence, expectations, and balance through a GVC that can be easily replicated within a district or school through staff interdependency.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Establishing a guaranteed and viable curriculum through a collaborative approach

- Identifying priority standards by using consensus
- Developing a proficiency map as a team
- Unpacking standards into student learning targets to provide effective planning and assessment

## **Sarah Schuhl**

### **Creating Common Assessments for Team and Student Learning**

Common assessments help students and teachers answer the second critical question of a PLC, “How do we know if students learned it?” What is the purpose of each assessment? How can they be used to help students identify what they have and have not yet learned? Participants explore considerations for writing quality common assessments and using them to involve students in their learning.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand a balanced assessment system.
- Learn criteria for creating high-quality common assessments.
- Explore how to use common assessments for student reflection and action.

## Session Descriptions—Day 3

### 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.

#### Scott Carr

##### **The Agile Teacher**

Educators can leverage a variety of evidence to guide daily instructional decisions and student support in order to serve the diverse needs of their students. The agile teacher responds rather than reacts to data. They are flexible and able to pivot their teaching based on student results and team input.

Participants in this session:

- Identify various methods for collecting data related to student learning and growth.
- Explore techniques for engaging students in the assessment process.
- Learn team strategies for reflection and decision making.

#### Erika Chapa

##### **Implementing Effective Interventions Based on the Science of Reading**

Explore ways to determine appropriate reading interventions rooted in the science of reading. Dive into evidence-based strategies that decode the complexities of reading development. Elevate your teaching with tools that help bridge the gap between research and practice for enhanced literacy outcomes in both classroom and intervention settings.

Participants in this session:

- Uncover the neurological underpinnings of reading.
- Gain practical insights to implement targeted interventions that address root causes of reading difficulties.
- Explore interventions focused on phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

## **William M. Ferriter**

### **Making Differentiation Doable**

If schools are truly working to move every student forward, learning experiences must be differentiated to meet the needs of individual students. The challenge, however, rests in making differentiation doable. While few teachers doubt the importance of differentiating, many struggle to make customized learning spaces a reality.

In this presentation, Solution Tree author and career classroom teacher Bill Ferriter introduces participants to a range of strategies that can be used to:

- Carefully plan and deliver initial attempts at remediation and enrichment in a differentiated classroom.
- Create meaningful “turn to” tasks for students to tackle after demonstrating mastery of grade-level essentials.
- Reduce the time, energy, and effort required to effectively differentiate instruction.

## **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.

## **Michael J. Maffoni**

### **Energize Your Teams: Coaching Collaborative Teams From Next Practice to Best Practice**

It is clear, now more than ever, that effective implementation of a PLC at Work matters and is too important to be left to chance. Coaching collaborative teams provides the necessary bridge as they cross the knowing-doing gap.

Michael J. Maffoni helps participants strengthen their PLCs through effective coaching practices. Participants examine why coached teams go further faster than uncoached teams and explore how a proven team-coaching cycle, tools, and professional development modules from *Energize Your Teams: Powerful Tools for Coaching Collaborative Teams in PLCs at Work* (Solution Tree, 2021) provide resources for schools to make the shift from “PLC Lite” to “PLC Right.”

Participants in this session:

- Learn a proven, effective coaching cycle that fortifies collaborative team and school PLC practices.
- Engage in activities to apply the coaching tools, processes, and professional development to coach collaborative teams in a PLC.
- Explore professional development modules aligned to the five essential prerequisites of a PLC so teams receive just-in-time professional development based on their specific next steps.

## 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

## Jamie Nino

### **Unlocking the Power of Student Learning Communities**

Participants in this session are introduced to student learning communities (SLCs). Just as adults build their own capacity, students need to do likewise. This high-leverage team action ensures that students are actively participating in their own learning. SLCs encourage students to have a growth mindset and hold one another accountable for learning.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding how to establish goals with students to foster a sense of purpose in their learning journey
- Examining how to establish a safe culture within a classroom so students are successful
- Developing a growth mindset to promote resiliency
- Introducing celebration to recognize and appreciate student achievement



## Sarah Schuhl

### **Data, Data, Data: What Do Teams Need? What Do Teams Do With It?**

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

### **KEYNOTE**

## Tim Brown

### **How to Make Our Promise a Reality**

A complete examination of the PLC at Work process shows there are six interconnected characteristics that influence the cultural and structural changes that occur within a school. This keynote is designed to wrap up the institute by examining those characteristics that need to be embedded into the culture of our school in order to fulfill the promises we make to our students and community. The keynote is structured to inform, engage, and deepen our understanding as to how these characteristics help develop collective teacher efficacy and reinforce our belief in our ability to organize and execute the course of action to move us closer to accomplishing our mission, vision, values, and goals.