

## Monday, August 18

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Empire Hall South
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Mike Mattos <i>All In! Digging Deeper Into Becoming a True Professional Learning Community</i>	Empire Hall North
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–3.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	Empire Hall South
12:30–2:00 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–3.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Jeanne Spiller <i>Courage to Lead, Focus to Achieve</i>	Empire Hall North

## Tuesday, August 19

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Empire Hall South
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Anthony Muhammad <i>Transforming School Culture 2.0: Why Culture Is Important Today, Tomorrow, and Forever</i>	Empire Hall North
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–3.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	Empire Hall South
12:30–2:00 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–3.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	<b>Team Time</b> —Presenters aid in your collaborative team discussions.	Empire Hall North

## Wednesday, August 20

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Empire Hall South
8:00–9:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–3.
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Luis F. Cruz <i>Resistance to PLC Implementation: How to Confront It and Win</i>	Empire Hall North

Agenda is subject to change.

# Breakout Sessions at a Glance

Rooms are listed beneath titles in *blue italics*.  
A red asterisk\* indicates session will be repeated.

Presenter	Monday, August 18		Tuesday, August 19		Wednesday, August 20
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
<b>Tim Brown</b>	Enhancing Self-Efficacy and Motivation Through Reflection and Goal Setting* <i>Grand Lilac North</i>	Becoming World Class: Steps, Processes, and Tools for Getting on the Same Page* <i>Grand Lilac North</i>	Using CFAs to Promote and Ensure Learning <i>Grand Lilac North</i>	Becoming World Class: Steps, Processes, and Tools for Getting on the Same Page <i>Grand Lilac North</i>	Enhancing Self-Efficacy and Motivation Through Reflection and Goal Setting <i>Grand Lilac North</i>
<b>Luis F. Cruz</b>	Breaking Through the Initialisms: Connecting PLC and RTI to Ensure High-Quality Learning for Every Student* <i>Highland D</i>	Tweaking the PLC Process to Support Emergent Bilingual Students <i>Highland D</i>	PLC Versus PLC Process: The Difference Between PLC as a Noun and a Verb <i>Highland D</i>	Breaking Through the Initialisms: Connecting PLC and RTI to Ensure High-Quality Learning for Every Student <i>Highland D</i>	All Done—Now What? Turning Your PLC Institute Experience Into Action at Your Site <i>Empire Hall North</i>
<b>Mike Mattos</b>	Are We a Group or a Team? <i>Empire Hall North</i>	MTSS and PLCs: Leveraging Collaboration to Effectively Intervene <i>Highland C</i>	Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools <i>Highland C</i>	Behavior Solutions: Using the PLC at Work Process to Teach Essential Behaviors <i>Empire Hall North</i>	Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC at Work Process <i>Highland D</i>
<b>Anthony Muhammad</b>	Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting! <i>Highland B</i>	Moving From PLC Lite to PLC Right! <i>Highland B</i>	"So, How Do We Get Buy-In?" Leveraging the Guiding Coalition to Build Consensus <i>Highland B</i>	Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change <i>Highland B</i>	We Are Ready for PLC Greatness! How Do We Go Back and Convince Others to Join In? <i>Highland B</i>
<b>Maria Nielsen</b>	Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Student Learning* <i>Grand Lilac South</i>	The 15-Day Challenge: Simplify and Energize Your PLC at Work* <i>Grand Lilac South</i>	Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Student Learning <i>Grand Lilac South</i>	Elementary ELA High-Leverage Strategies for Reading and Writing on Grade Level <i>Grand Lilac South</i>	The 15-Day Challenge: Simplify and Energize Your PLC at Work <i>Grand Lilac South</i>

Presenter	Monday, August 18		Tuesday, August 19		Wednesday, August 20
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
<b>Regina Stephens Owens</b>	The <i>Why</i> Effect: Intentional Systems Drive Inspirational Cultures <i>Highland A</i>	Data Discussion for Instructional Leaders: From Data to Design to Demonstration of Learning <i>Highland A</i>	Cultivating Educator Wellness for Leading and Living the PLC Life! <i>Highland A</i>	Small Schools and Singletons: Wired by Rigor, Relevance, and Results <i>Highland A</i>	The Learning Professional: Coaching Competence, Not Compliance <i>Highland A</i>
<b>Barbara Phillips</b>	Breaking Down Standards to Build Success <i>Highland E</i>	Mission Possible: A Blueprint for Collaborative Team Success <i>Highland E</i>	Crack the Code: Transforming PLC Naysayers Into Yaysayers* <i>Highland E</i>	Voyage to Victory: Charting the Course of Your PLC Journey <i>Highland E</i>	Crack the Code: Transforming PLC Naysayers Into Yaysayers <i>Highland E</i>
<b>Anthony R. Reibel</b>	Know Your Students Better: How Embracing a More Relational Teaching Practice Can Promote Student Learning, Self-Regulation, and Efficacy <i>Cascade C</i>	More Than a Score: Unlocking the Full Potential of Student Assessment <i>Cascade C</i>	Change of Plans! Moving to an Evidence-Based Grading and Reporting Model <i>Cascade C</i>	Pathways to Proficiency: Creating an Implementation Plan for Grading Change <i>Cascade C</i>	
<b>Jeanne Spiller</b>	Mapping the Path to Mastery: Designing Learning Progressions and Formative Assessments <i>Highland C</i>	All Means All: Essential Actions for General and Special Educators to Ensure High Levels of Learning for All <i>Empire Hall North</i>	Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools <i>Empire Hall North</i>	High-Impact Strategies for Low-Performing Schools Through the PLC Process* <i>Highland C</i>	High-Impact Strategies for Low-Performing Schools Through the PLC Process <i>Highland C</i>

Agenda is subject to change.

# Session Descriptions—Day 1

## KEYNOTE

### Mike Mattos

#### **All In! Digging Deeper Into Becoming a True Professional Learning Community**

The PLC at Work framework is the most research-based, practitioner-confirmed process to improve student and adult learning. Yet many schools and districts are failing to reap the benefits of their collaborative efforts because they fail to dig deeply and stay committed to the right work. Mike Mattos identifies the essential thinking and actions of a true professional learning community and discusses how each collectively creates an ongoing process of continuous improvement.

Participants in this session:

- Learn the three big ideas and four critical questions of the PLC at Work process.
- Understand how each critical question is not a singular act but instead requires never-ending cycles of focus to dig deeper into the right work.
- Assess their current reality and consider next best steps to improve learning for all.

## MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### Tim Brown

#### **Enhancing Self-Efficacy and Motivation Through Reflection and Goal Setting**

Educators in a school with a focus on learning promote a strong sense of self-efficacy in their students. Studies show this may be one of the greatest factors for student motivation and engagement. Participants in this session examine essential characteristics for building student self-efficacy and explore team-developed products and strategies for how to use them.

### Luis F. Cruz

#### **Breaking Through the Initialisms: Connecting PLC and RTI to Ensure High-Quality Learning for Every Student**

In the world of education, initialisms like PLC and RTI often come with the promise of improving student outcomes, but they can also lead to confusion when educators struggle to see how these frameworks fit together. In this session, Luis F. Cruz, coauthor of *Taking Action: A Handbook for the RTI at Work Process*, 2nd ed. (Solution Tree, 2024), guides participants in making sense of the many initialisms and how they align to create a unified, student-centered approach. Participants leave with a clear understanding of how to connect the dots between PLC and RTI, ensuring a coherent strategy that supports all students in reaching their highest levels of learning.

Participants in this session:

- Understand how multitiered systems of support (MTSS) complement and strengthen the PLC process, creating a seamless system of support for all students.
- Explore how a guaranteed and viable curriculum is essential in developing common formative assessments (CFAs), and how this foundation supports the effectiveness of MTSS.
- Participate in an interactive activity designed for immediate application, enabling them to support and share the learning with colleagues who were unable to attend.

## **Mike Mattos**

### **Are We a Group or a Team?**

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

Participants in this session:

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

## **Anthony Muhammad**

### **Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!**

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

Participants in this session learn:

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

## Maria Nielsen

### Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Student Learning

Maria Nielsen helps teachers move past “sit and get” in the classroom to a place where all students actively participate in learning. She shares engagement strategies to assess student understanding throughout a lesson or unit of study.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the *nifty-nine* best teaching strategies.
- Learn how to assess student learning by implementing engagement strategies.
- Identify the differences among assessment questions, open questions, and engagement questions.

## Regina Stephens Owens

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

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

Participants can expect to:

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

## Barbara Phillips

### Breaking Down Standards to Build Success

In this session, Barbara Phillips helps participants create clear, actionable steps for student achievement and effective teacher collaboration. Participants learn how to identify and break down essential standards into measurable learning targets that directly impact both student success and teacher teamwork. With practical strategies and real-world examples, participants gain hands-on experience in unpacking standards and aligning them to the core PLC questions that shape impactful, student-centered instruction. Whether you’re new to the PLC process or looking to refine your approach, Barbara Phillips provides the tools and insights you need to create clarity and build success for both students and teachers.

Participants in this session:

- Explain how breaking down essential standards will ensure clarity and alignment.

- Implement actionable strategies to efficiently apply this work in both classroom and leadership settings.
- Identify next steps for ongoing collaboration and continuous improvement.

## Anthony R. Reibel

### **Know Your Students Better: How Embracing a More Relational Teaching Practice Can Promote Student Learning, Self-Regulation, and Efficacy**

Teachers creating meaning and knowledge with their students' lived experiences—relating to students—is invaluable. Anthony R. Reibel invites participants to think about learning as an emergent concept resulting from interdependent collaboration, relational pedagogy, and productive discourse. He discusses putting the student before the score, the process before the product, and relationships before evaluation. Participants move from a definition of relational pedagogy to grading and assessment practices that affirm students for who they are and unconditionally support them in who they want to become.

Participants in this session:

- Learn about the challenges schools face when implementing relational pedagogy and grading practices.
- Review practices and policies that make relationships a core tenet of their school.
- Reflect on current needs in grading reform and explore how relationships with students can change grading practices.

## Jeanne Spiller

### **Mapping the Path to Mastery: Designing Learning Progressions and Formative Assessments**

Participants in this session explore the power of learning progressions and formative assessment to drive student growth and achievement. Participants learn how to break down essential standards into clear, actionable progressions that guide instruction and assessment. By connecting learning progressions to effective formative assessment practices, Jeanne Spiller equips educators to monitor student progress, provide targeted feedback, and adapt teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of learners.

Participants can expect to:

- Develop clear and actionable learning progressions aligned to essential standards.
- Design and implement formative assessment strategies that support and inform instruction.
- Use student evidence to identify next steps in learning and provide meaningful feedback to improve student outcomes.

## **AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

### **Tim Brown**

#### **Becoming World Class: Steps, Processes, and Tools for Getting on the Same Page**

Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence* (2005), argues that explicitly stated values are one of the most powerful steps we can take to help a team become exemplary. Developing a common vision of instruction, assessment, and interventions at the classroom, team, and schoolwide levels are critical steps in the PLC process. Tim Brown shares strategies and provides examples that educators have found helpful for developing their collective commitments and common vision for a learning-centered classroom.

### **Luis F. Cruz**

#### **Tweaking the PLC Process to Support Emergent Bilingual Students**

While research consistently shows that the PLC process is effective in helping all students achieve at high levels, educators must make intentional adjustments to meet the needs of diverse learners—especially those learning English as an additional language. In this session, Luis F. Cruz shares his expertise in the PLC process and in working with English learners to equip participants with strategies for ensuring these students thrive within the framework of a PLC. Participants in this session discover how to adapt key components of the PLC process to promote academic success for emergent bilingual students, ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all.

### **Mike Mattos**

#### **MTSS and PLCs: Leveraging Collaboration to Effectively Intervene**

The fundamental purpose of a professional learning community is to ensure high levels of learning for every student. Achieving this goal will undoubtedly require schools to effectively answer the critical question: How will we respond when students don't learn? Mike Mattos discusses specific steps that schools can take to create a highly effective, multitiered system of supports to target learning gaps, and demonstrates how the PLC at Work process fosters the schoolwide framework required to successfully intervene.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the guiding principles behind a multitiered system of interventions.
- Learn the essential actions of a school's guiding coalition, teacher teams, and intervention team.
- Prioritize resources to best meet student needs and make MTSS doable.

### **Anthony Muhammad**

#### **Moving From PLC *Lite* to PLC *Right*!**

The PLC at Work process has been accessible to educators for 27 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, participants explore the key leverage points that will guide any school into PLC excellence!

Participants in this session:

- Understand the importance and interdependence of the six “tight” elements of a PLC.
- Benefit from over 26 years of PLC research on the most effective practices used to secure full staff commitment to the PLC process.
- Examine surveys and rubrics to measure and assess a staff’s current reality in the PLC process.

## **Maria Nielsen**

### **The 15-Day Challenge: Simplify and Energize Your PLC at Work**

This interactive session establishes, reboots, or re-energizes the work of collaborative teams. Schools nationwide are using this simple learning-assessing process to connect the dots of a PLC. Maria Nielsen helps teams see the big picture of a PLC and put it all together in a recurring cycle of collective inquiry. The 15-day challenge is a practical way to bring the PLC process to life.

Participants in this session:

- Clarify the work of collaborative teams.
- Establish steps for a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- Explore the learning-assessing cycle in a unit of study.

## **Regina Stephens Owens**

### **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.

## **Barbara Phillips**

### **Mission Possible: A Blueprint for Collaborative Team Success**

Barbara Phillips explores tangible strategies and actions that effectively address the four critical questions of a PLC. Participants explore video case studies of successful collaborative teams,

share innovative ideas, and engage in activities designed to inspire and empower their teams. Participants walk away with a personalized action plan to transform their meetings into impactful, student-focused sessions that drive results.

Participants in this session:

- Integrate insights from video case studies showcasing successful collaborative teams in action.
- Engage in collaborative discussions and activities that encourage the sharing of best practices and innovative ideas for addressing challenges within their teams.

## Anthony R. Reibel

### **More Than a Score: Unlocking the Full Potential of Student Assessment**

Participants explore the nature of formative assessments and how, if used correctly, they can support, develop, and evaluate a student's proficiency and lead to more reliable grading practices. Anthony R. Reibel demonstrates the important role of the assessment process in supporting a conversation between teacher and student.

Participants in this session:

- Explore the importance of proficiency-based learning targets in the assessment process.
- Engage with examples of quality formative assessment.
- Reflect on how a teacher can use assessments to generate more reliable grades and marks.

## Jeanne Spiller

### **All Means All: Essential Actions for General and Special Educators to Ensure High Levels of Learning for All**

Participants explore the concepts from *Yes We Can: General and Special Educators Collaborating in a Professional Learning Community* (Solution Tree, 2016) and its new companion book *All Means All: Essential Actions for Leveraging Yes We Can!* (Solution Tree, 2025). These concepts focus on fostering collaboration between general and special educators to achieve high levels of learning for *all* students by addressing personal and systemic beliefs, aligning systems, and adopting inclusive practices.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the six core principles from *Yes We Can* and their relevance to inclusive practices.
- Examine personal and systemic beliefs about students, learning, and educators' roles.
- Reflect on current practices to identify gaps and align actions with the belief that all students can learn at high levels through specific strategies.
- Develop actionable next steps to strengthen collective commitment and shared ownership in the PLC process.

## AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

### **Jeanne Spiller**

#### **Courage to Lead, Focus to Achieve**

In this keynote, Jeanne Spiller dives into the pivotal role of courageous and focused leadership in professional learning communities. Participants explore actionable strategies for fostering collaboration, driving accountability, and maintaining a sharp focus on student success. Jeanne empowers leaders at every level to navigate challenges boldly, build cohesive teams, and achieve transformative outcomes for students.

## Session Descriptions—Day 2

### KEYNOTE

#### **Anthony Muhammad**

##### **Transforming School Culture 2.0: Why Culture Is Important Today, Tomorrow, and Forever**

This decade has proven that there is only one constant, and that constant is change. We have experienced a global pandemic and different political parties leading the government. Despite all this change, children still need to be educated, and the best way to educate them, regardless of external dynamics, is to operate as a professional learning community. Schools that create healthy, strong cultures produce an environment where PLCs can thrive. Participants in this session explore why a focus on healthy school culture is timeless and why it is our responsibility to create a learning-focused environment today, tomorrow, and forever.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the contemporary factors that impact school culture and why these challenges must be addressed effectively.
- Understand the interdependent relationship between professional habits, behaviors, and student learning.
- Learn practical ways to improve their school culture immediately in the pursuit of PLC greatness.

### MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### **Tim Brown**

##### **Using CFAs to Promote and Ensure Learning**

Common formative assessments have been described as the lynchpin of the PLC process. When done well, they can transform the learning experience of students and teachers alike. In this session, Tim Brown leads participants in exploring important keys to enhance the development and effective use of CFAs by collaborative teams. Various tools, resources, and protocols are provided to help teams derive all the benefits found in the CFA process.

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

##### **PLC Versus PLC Process: The Difference Between PLC as a Noun and a Verb**

A school becomes a PLC when the entire staff not only embraces but also effectively utilizes the PLC process. But what does it really mean to *become* a PLC, and how do staff *use* the PLC process? In this session, Luis F. Cruz explains the distinction between a school that is a PLC and how the staff actively engage in the PLC process. Dr. Cruz introduces the key adult behaviors necessary for achieving systemic change that supports high levels of learning for all students.

Participants in this session:

- Explore the non-negotiables identified by Rick DuFour and Robert Eaker—the original architects of the PLC process—that are essential for a school or district to truly become a PLC.
- Discover how Dr. Cruz refers to these non-negotiables as the five vessels—critical elements that, when embraced by staff, lead to systemic change and drive high levels of learning for every student.
- Gain insight into why some staff may perceive PLCs as initiatives that have already been attempted in the past and failed.

## 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.

## Anthony Muhammad

### **"So, How Do We Get Buy-In?" Leveraging the Guiding Coalition to Build Consensus**

In his more than 23 years as a PLC leader, the question Anthony Muhammad gets most often is: How do we get buy-in? In this session, Dr. Muhammad provides research guidance on responding to resistance and strategically building consensus for the PLC at Work process. Participants in this session lean on the change management framework presented in *Time for Change: Four Essential Skills for Transformational School and District Leaders* (Solution Tree Press, 2019) coauthored by Anthony Muhammad and Luis Cruz. This framework leverages four critical leadership skills proven to build consensus: 1) communication, 2) trust building, 3) capacity building, and 4) accountability.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how to organize and sustain a functional guiding coalition.

- Learn how to apply the *Time for Change* framework to real-world problems.
- Learn how to properly assess their culture and strategically plan to overcome resistance to change.

## Maria Nielsen

### **Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Student Learning**

Maria Nielsen helps teachers move past “sit and get” in the classroom to a place where all students actively participate in learning. She shares engagement strategies to assess student understanding throughout a lesson or unit of study.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the *nifty-nine* best teaching strategies.
- Learn how to assess student learning by implementing engagement strategies.
- Identify the differences among assessment questions, open questions, and engagement questions.

## Regina Stephens Owens

### **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

## Barbara Phillips

### **Crack the Code: Transforming PLC Naysayers Into Yaysayers**

In this session, Barbara Phillips provides ways to build collaboration and overcome resistance within a PLC. Barbara dives into the underlying causes of resistance and provides proven strategies to foster a culture of teamwork and positivity. Through real-life examples and case studies, participants gain effective communication techniques and engagement strategies to inspire buy-in and enthusiasm. Participants leave with a practical toolkit to strengthen their team and turn challenges into opportunities for growth.

Participants in this session:

- Identify common reasons for resistance and develop an understanding of the underlying factors at play.
- Analyze case studies and real-life examples of successful strategies employed to convert resistant team members into enthusiastic collaborators.
- Practice effective communication techniques to engage and address concerns raised by resistant individuals.

## Anthony R. Reibel

### **Change of Plans! Moving to an Evidence-Based Grading and Reporting Model**

Leaders and teachers alike need strategies on how to lead conversations about grading practices. These conversations evolve so quickly that it's often challenging to stay on track and produce any action or change. Anthony R. Reibel provides a simple way to start conversations about grading reform as it relates to a standards-based grading system. Participants receive templates and strategies to keep these conversations on track and promote actionable inquiry that leads to the successful implementation of new grading ideas.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn about mindsets and strategies that promote conversations that lead to lasting changes in grading practices.
- Assess the essential commitments one must make to ensure a healthy transition to standards-based grading.
- Reflect on current needs in grading reform and explore conversation tools to help manage those needs.

## Jeanne Spiller

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

Schools that function as PLCs must ultimately do two things: 1) 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.

## **AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

### **Tim Brown**

#### **Becoming World Class: Steps, Processes, and Tools for Getting on the Same Page**

Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence* (2005), argues that explicitly stated values are one of the most powerful steps we can take to help a team become exemplary. Developing a common vision of instruction, assessment, and interventions at the classroom, team, and schoolwide levels are critical steps in the PLC process. Tim Brown shares strategies and provides examples that educators have found helpful for developing their collective commitments and common vision for a learning-centered classroom.

### **Luis F. Cruz**

#### **Breaking Through the Initialisms: Connecting PLC and RTI to Ensure High-Quality Learning for Every Student**

In the world of education, initialisms like PLC and RTI often come with the promise of improving student outcomes, but they can also lead to confusion when educators struggle to see how these frameworks fit together. In this session, Luis F. Cruz, coauthor of *Taking Action: A Handbook for the RTI at Work Process*, 2nd ed. (Solution Tree, 2024), guides participants in making sense of the many initialisms and how they align to create a unified, student-centered approach. Participants leave with a clear understanding of how to connect the dots between PLC and RTI, ensuring a coherent strategy that supports all students in reaching their highest levels of learning.

Participants in this session:

- Understand how multitiered systems of support (MTSS) complement and strengthen the PLC process, creating a seamless system of support for all students.
- Explore how a guaranteed and viable curriculum is essential in developing common formative assessments (CFAs), and how this foundation supports the effectiveness of MTSS.
- Participate in an interactive activity designed for immediate application, enabling them to support and share the learning with colleagues who were unable to attend.



## Mike Mattos

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

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

Participants can expect to:

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

## Anthony Muhammad

### **Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change**

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

Participants can expect to:

- Examine their responsibility to educate *all* students—without exception!
- 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).

## Maria Nielsen

### **Elementary ELA High-Leverage Strategies for Reading and Writing on Grade Level**

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

Participants in this session:

- Gather tools and graphic organizers to connect reading and writing.
- Understand learning progressions on literacy-focused instruction and assessment.

- Overlay essential standards with district-prescribed curricula.
- Examine research-based teaching strategies to improve classroom instruction.

## Regina Stephens Owens

### **Small Schools and Singletons: Wired by Rigor, Relevance, and Results**

Small schools—charter, innovative, or online—often ask: How do we engage in the PLC at Work process? How do we involve CTE, fine arts, PE? How do we handle singletons? Where do we begin? Join Regina Stephens Owens to learn how to effectively implement the PLC process so that you are wired for rigor and relevance..

Outcomes from this session include:

- Learning how to function as a PLC at Work
- Developing your teams to include meaningful work for all
- Monitoring and measuring your success

## Barbara Phillips

### **Voyage to Victory: Charting the Course of Your PLC Journey**

Set sail on the path to PLC success! Participants in this session embark on a reflective journey to explore their current practices and identify areas of strength and growth. They chart their course with a projected year-by-year action plan that defines success criteria and measurable evidence of progress. Barbara Phillips provides strategies to navigate challenges and celebrate milestones to steer teams toward collaborative excellence. Map out your voyage and ensure a smooth journey toward high levels of learning for all!

## Anthony R. Reibel

### **Pathways to Proficiency: Creating an Implementation Plan for Grading Change**

Leaders and teachers need strategies to lead conversations about grading practices. These conversations evolve so quickly that staying on track and producing any action or change is often tough. In this session, Anthony R. Reibel offers a simple way to start conversations about grading reform related to a standards-based grading system. Participants receive templates and strategies to keep these conversations on track and promote actionable inquiry that leads to the successful implementation of new grading ideas.

Participants in this session:

- Learn about mindsets and strategies that promote conversations that lead to lasting changes in grading practices.
- Assess the essential commitments to ensure a healthy transition to standards-based grading.
- Reflect on current needs in grading reform and explore conversation tools to help manage those needs.

## Jeanne Spiller

### **High-Impact Strategies for Low-Performing Schools Through the PLC Process**

Focusing on the PLC process, Jeanne Spiller addresses the unique challenges faced by low-performing schools and equips participants with practical tools and frameworks to drive meaningful change. Jeanne empowers educators and leaders with actionable strategies to address the challenges of low-performing schools. Participants explore targeted instructional practices, analyze root causes, and collaborate on creating a 30-day action plan using the PLC framework. Participants engage with hands-on activities, practical tools, and collaborative problem solving to drive measurable improvements in student outcomes.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify high-impact strategies to address challenges in low-performing schools.
- Utilize the PLC process to implement and monitor targeted interventions.
- Develop a focused action plan to achieve measurable improvements in student outcomes.

## Session Descriptions—Day 3

### BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### Tim Brown

##### **Enhancing Self-Efficacy and Motivation Through Reflection and Goal Setting**

Educators in a school with a focus on learning promote a strong sense of self-efficacy in their students. Studies show this may be one of the greatest factors for student motivation and engagement. Participants in this session examine essential characteristics for building student self-efficacy and explore team-developed products and strategies for how to use them.

#### Luis F. Cruz

##### **All Done—Now What? Turning Your PLC Institute Experience Into Action at Your Site**

After gaining a wealth of skills and strategies from today's Institute, participants may face the challenge of bringing those ideas back to their schools and convincing colleagues to embrace the PLC process. How do we foster a culture of collaboration and commitment among staff, especially those who weren't able to attend? In this session, Luis F. Cruz shares proven strategies for getting colleagues to think differently, feel differently, and ultimately do differently, ensuring that the PLC process takes root schoolwide.

Participants in this session:

- Gain insight into how to guide staff through necessary technical changes (the structural aspects of the PLC process) to ensure that all students achieve at high levels.
- Learn how to promote a cultural shift (the human aspect of the PLC process) that supports and sustains those technical changes, creating lasting transformation in their school's community.
- Walk away with actionable resources to facilitate both technical and cultural changes, empowering them to effectively implement the PLC process at their site.

#### Mike Mattos

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

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

Participants learn how to:

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

## Anthony Muhammad

### **We Are Ready for PLC Greatness! How Do We Go Back and Convince Others to Join In?**

After spending two transformational days learning about the power of PLC, most participants are ready to return home and get to work! Unfortunately, many of their colleagues did not share the experience. So, how do we go back home and get others on board? Anthony Muhammad outlines a process that will not only sustain the momentum experienced at this institute, but equip participants to convince others to join them on their PLC journey. Dr. Muhammad: 1) establishes philosophical agreement and shared purpose, and 2) addresses staff frustration and discomfort with change. Participants gain an abundance of practical strategies to start the process of transforming their culture when they return to their school.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how to address counterproductive belief systems and form a cohesive team of student advocates.
- Understand how to analyze and manage staff frustration.
- Learn ways to understand and confront emotional barriers to improve their professional practice.

## Maria Nielsen

### **The 15-Day Challenge: Simplify and Energize Your PLC at Work**

This interactive session establishes, reboots, or re-energizes the work of collaborative teams. Schools nationwide are using this simple learning-assessing process to connect the dots of a PLC. Maria Nielsen helps teams see the big picture of a PLC and put it all together in a recurring cycle of collective inquiry. The 15-day challenge is a practical way to bring the PLC process to life.

Participants in this session:

- Clarify the work of collaborative teams.
- Establish steps for a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- Explore the learning-assessing cycle in a unit of study.

## Regina Stephens Owens

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

In a time of great change and instability, educators and administrators more than ever must 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.

## Barbara Phillips

### **Crack the Code: Transforming PLC Naysayers Into Yaysayers**

In this session, Barbara Phillips provides ways to build collaboration and overcome resistance within a PLC. Barbara dives into the underlying causes of resistance and provides proven strategies to foster a culture of teamwork and positivity. Through real-life examples and case studies, participants gain effective communication techniques and engagement strategies to inspire buy-in and enthusiasm. Participants leave with a practical toolkit to strengthen their team and turn challenges into opportunities for growth.

Participants in this session:

- Identify common reasons for resistance and develop an understanding of the underlying factors at play.
- Analyze case studies and real-life examples of successful strategies employed to convert resistant team members into enthusiastic collaborators.
- Practice effective communication techniques to engage and address concerns raised by resistant individuals.

## Jeanne Spiller

### **High-Impact Strategies for Low-Performing Schools Through the PLC Process**

Focusing on the PLC process, Jeanne Spiller addresses the unique challenges faced by low-performing schools and equips participants with practical tools and frameworks to drive meaningful change. Jeanne empowers educators and leaders with actionable strategies to address the challenges of low-performing schools. Participants explore targeted instructional practices, analyze root causes, and collaborate on creating a 30-day action plan using the PLC framework. Participants engage with hands-on activities, practical tools, and collaborative problem solving to drive measurable improvements in student outcomes.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify high-impact strategies to address challenges in low-performing schools.
- Utilize the PLC process to implement and monitor targeted interventions.
- Develop a focused action plan to achieve measurable improvements in student outcomes.

## KEYNOTE

### Luis F. Cruz

#### **Resistance to PLC Implementation: How to Confront It and Win**

Implementing the PLC process inevitably generates resistance from staff. Instead of questioning why resistance occurs, the real challenge is learning how to identify and address both rational and irrational forms of resistance. In this keynote, Luis F. Cruz draws on insights from his bestselling book coauthored with Anthony Muhammad, *Time for Change: Four Essential Skills for Transformational School and District Leaders* (Solution Tree, 2019), to equip participants with the knowledge and strategies needed to confront resistance effectively. Participants gain practical tools for guiding their colleagues through the challenges of PLC implementation and ensuring deep, lasting commitment to the process.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the difference between rational and irrational forms of resistance to change and how to respond to each.
- Learn who holds the primary responsibility for addressing resistance to change during PLC implementation and how to empower those leaders.
- Leave inspired and well-equipped to implement the “real” PLC process—versus a watered-down, “PLC Lite” version—ensuring meaningful change in their school or district.