

# Agenda

## Grand Rapids • August 14–16, 2024

### Wednesday, August 14

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Rooms/Locations TBD
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Mike Mattos <i>Proven, Practical, and Doable: Making the Case for PLCs at Work</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.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	
12:30–2:00 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–4.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	<b>Panel Discussion</b> —Presenters answer your most pressing questions.	

### Thursday, August 15

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	Rooms/Locations TBD
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Luis F. Cruz <i>Let's Get Deeper: Understanding the Difference Between Becoming a PLC and Engaging in the PLC Process</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.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	
12:30–2:00 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–4.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	<b>Team Time</b> —Presenters aid in your collaborative team discussions.	

### Friday, August 16

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> —Bob Sonju <i>Right Here, Right Now: The Power of Educators Learning Together</i>	

Agenda is subject to change.

## Breakout Sessions at a Glance

Presenters & Titles	Wednesday, August 14		Thursday, August 15		Friday, August 16
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:00–2:00 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:00–2:00 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
<b>Luis F. Cruz</b>					
Task Forces: Collectively Using PLC Characteristics to Serve Underperforming Student Cohorts	X				
When the Staff Says No to PLCs: Dealing With Resistance to the PLC Process in Your School or District		X			
English Learners and PLCs			X		
Taping Before Painting: Blending the PLC and RTI Processes to Collectively Respond When Students Don't Learn				X	
I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful					X
<b>Emily Feltner</b>					
They're All Over the Place! Strategies to Support Reading Comprehension at Grade Level and Beyond	X			X	
We've Established the Essentials; What's Next?		X			
Collaboration Revolution: Transforming Team Tensions Into Total Commitment			X		X
<b>Chris Hansen</b>					
Put Your Learning Targets on the Board: Moving From Complying to Making This Meaningful for Teacher and Student Alike	X			X	
Common Formative Assessment for Singletons and Small Schools: The "On What" Dilemma		X			
Great Instructional Strategies to Avoid Tier 2 and Tier 3 Intervention			X		X
<b>Jacqueline Heller</b>					
High Levels of Learning for Both Students and Adults	X			X	

TEAMS Transform Literacy Outcomes for Students in a PLC at Work		X			X
How Can Assessment Look Different in Early Childhood? (PreK–2)			X		
<b>Mike Mattos</b>					
Are We a Group or a Team?	X				
Taking Action: How to Create a Highly Effective, Multitiered System of Supports		X			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools			X		
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools				X	
Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC at Work Process					X
<b>Robert Mountjoy</b>					
"We Practice SEL at My School!" What Proof Can You Produce to Support Your Work in Educating the Whole Child?	X				X
Yes We Can! Ensuring All Students Learn at High Levels Using Inclusive Practices		X		X	
The Little School That Could! The Story of the School That Was Counted Out			X		
<b>Regina Stephens Owens</b>					
Cultivating Educator Wellness for Leading and Living the PLC Life!	X				
The <i>Why</i> Effect: Intentional Systems Drive Inspirational Cultures		X			
Data Discussion for Instructional Leaders: From Data to Design to Demonstration of Learning			X		
Small Schools and Singletons: Wired for Rigor and Relevance				X	
The Learning Professional: Coaching Competence, Not Compliance					X
<b>Phillip Page</b>					
Restructuring the Roles and Responsibilities of Instructional Coaches to Prepare and Guide the Successful Implementation of a Professional Learning Community	X			X	

Uncommon Results: Celebrating Your Way to a Model Professional Learning Community		X			X
Utilizing the Guiding Coalition to Model, Progress Monitor, and Provide Intentional Professional Learning in the PLC Process			X		
<b>Bob Sonju</b>					
Supercharge Your Collaboration: Strategies to Make Your Team's Collaboration Exceptional	X				
Proven Practices of PLC Leaders: Keys to Leading, Monitoring, and Supporting Teachers and Teams in a PLC		X			
Gaining Shared Clarity: Answering Question One—What Do We Want Them to Know?			X		
Help Your Team: Overcoming Common Collaborative Challenges in a PLC at Work				X	
Simplifying the Journey: Collaboration, Consistency, and Clarity for Teachers, Teams, and Leaders in a PLC					X
<b>Eric Twadell</b>					
Leadership Matters: Four Essential Conversations for District, School, and Team Leaders	X				
Through New Eyes: Examining the Culture of Your School		X			
Social and Emotional Learning in a PLC at Work			X		
Grading and Reporting for Learning: The Five Stages of Evidence-Based Grading				X	
Using AI Tools to Facilitate Better Teaching and Learning					X

Agenda is subject to change.

## Session Descriptions—Day 1

### KEYNOTE

#### Mike Mattos

##### **Proven, Practical, and Doable: Making the Case for PLCs at Work**

As a profession, we are facing unprecedented times. Never in our history has success in K–12 education been more vital to every child’s success, and never have educators faced such daunting challenges amplified by a global pandemic and social strife. How we, as educators, respond to these realities will have a profound impact for generations. In this keynote, Mike Mattos makes the case that our best hope to overcome these obstacles and ensure all our students succeed is to become a true professional learning community. Participants learn the guiding principles and essential actions of the PLC at Work process, assess their progress, and consider next steps in their PLC journey.

### MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### Luis F. Cruz

##### **Task Forces: Collectively Using PLC Characteristics to Serve Underperforming Student Cohorts**

A strong and focused PLC ensures high levels of learning for all students. To achieve this goal, PLCs acknowledge that achievement gaps result when traditional school systems don’t give historically marginalized students the opportunity to learn. Task forces assemble teams of educators to confront systemic barriers that hinder English learners, students with individual education plans, and economically disadvantaged students, to name a few disenfranchised student cohorts. Luis F. Cruz shares how task forces redesign systems in seven steps to ensure all students learn at high levels, including those traditionally excluded from optimal opportunities.

Participants in this session learn:

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

#### Emily Feltner

##### **They’re All Over the Place! Strategies to Support Reading Comprehension at Grade Level and Beyond**

This session focuses on strategies to foster reading comprehension in grades three and above to ensure students who enter below grade level leave reading on grade level or above. Crafting effective Tier 1 instruction for students with varying proficiency levels poses unique challenges requiring a delicate balance when addressing the difficulties faced by struggling readers. It necessitates educators allow students to struggle productively when engaging in grade-level material without overtaking the reading

process. Learn how to inspire and empower students to not only meet academic reading standards but to cultivate a lifelong love for reading, creating readers for life!

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Explore practical methods to scaffold instruction, providing support for students as they tackle increasingly complex reading materials.
- Discover strategies to cultivate critical thinking skills alongside reading, writing, thinking, and talking.
- Discuss approaches to extend the love for reading beyond the classroom setting.

## Chris Hansen

### **Put Your Learning Targets on the Board: Moving From Complying to Making This Meaningful for Teacher and Student Alike**

You can call the learning targets *learning intentions*, *success criteria*, or *what all students need to know and be able to do*, but if you are putting those words up to satisfy a district or principal *requirement*, the activity can be empty. The research is clear that when both the educator and the student know what is to be learned, the chances of success increase dramatically. In this session, Chris Hansen returns to the *why* of posted learning targets and offers strategies for educators to polish their language to students about why they are there at all.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Revisit why learning must be visible and delve into John Hattie's research.
- Think about implementing team-based targets and sharing the load to create a system of implementation.
- Explore implementing the "What are you learning?" check-in strategy.

## Jacqueline Heller

### **High Levels of Learning for Both Students and Adults**

How do we meet students where they are and actually move them toward proficiency on the essential standards? The process of closing learning gaps begins by clarifying which standards are most essential for every student to know and be able to do. When teams identify what students must learn and collectively develop a plan of action through the teaching-learning feedback loop, they can achieve high levels of learning for every student, build teacher clarity, and improve collective practices.

Participants learn how to:

- Use criteria to guide collaborative discussions of what is most essential for student learning.
- Deconstruct essential standards into specific learning targets arranged in a learning progression.
- Prioritize and pace the learning across the year with proficiency maps.
- Align purchased curriculum materials to team-developed learning targets.

- Examine tools, templates, and protocols to support the work of teams in designing instruction and assessment of the essential standards.

## Mike Mattos

### Are We a Group or a Team?

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

Participants in this session:

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

## Robert Mountjoy

### "We Practice SEL at My School!" What Proof Can You Produce to Support Your Work in Educating the Whole Child?

To get the most out of our students, we should cultivate their skills to help them become effective, independent human beings, and then move toward interdependence.

But how do you know if it is working? How do you track progress toward the social-emotional learning of your students? Join Robert Mountjoy as he provides evidence-based practices that allow you and your students to grow, preparing them for their future. Move from a school culture of *buy-in* to *ownership*.

Participants in this session:

- Explore strategies to move students from independence to interdependence.
- Develop habits to be the best version of themselves.
- Track SEL growth in students.

## Regina Stephens Owens

### 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

## Phillip Page

### **Restructuring the Roles and Responsibilities of Instructional Coaches to Prepare and Guide the Successful Implementation of a Professional Learning Community**

For many instructional coaches, supporting teachers and administrators navigating the shift from traditional academic practices to a change of practices within a professional learning community can be nothing short of overwhelming. Explaining the *why* behind the work, teaching what is going to change, and modeling how it will look doesn't often fit into the time frame allotted to work with all instructional staff. In this session, Phillip Page leads participants in redefining the roles and responsibilities of traditional academic coaches and school support staff to support collaborative teams and individual teachers as they navigate the four critical questions of the PLC process.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Discuss the traditional roles and responsibilities of instructional coaches and how a shift in expectations can lead to greater success for all teachers in a professional learning community.
- Establish practices to support collaborative teams and individual teachers to build collective efficacy in their work within the four critical questions of a PLC.
- Explore practical leadership and feedback tools to promote collaborative teams acting their way into a new way of thinking.

## Bob Sonju

### **Supercharge Your Collaboration: Strategies to Make Your Team's Collaboration Exceptional**

Collaboration is a foundational part of the PLC process. For teams to see increases in student learning, merely collaborating will not accomplish this; it's what you collaborate about that will increase learning



and improve your ability to function as a highly effective team. In this highly engaging session, author and practitioner Bob Sonju guides participants through strategies and practices to make their collaboration go from *blah* to supercharged!

Participants in this session:

- Understand the specific actions of highly effective collaborative teams.
- Utilize various tools to determine their team's progress.

## 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.

## AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### Luis F. Cruz

#### **When the Staff Says No to PLCs: Dealing With Resistance to the PLC Process in Your School or District**

The most challenging aspect of implementing PLCs is not the work but instilling within the members of the staff an intrinsic commitment to do the work. Every school seeking to implement PLCs with depth and duration experiences resistance to its implementation. How do leaders (not just administrators) confront resistance in a tactful and intentional manner? Are there forms of resistance that must be addressed differently? Join Luis F. Cruz as he uses findings from his best-selling book coauthored with Anthony Muhammad, *Time for Change: Four Essential Skills for Transformational School and District Leaders* (Solution Tree, 2019) to teach participants how best to take a proactive and reactive stance to resistance by staff when implementing PLCs.

Participants in this session learn how:

- To differentiate between rational and irrational forms of staff resistance
- Teachers and administrators work together to support and hold the staff accountable when implementing the PLC process
- To establish a culture of accountability and initiate direct accountability when needed

## Emily Feltner

### **We've Established the Essentials; What's Next?**

Traditional school teams regularly plan by selecting resources, activities, and tasks, while collaborative teams within a professional learning community focus on collectively answering the question, "What do we want students to know and be able to do?" This requires teams to shift their thinking from planning what will be taught to planning what will be learned. Participants engage in planning for learning by starting with an essential standard, determining a learning progression for that standard, and discerning ways to commonly assess progress toward mastery.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Experience the shift from teaching to learning through the team planning process.
- Create a learning progression from learning targets based on an essential standard in order to scaffold instruction.
- Create a common formative assessment that can be embedded throughout a unit of study.

## Chris Hansen

### **Common Formative Assessment for Singletons and Small Schools: The "On What" Dilemma**

The concept of all teachers working together toward the same goal sounds excellent. Still, the reality can often make educators feel they aren't meeting building or district expectations when their content is disparate. In this session, Chris Hansen addresses the student's greatest area of need and how an entire staff can rally their collective efforts and assessments around SMART goals.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Gain shared clarity on the essentials of student learning.
- Use targeted assessment to get to the student and skill.
- Gain strategies for meaningful cross-content and grade-level collaboration.

## Jacqueline Heller

### **TEAMS Transform Literacy Outcomes for Students in a PLC at Work**

Reading proficiently lays the foundation for achievement in all aspects of learning. We must ensure a guaranteed and viable reading curriculum by identifying what is most essential from the seemingly unending scope of literacy learning, standards, and research. When teams build shared learning in how to identify, prioritize, and clarify essential learning targets, then align their assessment practices to those literacy learning targets, they can better ensure high levels of literacy learning for every child, every day.

Participants in this session gain tools to help teams:

- Understand the TEAMS framework for guiding collaborative time to focus on student learning in literacy.

- Create learning targets and reading progressions from essential literacy standards.
- Use data to set, share, monitor, and celebrate student literacy goals.

## Mike Mattos

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

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

Participants in this session:

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

## Robert Mountjoy

### **Yes We Can! Ensuring All Students Learn at High Levels Using Inclusive Practices**

A critical step when teams commit to collaborating in the PLC process is to examine their personal and systemic beliefs about students, themselves, and learning. Teams must then ensure that all systems align, bringing this vision to life. Based on content from the best-selling book *Yes We Can! General and Special Educators Collaborating in a Professional Learning Community* (Solution Tree, 2016), Robert Mountjoy provides an overview of the six core beliefs and associated practices of inclusive work. This session is designed for leaders of all levels and both general and special educators.

Participants in this session:

- Gain clarity on how to ensure high levels of learning for *all*.
- Examine the six core beliefs and aligned practices of inclusive work.
- Through the use of a self-assessment, reflect on current practices that do and do not align with the belief that all students can learn at high levels and consider next steps for moving forward.

## Regina Stephens Owens

### **The Why Effect: Intentional Systems Drive Inspirational Cultures**

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

Participants can expect to:

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

## Phillip Page

### **Uncommon Results: Celebrating Your Way to a Model Professional Learning Community**

Celebrating the right work within a professional learning community is an effective way to drive the PLC culture shift. Any organization attempting to change its culture will undoubtedly encounter three types of people: doers, doubters, and resisters. Capturing the right work and sharing it through celebration is instrumental in affirming those doing the right work, showing the doubters it does work, and minimizing the voices of the resisters. Phillip Page includes exemplars of celebrating key actions within each of the three big ideas: focus on learning, collaboration and collective responsibility, and results orientation.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Discuss meaningful celebrations that recognize all staff who engage in the right work.
- Establish celebration strategies that lead to high-functioning collaborative teams.
- Explore practical tools to celebrate the small wins in leadership and in each of the three big ideas of a PLC.

## Bob Sonju

### **Proven Practices of PLC Leaders: Keys to Leading, Monitoring, and Supporting Teachers and Teams in a PLC**

Whether you are a team, school, or district leader, knowing what to pay attention to can often be a challenge. Bob Sonju leads participants through a series of strategies and practices that guiding coalitions and highly effective leaders in a professional learning community use to clarify the work to be done, support teachers and teams as they learn, monitor the work of teams, and celebrate small wins throughout the process.

Participants in this session:

- Learn the actions of teams, guiding coalitions, and leaders in a professional learning community.
- Identify the four keys to leadership in a professional learning community.
- Utilize proven strategies for monitoring the work of collaborative teams and increasing their effectiveness.

## Eric Twadell

### **Through New Eyes: Examining the Culture of Your School**

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

Participants in this session:

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

## Session Descriptions—Day 2

### KEYNOTE

#### **Luis F. Cruz**

##### **Let's Get Deeper: Understanding the Difference Between Becoming a PLC and Engaging in the PLC Process**

Like professionals in other fields, school educators embrace a set of research-based best practices to achieve desired outcomes. The goal for professional educators is to work collaboratively to ensure all students learn at high levels. To accomplish this goal, adult behaviors need to shift away from those found in a traditional school system to those aligned with becoming a professional learning community. Join Luis F. Cruz as he incorporates his experience as a former site principal at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and his rich knowledge of the PLC process to demonstrate the five core adult behaviors needed to ensure high levels of learning for all students. Learn how Dr. Cruz incorporates the analogy of five vessels to communicate the difference between PLC lite and PLC right!

### MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### **Luis F. Cruz**

##### **English Learners and PLCs**

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

Participants in this session learn:

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

#### **Emily Feltner**

##### **Collaboration Revolution: Transforming Team Tensions Into Total Commitment**

The belief in a professional learning community requires us to commit to being a member of a team. What do we do when team members don't play well with others? Working collaboratively with others can be challenging when individuals resist planning together and collectively responding to student learning. Recognizing common reasons for resistance and understanding the impact of unaddressed behaviors that hinder team success are crucial first steps for summoning the courage needed for critical conversations. This session empowers participants with practical strategies to address resistance within a team and foster a culture of commitment.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Examine ways to proactively foster a culture of commitment within a team.
- Learn how to initiate critical conversations with peers about collaborative challenges.
- Expand their toolbox with practical strategies to navigate resistance and engage in critical conversations.

## Chris Hansen

### **Great Instructional Strategies to Avoid Tier 2 and Tier 3 Intervention**

Educators know great first instruction is the key to ensuring all kids learn at high levels. Whether they are brand new or a veteran with decades in the classroom, classroom teachers are constantly looking for strategies that produce high engagement and results. This session offers engaging instructional strategies that can be both meaningful and motivating. From AI to the “you tricked me into learning” strategies, participants gain ideas for their instructional toolbox and collaborate with colleagues from around the globe. Bring your A-game strategies to share.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Discover the research behind high-cognitive and rigorous strategies.
- Experience a myriad of strategies and determine their effective application for their students.
- Create a network of new colleagues with whom to share ideas and tools.

## Jacqueline Heller

### **How Can Assessment Look Different in Early Childhood? (PreK–2)**

The collaborative and data-driven process of PLCs applies to every learner, not just those in the high-stakes testing grades. PreK to second-grade teams are asked to embrace assessment as information that allows them to be responsive and monitor their youngest students’ learning in a way that may look different than for upper grades.

Participants in this session:

- Broaden their perspective about developmentally appropriate common formative assessments.
- Learn how to accelerate student progress toward proficiency by creating targeted learning progressions that meet each student where they are and move them forward.
- Explore assessment techniques, tasks, and tools for team-developed assessments for academic content and social-emotional learning in early childhood.
- Use age-appropriate student goal setting and progress-monitoring tools to enhance learning for the whole child.

## Mike Mattos

### **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.

## Robert Mountjoy

### **The Little School That Could! The Story of the School That Was Counted Out**

It is time to get clear on what it is we want students to know and be able to do. It takes collaboration and planning. What does your master schedule look like? Do you have time to support the needs of all students through Tier 1 instruction? How do we support students through Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction? Participants focus on finding a balance, using their entire school to support what they value, and understanding the importance of Tier 1 instruction to ensure high levels of learning for all students.

Participants in this session:

- Become crystal clear on what they want students to know and be able to do.
- Learn how to use assessment and their current schedule to meet the learning needs of students.
- Collaboratively use data to determine next steps in student learning.

## Regina Stephens Owens

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

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

Participants can expect to:

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



## Phillip Page

### Utilizing the Guiding Coalition to Model, Progress Monitor, and Provide Intentional Professional Learning in the PLC Process

In *Learning by Doing* (Solution Tree, 2016), the authors refer to John Kotter’s “guiding coalition” to describe how it is critical for a district or school to assemble the right coalition of people to build the collective efficacy to lead the PLC culture shift. A culture shift cannot be driven by an individual; instead, the culture shift must be owned by the collective staff responsible for the change initiative. In this session, Phillip Page leads participants in exploring the foundations of the district and school guiding coalition to ensure the PLC culture shift is created with the intentionality necessary for the unique needs of each district and school.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Discuss the six roles and responsibilities of the guiding coalition members.
- Establish success criteria for an effective guiding coalition to build the necessary collective efficacy in the PLC process.
- Explore practical tools to progress monitor results and provide intentional and individualized professional learning to schools and collaborative teams.

## Bob Sonju

### Gaining Shared Clarity: Answering Question One—What Do We Want Them to Know?

Answering question one in the PLC process is *essential* for team and student success. As teams gain shared clarity regarding what *all* students need to know and be able to do for each course or grade level, their assessment and intervention practices become much more targeted. In this energetic and engaging session, Bob Sonju guides participants through the process of identifying essential standards and skills and gaining shared clarity for each using templates and strategies they can immediately implement in their team or school.

Participants in this session:

- Utilize proven strategies to identify and gain shared clarity on what all students need to know.
- Explore the benefits of clearly defining proficiency for their team and students.
- Utilize simple, targeted protocols and templates to assist teams in their collective work.

## Eric Twadell

### Social and Emotional Learning in a PLC at Work

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

Participants in this session:

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

## AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### **Luis F. Cruz**

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

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

Participants in this session learn:

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

### **Emily Feltner**

#### **They're All Over the Place! Strategies to Support Reading Comprehension at Grade Level and Beyond**

This session focuses on strategies to foster reading comprehension in grades three and above to ensure students who enter below grade level leave reading on grade level or above. Crafting effective Tier 1 instruction for students with varying proficiency levels poses unique challenges requiring a delicate balance when addressing the difficulties faced by struggling readers. It necessitates educators allow students to struggle productively when engaging in grade-level material without overtaking the reading process. Learn how to inspire and empower students to not only meet academic reading standards but to cultivate a lifelong love for reading, creating readers for life!

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Explore practical methods to scaffold instruction, providing support for students as they tackle increasingly complex reading materials.

- Discover strategies to cultivate critical thinking skills alongside reading, writing, thinking, and talking.
- Discuss approaches to extend the love for reading beyond the classroom setting.

## Chris Hansen

### **Put Your Learning Targets on the Board: Moving From Complying to Making This Meaningful for Teacher and Student Alike**

You can call the learning targets *learning intentions*, *success criteria*, or *what all students need to know and be able to do*, but if you are putting those words up to satisfy a district or principal *requirement*, the activity can be empty. The research is clear that when both the educator and the student know what is to be learned, the chances of success increase dramatically. In this session, Chris Hansen returns to the *why* of posted learning targets and offers strategies for educators to polish their language to students about why they are there at all.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Revisit why learning must be visible and delve into John Hattie’s research.
- Think about implementing team-based targets and sharing the load to create a system of implementation.
- Explore implementing the “What are you learning?” check-in strategy.

## Jacqueline Heller

### **High Levels of Learning for Both Students and Adults**

How do we meet students where they are and actually move them toward proficiency on the essential standards? The process of closing learning gaps begins by clarifying which standards are most essential for every student to know and be able to do. When teams identify what students must learn and collectively develop a plan of action through the teaching-learning feedback loop, they can achieve high levels of learning for every student, build teacher clarity, and improve collective practices.

Participants learn how to:

- Use criteria to guide collaborative discussions of what is most essential for student learning.
- Deconstruct essential standards into specific learning targets arranged in a learning progression.
- Prioritize and pace the learning across the year with proficiency maps.
- Align purchased curriculum materials to team-developed learning targets.
- Examine tools, templates, and protocols to support the work of teams in designing instruction and assessment of the essential standards.

## Mike Mattos

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

If the fundamental purpose of being a professional learning community is to ensure all students learn at high levels, then there must be time embedded during the school day to provide students extra time and support to succeed. 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.

## Robert Mountjoy

### **Yes We Can! Ensuring *All* Students Learn at High Levels Using Inclusive Practices**

A critical step when teams commit to collaborating in the PLC process is to examine their personal and systemic beliefs about students, themselves, and learning. Teams must then ensure that all systems align, bringing this vision to life. Based on content from the best-selling book *Yes We Can! General and Special Educators Collaborating in a Professional Learning Community* (Solution Tree, 2016), Robert Mountjoy provides an overview of the six core beliefs and associated practices of inclusive work. This session is designed for leaders of all levels and both general and special educators.

Participants in this session:

- Gain clarity on how to ensure high levels of learning for *all*.
- Examine the six core beliefs and aligned practices of inclusive work.
- Through the use of a self-assessment, reflect on current practices that do and do not align with the belief that all students can learn at high levels and consider next steps for moving forward.

## Regina Stephens Owens

### **Small Schools and Singletons: Wired for Rigor and Relevance**

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

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

Participants can expect to:

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

## Phillip Page

### **Restructuring the Roles and Responsibilities of Instructional Coaches to Prepare and Guide the Successful Implementation of a Professional Learning Community**

For many instructional coaches, supporting teachers and administrators navigating the shift from traditional academic practices to a change of practices within a professional learning community can be nothing short of overwhelming. Explaining the *why* behind the work, teaching what is going to change, and modeling how it will look doesn't often fit into the time frame allotted to work with all instructional staff. In this session, Phillip Page leads participants in redefining the roles and responsibilities of traditional academic coaches and school support staff to support collaborative teams and individual teachers as they navigate the four critical questions of the PLC process.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Discuss the traditional roles and responsibilities of instructional coaches and how a shift in expectations can lead to greater success for all teachers in a professional learning community.
- Establish practices to support collaborative teams and individual teachers to build collective efficacy in their work within the four critical questions of a PLC.
- Explore practical leadership and feedback tools to promote collaborative teams acting their way into a new way of thinking.

## Bob Sonju

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

What should happen when a team starts to struggle? As teachers move toward becoming interdependent teams, challenges inevitably arise. Ensuring high levels of learning for every student requires a change in thinking and practice. Participants briefly review the work of highly effective teams, consider scenarios showing common team challenges, and work collaboratively to identify strategies for moving a team forward. This session is based on a book of the same title (Solution Tree, 2019), coauthored by Brandon Jones, Maria Nielsen, Bob Sonju, Jeanne Spiller, and other educators who possess a wide range of backgrounds and experiences in all levels of education.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Identify common challenges that limit a team's efficacy.
- Collaboratively resolve specific challenges and share strategies to help teams progress.
- Understand the elements of effective collaboration.

## 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.

## Session Descriptions—Day 3

### BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### Luis F. Cruz

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

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

Participants in this session learn:

- Why resistance to the PLC process is to be expected
- Powerful resources from *Learning by Doing*
- Practical actions to accelerate PLC at Work
- The four schools activity

#### Emily Feltner

##### **Collaboration Revolution: Transforming Team Tensions Into Total Commitment**

The belief in a professional learning community requires us to commit to being a member of a team. What do we do when team members don't play well with others? Working collaboratively with others can be challenging when individuals resist planning together and collectively responding to student learning. Recognizing common reasons for resistance and understanding the impact of unaddressed behaviors that hinder team success are crucial first steps for summoning the courage needed for critical conversations. This session empowers participants with practical strategies to address resistance within a team and foster a culture of commitment.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Examine ways to proactively foster a culture of commitment within a team.
- Learn how to initiate critical conversations with peers about collaborative challenges.
- Expand their toolbox with practical strategies to navigate resistance and engage in critical conversations.

#### Chris Hansen

##### **Great Instructional Strategies to Avoid Tier 2 and Tier 3 Intervention**

Educators know great first instruction is the key to ensuring all kids learn at high levels. Whether they are brand new or a veteran with decades in the classroom, classroom teachers are constantly looking for strategies that produce high engagement and results. This session offers engaging instructional strategies that can be both meaningful and motivating. From AI to the “you tricked me into learning”

strategies, participants gain ideas for their instructional toolbox and collaborate with colleagues from around the globe. Bring your A-game strategies to share.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Discover the research behind high-cognitive and rigorous strategies.
- Experience a myriad of strategies and determine their effective application for their students.
- Create a network of new colleagues with whom to share ideas and tools.

## Jacqueline Heller

### **TEAMS Transform Literacy Outcomes for Students in a PLC at Work**

Reading proficiently lays the foundation for achievement in all aspects of learning. We must ensure a guaranteed and viable reading curriculum by identifying what is most essential from the seemingly unending scope of literacy learning, standards, and research. When teams build shared learning in how to identify, prioritize, and clarify essential learning targets, then align their assessment practices to those literacy learning targets, they can better ensure high levels of literacy learning for every child, every day.

Participants in this session gain tools to help teams:

- Understand the TEAMS framework for guiding collaborative time to focus on student learning in literacy.
- Create learning targets and reading progressions from essential literacy standards.
- Use data to set, share, monitor, and celebrate student literacy goals.

## Mike Mattos

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

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

Participants learn how to:

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



## Robert Mountjoy

### **"We Practice SEL at My School!" What Proof Can You Produce to Support Your Work in Educating the Whole Child?**

To get the most out of our students, we should cultivate their skills to help them become effective, independent human beings, and then move toward interdependence.

But how do you know if it is working? How do you track progress toward the social-emotional learning of your students? Join Robert Mountjoy as he provides evidence-based practices that allow you and your students to grow, preparing them for their future. Move from a school culture of *buy-in* to *ownership*.

Participants in this session:

- Explore strategies to move students from independence to interdependence.
- Develop habits to be the best version of themselves.
- Track SEL growth in students.

## Regina Stephens Owens

### **The Learning Professional: Coaching Competence, Not Compliance**

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

Participants can expect to:

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

## Phillip Page

### **Uncommon Results: Celebrating Your Way to a Model Professional Learning Community**

Celebrating the right work within a professional learning community is an effective way to drive the PLC culture shift. Any organization attempting to change its culture will undoubtedly encounter three types of people: doers, doubters, and resisters. Capturing the right work and sharing it through celebration is instrumental in affirming those doing the right work, showing the doubters it does work, and minimizing the voices of the resisters. Phillip Page includes exemplars of celebrating key actions within each of the three big ideas: focus on learning, collaboration and collective responsibility, and results orientation.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Discuss meaningful celebrations that recognize all staff who engage in the right work.
- Establish celebration strategies that lead to high-functioning collaborative teams.
- Explore practical tools to celebrate the small wins in leadership and in each of the three big ideas of a PLC.

## Bob Sonju

### **Simplifying the Journey: Collaboration, Consistency, and Clarity for Teachers, Teams, and Leaders in a PLC**

It's easy to get confused and overwhelmed with all the "noise" in today's educational world. The creativity and innovation needed in today's schools is not found in adding more to the plates of educators. Instead, the key to clearing up confusion is in simplifying and focusing on research-based, proven strategies that make a dramatic difference in student learning. Career educator and author Bob Sonju will guide participants through the four critical questions of a PLC and will share practical strategies to make their collective practices more targeted and effective as they learn together.

Participants in this session:

- Engage in a process that will simplify the work of their team and school.
- Practice effective strategies for making assessment data more useful.
- Explore targeted assessment and grading practices.

## 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.

## **KEYNOTE**

### **Bob Sonju**

#### **Right Here, Right Now: The Power of Educators Learning Together**

Dr. Robert Eaker, an architect of the PLC process, clearly defined our role in this essential work when he stated, “The first step educators in a PLC take ... is to learn together” (Solution Tree, 2020). Anchored in the four critical questions and three big ideas that drive PLCs, this session challenges educators to embrace the learning and momentum that has taken place during this institute and turn it into sustainable change in their collaborative practices. During this keynote, Bob Sonju introduces educators to ideas and strategies to increase the effectiveness of their collective learning while also reminding them of their foundational role as ambassadors of hope for their fellow educators and the students they serve.