

Monday, December 1

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Ballroom 2501 C
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Mike Mattos <i>All In! Digging Deeper Into Becoming a True Professional Learning Community</i>	Ballroom 2501 AB
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	Keynote —Jason A. Andrews <i>Shared Responsibility: Leadership and Culture in Advancing the PLC Journey</i>	Ballroom 2501 AB

Tuesday, December 2

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Ballroom 2501 C
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Anthony Muhammad <i>Transforming School Culture 2.0: Why Culture Is Important Today, Tomorrow, and Forever</i>	Ballroom 2501 AB
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	Team Time —Presenters aid in your collaborative team discussions.	Ballroom 2501 AB

Wednesday, December 3

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Ballroom 2501 C
8:00–9:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	Keynote —Luis F. Cruz <i>Resistance to PLC Implementation: How to Confront It and Win</i>	Ballroom 2501 AB

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, December 1		Tuesday, December 2		Wednesday, December 3
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Jason A. Andrews	Building a Culture of Collective Responsibility to Support Every Student <i>2502 A</i>	From Cooperation to Collaboration: Building Highly Effective Teams in a PLC <i>2502 A</i>	From Resistance to Commitment: Building Ownership of the PLC Process* <i>2502 A</i>	Turning Missteps Into Milestones: Avoiding Common Pitfalls in the PLC Process <i>2502 A</i>	From Resistance to Commitment: Building Ownership of the PLC Process <i>2502 A</i>
Tim Brown	Enhancing Self-Efficacy and Motivation Through Reflection and Goal Setting* <i>3501 C</i>	Becoming World Class: Steps, Processes, and Tools for Getting on the Same Page* <i>3501 C</i>	Using CFAs to Promote and Ensure Learning <i>3501 C</i>	Becoming World Class: Steps, Processes, and Tools for Getting on the Same Page <i>3501 C</i>	Enhancing Self-Efficacy and Motivation Through Reflection and Goal Setting <i>3501 C</i>
Luis F. Cruz	Breaking Through the Initialisms: Connecting PLC and RTI to Ensure High-Quality Learning for Every Student* <i>2502 B</i>	Tweaking the PLC Process to Support Emergent Bilingual Students <i>2502 B</i>	PLC Versus PLC Process: The Difference Between PLC as a Noun and a Verb <i>2502 B</i>	Breaking Through the Initialisms: Connecting PLC and RTI to Ensure High-Quality Learning for Every Student <i>2502 B</i>	All Done—Now What? Turning Your PLC Institute Experience Into Action at Your Site <i>Ballroom 2501 AB</i>
Mike Mattos	Are We a Group or a Team? <i>Ballroom 2501 AB</i>	MTSS and PLCs: Leveraging Collaboration to Effectively Intervene <i>Ballroom 2501 AB</i>	Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools <i>Ballroom 2501 AB</i>	Behavior Solutions: Using the PLC at Work Process to Teach Essential Behaviors <i>Ballroom 2501 AB</i>	Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC at Work Process <i>2502 B</i>
Anthony Muhammad	Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting! <i>2505 A</i>	Moving From PLC <i>Lite</i> to PLC <i>Right</i> ! <i>2505 A</i>	“So, How Do We Get Buy-In?” Leveraging the Guiding Coalition to Build Consensus <i>2505 A</i>	Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change <i>2505 A</i>	We Are Ready for PLC Greatness! How Do We Go Back and Convince Others to Join In? <i>2505 A</i>
Maria Nielsen	Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Student Learning <i>2503 AB</i>	The 15-Day Challenge: Simplify and Energize Your PLC at Work* <i>2503 AB</i>	Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools <i>2503 AB</i>	Elementary ELA High-Leverage Strategies for Reading and Writing on Grade Level <i>2503 AB</i>	The 15-Day Challenge: Simplify and Energize Your PLC at Work <i>2503 AB</i>

Presenter	Monday, December 1		Tuesday, December 2		Wednesday, December 3
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	1:00–2:30 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Regina Stephens Owens	The <i>Why</i> Effect: Intentional Systems Drive Inspirational Cultures <i>2505 B</i>	Data Discussion for Instructional Leaders: From Data to Design to Demonstration of Learning <i>2505 B</i>	Cultivating Educator Wellness for Leading and Living the PLC Life! <i>2505 B</i>	Small Schools and Singletons: Wired by Rigor, Relevance, and Results <i>2505 B</i>	The Learning Professional: Coaching Competence, Not Compliance <i>2505 B</i>
Geri Parscale	Collaborative Excellence: Harnessing the Power of the Instructional Cycle in PLCs* <i>3501 A</i>	Empowering Success: Strategies for Linking PLCs With SPED Through Informative Collaboration and Impact <i>3501 A</i>	Navigating Trauma: Is Your School Ready?* <i>3501 A</i>	Collaborative Excellence: Harnessing the Power of the Instructional Cycle in PLCs <i>3501 A</i>	Navigating Trauma: Is Your School Ready? <i>3501 A</i>
Eric Twadell	Social and Emotional Learning in a PLC at Work <i>3501 D</i>	Using AI Tools to Facilitate Better Teaching and Learning <i>3501 D</i>	Evidence-Based Grading: Five Stages to Transform Grading Practices* <i>3501 D</i>	Through New Eyes: Examining the Culture of Your School <i>3501 D</i>	Evidence-Based Grading: Five Stages to Transform Grading Practices <i>3501 D</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

Jason A. Andrews

Building a Culture of Collective Responsibility to Support Every Student

Collective responsibility is the cornerstone of a successful professional learning community. It reflects a shared belief that all students are capable of learning at high levels and a commitment by all staff to ensure every student's success. To effectively provide students with additional time and support through a systematic and responsive approach, a culture of collective responsibility must be firmly established. Participants gain practical tools and strategies to assess their current school culture and identify opportunities to strengthen collective responsibility. Through reflective activities and actionable insights, they learn how to align beliefs and actions, build trust and accountability among staff, and create an environment where everyone is committed to the success of all students. Whether you're looking to initiate or deepen this cultural shift, Jason A. Andrews empowers you to lead the charge in fostering collective responsibility in your school or district.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn how to evaluate their current school culture to identify strengths and areas for growth in fostering collective responsibility.
- Explore strategies and protocols to align staff beliefs and behaviors with the shared commitment to ensuring all students learn at high levels.

- Develop actionable plans to build trust, accountability, and shared ownership among staff, creating a culture that provides systematic and effective interventions to students.

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.

Geri Parscale

Collaborative Excellence: Harnessing the Power of the Instructional Cycle in PLCs

In this session, Geri Parscale empowers teachers to effectively integrate the instructional cycle into their collaborative PLC time and classroom practices. Participants explore how to align the stages of planning, instruction, assessment, and reflection to enhance student learning outcomes. Through interactive discussions, case studies, and hands-on planning, participants learn how to use the instructional cycle as a framework for fostering collaboration and consistency in their teaching. By mastering this process, participants leave better equipped to design purposeful lessons, analyze student data, and adjust their practices to meet the diverse needs of their students.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the components of the instructional cycle and their application in both collaborative and classroom settings.
- Develop strategies to incorporate the instructional cycle into PLC discussions to align goals and improve instructional practices.
- Utilize the instructional cycle to analyze student data, identify learning gaps, and plan targeted interventions to enhance student outcomes.

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

Jason A. Andrews

From Cooperation to Collaboration: Building Highly Effective Teams in a PLC

While collaboration is a foundational principle of the PLC process, true collaboration requires more than simply bringing teachers together for meetings. As DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, et al. (*Learning by Doing*, 4th ed., 2024) emphasized, to ensure all students learn at high levels, educators must work collaboratively and take shared responsibility for student success. Jason A. Andrews takes a deep dive into developing genuine collaborative cultures within schools. Participants explore the distinction between cooperation and collaboration, examine the essential work of collaborative teams, and learn how to utilize tools and protocols that foster deeper, more meaningful teamwork. Through practical examples and hands-on activities, participants gain strategies to help their teams move beyond surface-level cooperation and achieve the transformative benefits of true collaboration.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn to identify the key differences between cooperative efforts and true collaboration, understanding how meaningful collaboration impacts student outcomes.
- Explore strategies for developing a collaborative culture, fostering trust, and ensuring teams are focused on high-impact work aligned with the four critical questions of a PLC.
- Gain practical tools and protocols to guide team processes, ensure productive collaboration, and build shared responsibility for the success of all students.

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.

Geri Parscale

Empowering Success: Strategies for Linking PLCs With SPED Through Informative Collaboration and Impact

In this session, Geri Parscale focuses on effectively integrating professional learning communities with strategies to support special education students. Participants explore how collaborative practices within PLCs can enhance instructional planning, differentiation, and progress monitoring for students with individualized needs. Through various learning opportunities and discussions, participants learn how to align their PLC goals with best practices for special education, ensuring that all students have access to high-quality instruction and the support they need to thrive.

Participants in this session:

- Understand how to incorporate data-driven discussions about special education students' progress into regular PLC meetings.
- Develop strategies to collaboratively design differentiated instruction that meets the needs of special education students.
- Identify ways to leverage PLCs to enhance individualized education program implementation and accountability.

Eric Twadell

Using AI Tools to Facilitate Better Teaching and Learning

Participants are encouraged to bring a fully charged computer or tablet to take full advantage of their time in this session.

In this session, AI beginners learn how various AI chatbots can help facilitate better teaching and learning. For most teachers, unpacking standards, planning lessons, creating assessments, and developing interventions rarely start from scratch. Instead, we often begin with existing materials—something teachers have used in the past, something already in the district curriculum materials, something purchased from an online source like Teachers Pay Teachers, or something from online lesson libraries maintained by content-specific websites like PBS or NCTM. While those materials have potential and certainly save time by providing a first draft of instructional strategies to consider, AI chatbots can help teachers analyze and improve these materials.

AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

Jason A. Andrews

Shared Responsibility: Leadership and Culture in Advancing the PLC Journey

In a professional learning community, leadership is not confined to a title; it's a shared responsibility that empowers every educator to drive meaningful change. Jason A. Andrews explores how shared leadership, the role of an effective guiding coalition, and a healthy, collaborative culture are essential for ensuring high levels of learning for all students. Drawing on the foundational principles of the PLC process, Dr. Andrews highlights how leadership at every level—from classroom teachers to school and district leaders—plays a critical role in advancing the work. Participants learn how to effectively establish and sustain a guiding coalition that embraces a shared vision, fosters trust, and models the collaborative behaviors essential for student success.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore how shared leadership at all levels drives the success of the PLC process and ensures collective responsibility for student learning.
- Gain insights into the role of guiding coalitions in fostering collaboration, building trust, and modeling the behaviors that sustain a thriving PLC culture.
- Leave inspired with actionable ideas to create and sustain a culture of trust, respect, and accountability that empowers every educator to contribute meaningfully to the PLC journey.

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

Jason A. Andrews

From Resistance to Commitment: Building Ownership of the PLC Process

While resistance to change is a natural part of any transformative process, effectively addressing it is key to building a thriving professional learning community. Jason A. Andrews equips participants with practical strategies to understand and overcome staff resistance while fostering a sense of ownership and shared commitment to the PLC process. Through an exploration of real-world scenarios, participants learn how to engage reluctant team members, address concerns with empathy, and create an environment where every educator feels valued and invested in the collective work. Participants gain tools to build trust, clarify the *why* behind the PLC process, and inspire a collaborative culture where all voices contribute to achieving high levels of learning for all students. Whether you're an administrator, instructional coach, or teacher leader, Dr. Andrews provides actionable insights to turn challenges into opportunities and resistance into momentum.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn to recognize common reasons for staff resistance to the PLC process and develop strategies to address concerns with empathy and understanding.

- Explore techniques to foster trust, clarify the purpose of the PLC process, and create a shared sense of responsibility among team members.
- Gain practical tools and communication strategies to transform resistance into commitment, enabling teams to work collaboratively toward achieving high levels of learning for all students.

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 learn 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

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.

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

Geri Parscale

Navigating Trauma: Is Your School Ready?

As of 2023, more than two-thirds of children reported that they have been a victim of a traumatic event or crisis by age sixteen. Educators are seeing an epidemic of student trauma, and it's imperative that every school be equipped to thoughtfully respond to traumatic and high-stress situations. In this session, Geri Parscale guides participants in understanding the impact of trauma on student learning and behavior while providing actionable strategies to create supportive classroom environments and schools. Through reflective activities and discussions, participants explore the core principles of trauma-informed teaching and how to build a system of support in their schools to be prepared when the unthinkable happens. Participants engage with practical tools and real-world scenarios that empower them to confidently navigate the complexities of teaching and working with students who have experienced trauma.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the foundational principles of trauma-informed education as outlined in *Navigating the Unexpected* (Solution Tree, 2024) and their application in the classroom.
- Identify strategies to build strong relationships and establish a sense of safety for students and teachers impacted by trauma.

- Develop a toolkit of proactive and responsive techniques to prepare schools to meet the evolving challenges in education and prioritize well-being and success for each student.

Eric Twadell

Evidence-Based Grading: Five Stages to Transform Grading Practices

Moving beyond PLC Lite requires that schools examine traditional grading practices. While tackling this challenge has often been cited as the “third rail of school reform,” it is an essential destination on the journey to becoming a PLC that embraces assessment and grading practices and supports student learning. In this session, Eric Twadell provides participants with a roadmap for differentiating professional development for teachers and teams interested in implementing standards-based grading.

Participants in this session:

- Gain 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.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Jason A. Andrews

Turning Missteps Into Milestones: Avoiding Common Pitfalls in the PLC Process

The PLC process is a powerful framework for improving student learning, but even experienced teams can encounter challenges that derail progress. Participants explore common mistakes schools and districts make when implementing the PLC process, such as losing focus on the four critical questions of learning, misusing collaborative team time, and failing to develop a results-oriented culture. Whether you’re just beginning your PLC journey or refining your practice, Jason A. Andrews provides practical strategies to foster systemwide fidelity to the foundations necessary for successful PLC implementation. Participants examine how to align their work with the three big ideas of a PLC: ensuring a relentless focus on learning, fostering a culture of collaboration, and using evidence of student learning to drive action. Through real-world examples, reflective discussions, and actionable solutions, participants leave equipped to overcome obstacles, strengthen their collaborative teams, and sustain a results-driven PLC culture in their schools or districts.

Participants can expect to:

- Recognize and understand the most frequent mistakes made during implementation of the PLC process and their impact on student learning and team collaboration.
- Gain practical strategies to avoid missteps and maintain a consistent focus on the three big ideas and four critical questions of a PLC.

- Leave with tools and insights to reflect on their own practices, adapt their approach, and build a resilient culture of continuous improvement within their PLC teams.

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

Geri Parscale

Collaborative Excellence: Harnessing the Power of the Instructional Cycle in PLCs

In this session, Geri Parscale empowers teachers to effectively integrate the instructional cycle into their collaborative PLC time and classroom practices. Participants explore how to align the stages of planning, instruction, assessment, and reflection to enhance student learning outcomes. Through interactive discussions, case studies, and hands-on planning, participants learn how to use the instructional cycle as a framework for fostering collaboration and consistency in their teaching. By mastering this process, participants leave better equipped to design purposeful lessons, analyze student data, and adjust their practices to meet the diverse needs of their students.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the components of the instructional cycle and their application in both collaborative and classroom settings.
- Develop strategies to incorporate the instructional cycle into PLC discussions to align goals and improve instructional practices.
- Utilize the instructional cycle to analyze student data, identify learning gaps, and plan targeted interventions to enhance student outcomes.

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 3

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Jason A. Andrews

From Resistance to Commitment: Building Ownership of the PLC Process

While resistance to change is a natural part of any transformative process, effectively addressing it is key to building a thriving professional learning community. Jason A. Andrews equips participants with practical strategies to understand and overcome staff resistance while fostering a sense of ownership and shared commitment to the PLC process. Through an exploration of real-world scenarios, participants learn how to engage reluctant team members, address concerns with empathy, and create an environment where every educator feels valued and invested in the collective work. Participants gain tools to build trust, clarify the *why* behind the PLC process, and inspire a collaborative culture where all voices contribute to achieving high levels of learning for all students. Whether you're an administrator, instructional coach, or teacher leader, Dr. Andrews provides actionable insights to turn challenges into opportunities and resistance into momentum.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn to recognize common reasons for staff resistance to the PLC process and develop strategies to address concerns with empathy and understanding.
- Explore techniques to foster trust, clarify the purpose of the PLC process, and create a shared sense of responsibility among team members.
- Gain practical tools and communication strategies to transform resistance into commitment, enabling teams to work collaboratively toward achieving high levels of learning for all students.

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.

Geri Parscale

Navigating Trauma: Is Your School Ready?

As of 2023, more than two-thirds of children reported that they have been a victim of a traumatic event or crisis by age sixteen. Educators are seeing an epidemic of student trauma, and it's imperative that every school be equipped to thoughtfully respond to traumatic and high-stress situations. In this session, Geri Parscale guides participants in understanding the impact of trauma on student learning and behavior while providing actionable strategies to create supportive classroom environments and schools. Through reflective activities and discussions, participants explore the core principles of trauma-informed teaching and how to build a system of support in their schools to be prepared when the unthinkable happens. Participants engage

with practical tools and real-world scenarios that empower them to confidently navigate the complexities of teaching and working with students who have experienced trauma.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the foundational principles of trauma-informed education as outlined in *Navigating the Unexpected* (Solution Tree, 2024) and their application in the classroom.
- Identify strategies to build strong relationships and establish a sense of safety for students and teachers impacted by trauma.
- Develop a toolkit of proactive and responsive techniques to prepare schools to meet the evolving challenges in education and prioritize well-being and success for each student.

Eric Twadell

Evidence-Based Grading: Five Stages to Transform Grading Practices

Moving beyond PLC Lite requires that schools examine traditional grading practices. While tackling this challenge has often been cited as the “third rail of school reform,” it is an essential destination on the journey to becoming a PLC that embraces assessment and grading practices and supports student learning. In this session, Eric Twadell provides participants with a roadmap for differentiating professional development for teachers and teams interested in implementing standards-based grading.

Participants in this session:

- Gain 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.

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.