PLC at Work Institute

San Antonio, TX • June 8–10, 2026

Monday, June 8

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Sarah Schuhl *More Than a Moment: The Power of Being a PLC*	
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**—Bob Sonju *Right Here, Right Now: The Power of Educators Learning Together*	

Tuesday, June 9

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Anthony Muhammad *Transforming School Culture 2.0: Why Culture Is Important Today, Tomorrow, and Forever*	
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.	

Wednesday, June 10

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
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**—Regina Stephens Owens *Courageous Capacity: Sustaining a Culture of Care and Competency*	

Agenda is subject to change.

Breakout Sessions at a Glance

A red asterisk* indicates session will be repeated.
Rooms will be listed in blue beneath titles three weeks before the event.

Presenter	Monday, June 8		Tuesday, June 9		Wednesday, June 10
	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.
Erika Chapa	Skill-Based Reading Interventions to Meet the Needs of Every Learner Room TBD	Differentiation Through Clarity: Learning Targets That Support Diverse Learners* Room TBD	Clarity and Access for Multilingual Learners Through PLC Practices Room TBD	Differentiation Through Clarity: Learning Targets That Support Diverse Learners Room TBD	From Pyramid to Practice: Building an Effective Multitiered System of Supports Room TBD
Michael J. Maffoni	Hope Is Not a Strategy: Monitoring PLCs Without Micromanaging Room TBD	Amplify Your Impact: Coaching Teams for Results Room TBD	Beyond Random Acts of Improvement: Strategic PLC Action Planning Room TBD	Why Meetings Miss the Mark: Diagnosing the Five Keys of Strong Teams Room TBD	Setting the Stage for PLC Success: Moves That Matter Before the School Year Begins Room TBD
Anthony Muhammad	All Hands on Deck! Keys to Building a Collaborative Culture Room TBD	Improving Professional Practice to Advance Student Learning Room TBD	"So, How Do We Get Buy-In?" Leveraging the Guiding Coalition to Build Consensus Room TBD	Does All Still Mean *All*? Balancing Professional Obligation and Populism Room TBD	We Are Ready for PLC Greatness! How Do We Go Back and Convince Others to Join In? Room TBD
Rebecca Nicolas	Standard by Standard, Student by Student Room TBD	Moving Teams Forward With a Healthy Dose of Data* Room TBD	Together We Lead: How Principals and Instructional Coaches Team Up for Lasting Impact Room TBD	Moving Teams Forward With a Healthy Dose of Data Room TBD	Busy Bees or Super Stars: Moving Teams Toward More Productive Meetings Room TBD
Maria Nielsen	*Coming soon!* Room TBD	*Coming soon!* Room TBD	*Coming soon!* Room TBD	*Coming soon!* Room TBD	*Coming soon!* Room TBD
Regina Stephens Owens	The *Why* Effect 2.0: Intentional Systems Produce Inspirational Cultures Room TBD	Educators Are Learners, Too! Stop Telling, Start Teaching Room TBD	Your Physical, Mental, and Relational Wellness: Thriving at Work *and* at Home! Room TBD	Different by Design: Small, Virtual, Innovative, and Singleton PLCs Room TBD	Inspiring a Culture of Courage and Care Room TBD

Presenter	Monday, June 8		Tuesday, June 9		Wednesday, June 10
	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.
Julie A. Schmidt	Next-Level Collaboration: Essential Standards as the Engine Room TBD	All Means All: Essential Actions for General and Special Educators to Ensure High Levels of Learning for *All* Room TBD	Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools Room TBD	Central Office Leadership: Articulate, Protect, and Promote Room TBD	Windows and Mirrors: Women Who Lead Room TBD
Sarah Schuhl	Together We Can Accelerate Student Learning to Grade Level and Beyond Room TBD	Math Success for All: Tier 1 and Tier 2 Instruction That Works Room TBD	Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools Room TBD	Create Common Assessments to Use in a Culture of Learning Room TBD	From Scores to Learning: Effective Grading Practices Room TBD
Bob Sonju	The Genius in The Room: Leveraging Team Strengths for Collective Learning and Growth* Room TBD	The Leadership Lens: Leadership Actions to Support the Work of Collaborative Teams Room TBD	Let's Practice: Collaboration Scene Investigators Examine the Evidence of Effective Collaboration Room TBD	The Genius in The Room: Leveraging Team Strengths for Collective Learning and Growth Room TBD	One Degree Off: How Small Drifts in PLC Work Lead Teams Away From Student Learning Room TBD

Agenda is subject to change.

Session Descriptions—Day 1

MORNING KEYNOTE

Sarah Schuhl

More Than a Moment: The Power of Being a PLC
A professional learning community focuses on ensuring high levels of learning for all students. But what does it *really* mean to be a PLC across a school or district? PLCs are not a trend, initiative, or moment in time; they are a way of being. A school or district operating as an effective PLC at Work personifies three big ideas while using four critical questions to guide the work of collaborative teams. The work can seem daunting without a roadmap or vision for how to collaborate efficiently and effectively. Sarah Schuhl clarifies this work using practical tools, protocols, and examples. Participants are challenged to move from *doing* PLCs to *being* a PLC.

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Erika Chapa

Skill-Based Reading Interventions to Meet the Needs of Every Learner
In this session, Erika Chapa guides elementary and middle school teachers in designing targeted reading interventions that address students' foundational literacy needs. Participants explore how to use assessment data to identify gaps in key reading skills—such as phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—and plan effective, skill-aligned interventions. Through practical examples and collaborative problem solving, educators gain strategies and tools to support struggling readers.

Participants in this session:
- Understand and identify foundational reading skill gaps.
- Align intervention strategies to identified student needs.
- Design targeted intervention lessons that address the identified foundational skill in a structured, systematic way.

Michael J. Maffoni

Hope Is Not a Strategy: Monitoring PLCs Without Micromanaging
In schools implementing Professional Learning Communities at Work, leaders are responsible for ensuring that collaborative teams consistently engage in work that enhances learning and results without micromanaging or attending every meeting. In this session, Michael J. Maffoni focuses on the specific leadership practices that enable effective PLC monitoring. Participants examine how clarity, coherence, and intentional systems help leaders move from assumptions about

implementation to evidence of impact, all while maintaining trust, ownership, and team autonomy.

Participants in this session:
- Clearly define the leadership role in monitoring PLC implementation at the system and school levels.
- Understand a loose and tight leadership approach that balances setting clear expectations with fostering collaborative team professional autonomy.
- Investigate the three key principles of effective monitoring that enhance team practices and outcomes.

Anthony Muhammad

All Hands on Deck! Keys to Building a Collaborative Culture
In this session, Anthony Muhammad addresses the cornerstone of the PLC process: collaboration. Learn how teachers, support staff, school administration, and central office all work together to improve school learning. Dr. Muhammad discusses alignment and coherence at every level of the system, including two key areas: creating a culture of collaboration and how to create an environment where people embrace collective responsibility.

Participants can expect to:
- Learn how to construct and protect productive collaborative relationships.
- Understand how to create organizational coherence and ensure collaboration at every level of the school community.
- Grasp the importance of cooperation over power or authority.

Rebecca Nicolas

Standard by Standard, Student by Student
Most schools are noisy, busy places where the demands of the moment can distract school leaders from the needs of individual students. Rebecca Nicolas explores the systems that support students in priority schools, standard by standard, and student by student. Participants in this session review classroom and schoolwide systems that build capacity for teachers and students as they work toward grade-level learning for all, taking into account the myriad challenges of the priority school environment.

Maria Nielsen

Coming soon!

Regina Stephens Owens

The *Why* Effect 2.0: Intentional Systems Produce Inspirational Cultures

Organizational purpose and shared beliefs shape systems at every level. How do we ensure that all practices and procedures are intentional and personify organizational beliefs? It all begins with the *why*. In this session, Regina Stephens Owens offers strategies to design cultures that shift from compliance and coercion to strategies that are caring and compelling.

Participants in this session:
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of the guiding coalition.
- Move from individual to collective commitments.
- Operationalize their culture by translating values into consistent actions.

Julie A. Schmidt

Next-Level Collaboration: Essential Standards as the Engine

Anchor your collaborative work in what matters most: your essential standards. In this session, Julie A. Schmidt focuses on three high-leverage collaborative processes all anchored in essential standards to ensure alignment, clarity, and rigor. By keeping essential standards as the driver of collaboration, teams can increase coherence, improve instructional rigor, and ensure that all students achieve meaningful learning outcomes. Participants gain ready-to-use tools and protocols to implement these collaborative processes immediately.

Participants explore:
- A pre-unit planning process driven by essential standards to ensure collaborative teams can be proactive in their instructional planning
- A process for collaboratively scoring student work to enhance team clarity and ensure consistent feedback for students
- A team rigor audit to assess whether instruction meets the depth and complexity required by essential standards

Sarah Schuhl

Together We Can Accelerate Student Learning to Grade Level and Beyond

Acceleration is not about moving faster. It is about ensuring all students engage in meaningful, grade-level content while receiving the support they need to be successful. Participants in this session examine the underlying meaning of acceleration for all and the mindsets that influence how schools respond to unfinished learning. They explore the differences between remediation and acceleration, identify common challenges that limit access to grade-level learning, and consider how instructional and leadership decisions can either reinforce or disrupt these gap-creating patterns.

Participants in this session:

- Identify which of the six acceleration mindsets most closely reflects current school practices and which must still be addressed.
- Determine specific actions teams can take to shift toward an acceleration model focusing on giving all students access to grade-level learning.

Bob Sonju

The Genius In The Room: Leveraging Team Strengths For Collective Learning and Growth
Unleash the collective genius in your team in this engaging, interactive session that redefines collaboration. It's not just about meeting together—it's about what you do in your collaborative meeting that impacts learning. Learn how to leverage the unique strengths of your team to tackle meaningful challenges, find innovative solutions, and focus your collaboration on what truly matters: ensuring high levels of learning for students and teachers.

Participants in this session:
- Understand how to focus team meetings on meaningful challenges and tasks that drive collective learning and improve student outcomes.
- Learn strategies to identify and utilize the unique strengths of team members to foster innovative solutions and purposeful collaboration.
- Gain strategies to transform team meetings into solution-driven discussions that inspire action and enhance student learning.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Erika Chapa

Differentiation Through Clarity: Learning Targets That Support Diverse Learners
In this session, Erika Chapa guides educators in aligning their instruction to essential standards and clearly defined learning targets to ensure that every student—regardless of background, ability, or learning style—has access to meaningful, rigorous learning. Through collaborative analysis, hands-on practice, and practical planning tools, participants learn how to unpack standards, design aligned instruction, and integrate supports that meet the diverse needs of all learners. Educators gain increased clarity, stronger alignment, and actionable strategies they can implement immediately with their collaborative teams.

Participants in this session:
- Unpack essential standards into clear learning targets.
- Align instruction directly to learning targets.
- Ensure current formative and summative assessments directly measure the knowledge and skills outlined in learning targets.

Michael J. Maffoni

Amplify Your Impact: Coaching Teams for Results

Strong professional learning communities are built through intentional coaching, not training alone. In this session, Michael J. Maffoni explores how coaching closes the knowing-doing gap and accelerates collaborative team effectiveness. Participants examine why coached teams go further faster and learn a practical, repeatable coaching cycle supported by targeted tools and just-in-time professional learning. Leaders supporting PLC implementation gain concrete strategies and coaching tools to move their teams to best next practice.

Participants in this session:
- Apply a clear coaching cycle to strengthen collaborative team practices.
- Practice using proven coaching tools to diagnose team needs and identify precise next steps.
- Explore "grab and grow" professional learning modules that are aligned to the five essential prerequisites of a PLC.

Anthony Muhammad

Improving Professional Practice to Advance Student Learning

A PLC collaborates to improve student learning by stimulating professional learning. Many schools do not consider the learning for professionals as sacred as student learning. The PLC process operates under the assumption that adult learning is the catalyst for student learning. In this session, Anthony Muhammad introduces a process that will allow each school designing ongoing professional learning to support their professionals, which translates into greater performance for students.

Participants can expect to:
- Analyze a comprehensive set of data to identify areas for growth.
- Produce an effective and efficient professional learning system for educators.
- Generate a culture of intellectualism.

Rebecca Nicolas

Moving Teams Forward With a Healthy Dose of Data

Some teams are definitely healthier than others. For some teams, data is the shot in the arm that can boost performance. In this session, Rebecca Nicolas allows participants to explore how leaders can diagnose the myriad ways in which teams engage in PLC lite, as well as the temptations of the "easy fix" for dysfunctional teams. Participants gain an understanding of the critical ways in which common data can move teams forward.

Maria Nielsen

Coming soon!

Regina Stephens Owens

Educators Are Learners, Too! Stop Telling, Start Teaching

Educators must embrace the mindset that they are learners, too. Participants in this session discover practical strategies to coach professionals toward true competence and promote efficacy and engagement in every learner. Regina Stephens Owens fosters collaboration and confidence as we learn and grow together by monitoring and measuring processes and performance.

Participants in this session:
- Identify systems in need of redesign and intentionally monitor and measure learning processes.
- Learn strategies to sustain professional growth and plan for continuous learning.

Julie A. Schmidt

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.

Sarah Schuhl

Math Success for All: Tier 1 and Tier 2 Instruction That Works

Mathematics collaborative teams are made of teachers who work tirelessly to grow student learning. Yet, despite every effort, too many students in too many schools are struggling. What can be done? It starts with mathematics teams having an intentional and focused learning plan for the year, every unit of instruction, and each daily lesson. Participants in this session explore how teams effectively plan for grade-level learning and mathematical reasoning in each unit and give students access to learning grade-level standards in lessons through targeted Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. Participants examine research-affirmed teaching actions that maximize student

learning during a mathematics lesson and learn how to incorporate mathematical rigor, balanced mathematical tasks, and student engagement.

Participants use the Mathematics at Work™ lesson design framework to:
- Examine research-affirmed teaching actions that maximize student learning during a mathematics lesson (Tier 1).
- Explore team actions and strategies for accelerating student learning to grade level and beyond using intentional Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction.

Bob Sonju

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

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

AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

Bob Sonju

Right Here, Right Now: The Power of Educators Learning Together
Dr. Robert Eaker, an architect of the PLC process, clearly defined our role in this essential work when he stated, "The first step educators in a PLC take … is to learn together" (Solution Tree, 2020). Anchored in the four critical questions and three big ideas that drive professional learning communities, this keynote challenges educators to embrace the learning and momentum from this institute and turn it into sustainable change in their collaborative practices. In this session, Bob Sonju introduces educators to ideas and strategies to increase the effectiveness of their collective learning while also reminding them of their foundational role as ambassadors of hope for their fellow educators and the students they serve.

Participants in this session:
- Gain a clear understanding of the four critical questions of a PLC and how they guide effective collaboration.

- Explore research-based practices that simplify their work while dramatically improving student learning outcomes.
- Learn simple and doable strategies to streamline collective practices.

Session Descriptions—Day 2

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

Erika Chapa

Clarity and Access for Multilingual Learners Through PLC Practices
In this session, Erika Chapa guides collaborative teams in addressing the needs of multilingual learners through the four critical questions of a professional learning community. Educators learn how to integrate language considerations into identifying essential standards, planning instruction, analyzing assessment results, and determining next steps for both support and extension. Through practical examples and research-aligned strategies, participants explore how scaffolding, language supports, and intentional planning can be embedded naturally into the PLC cycle to ensure meaningful access and success for all multilingual learners.

Participants in this session:
- Identify the language demands embedded in essential standards and learning targets.
- Plan instructional strategies that support multilingual learners by embedding scaffolds and opportunities for meaningful interactions.
- Use data protocols to distinguish when multilingual learners need content, language, or procedural support.

Michael J. Maffoni

Beyond Random Acts of Improvement: Strategic PLC Action Planning

Moving from PLC *lite* to PLC *right* requires more than good intentions; it calls for strategic action, aligned goals, and disciplined followthrough. In this session, Michael J. Maffoni highlights how schools can transition from isolated improvement efforts to cohesive, results-focused PLC implementation. Participants explore how implementation science, guiding coalitions, and aligned SMART goals work together to improve teaching and learning. Participants focus on developing 30-60-90-day action plans that promote clarity, momentum, and measurable progress toward both academic and PLC process objectives.

Participants in this session:
- Discover a tool to evaluate the current state of PLC implementation and determine strategic next steps.
- Clarify the guiding coalition's role in leading, monitoring, and sustaining change.

Anthony Muhammad

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

In his 25 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, 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.

Rebecca Nicolas

Together We Lead: How Principals and Instructional Coaches Team Up for Lasting Impact

Successful leadership requires successful collaboration, and one of the most important collaborative relationships a principal can have is with their instructional coach. Rebecca Nicolas explores the first chapter of *Together We Lead* (Solution Tree, 2026), a new book that illuminates the path for principals and instructional coaches as they collaborate for school improvement. Rebecca focuses on identifying roles and responsibilities, creating norms, using meeting

agendas, and working through difficult conversations between instructional coaches and principals.

Maria Nielsen

Coming soon!

Regina Stephens Owens

Your Physical, Mental, and Relational Wellness: Thriving at Work *and* at Home!
In this decade, teaching and leading in pursuit of improved student achievement is hard to do well day in and day out. Developing the relationship and wellness skills necessary to be part of an effective PLC at Work team takes its toll physically, mentally, and emotionally. The PLC life is one of "emotional and relational labor." It is easy to experience fatigue from the daily noise and intense, often quick-changing expectations of the educator's work life.

Participants in this session use the Wellness Solutions for Educators™ framework (co-authored by Dr. Timothy D. Kanold and Dr. Tina H. Boogren) to take a deep dive into the physical, mental, and relational wellness challenges that exist in the daily PLC life of an educator. Participants explore specific strategies for renewing the daily energy required to positively impact their students and colleagues. Participants are (re)invigorated, (re)inspired, and (re)connected to the benefits of a sustainable, joyful, and thriving home and PLC work life.

Participants can expect to:
- Discover brain research associated with their physical, mental, emotional, and social wellness.
- Consider concrete strategies for renewing their energy and incorporating wellness routines into daily life.
- Explore concrete strategies for reducing and avoiding the daily exhaustion of the educator's life.
- Learn mindfulness routines that build collaborative relationships and joy routines that stick.
- Learn how to choose a daily well-balanced professional and personal life.

Julie A. Schmidt

Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools
Schools that function as professional learning communities 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* in action.
- Review and reflect on the essential elements of Tiers 1, 2, and 3 intervention.

- Examine the most common RTI mistakes.
- Identify essential structures for RTI success.
- Reflect on critical reminders regarding process and criteria.

Sarah Schuhl

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

If the fundamental purpose of being a professional learning community is to ensure all students learn at high levels, then there must be time embedded during the school day to provide students extra time and support to succeed. This session provides real examples showing how to create time for supplemental and intensive interventions.

Participants learn specific steps to implement a flexible secondary intervention period, including how to:
- Determine what interventions to offer each week.
- Require students to attend specific interventions.
- Monitor student attendance.
- Allocate staff.
- Extend student learning.
- Address potential obstacles.
- Do all this within teachers' contractual obligations.

Bob Sonju

Let's Practice: Collaboration Scene Investigators Examine the Evidence of Effective Collaboration

Step into the role of a Collaboration Scene Investigator as you analyze the real "evidence" of a collaborative team at work. In this high-energy, hands-on session, participants observe a team in action, identify strengths and roadblocks, and uncover what separates average collaboration from high-impact teamwork. Working alongside fellow educators, you'll examine data, team dialogue, and decision-making to determine what makes collaboration truly effective. Leave with practical tools and fresh insights to take back to your own team—ready to solve the mystery of what leads to high levels of learning for all students.

Participants in this session:
- Analyze a collaborative team in action to identify key strengths and opportunities for growth.
- Apply evidence-based practices that transform ordinary collaboration into high-impact teamwork.
- Develop clear next steps to strengthen their own team's ability to ensure high levels of learning for all students.

Erika Chapa

Differentiation Through Clarity: Learning Targets That Support Diverse Learners

In this session, Erika Chapa guides educators in aligning their instruction to essential standards and clearly defined learning targets to ensure that every student—regardless of background, ability, or learning style—has access to meaningful, rigorous learning. Through collaborative analysis, hands-on practice, and practical planning tools, participants learn how to unpack standards, design aligned instruction, and integrate supports that meet the diverse needs of all learners. Educators gain increased clarity, stronger alignment, and actionable strategies they can implement immediately with their collaborative teams.

Participants in this session:
- Unpack essential standards into clear learning targets.
- Align instruction directly to learning targets.
- Ensure current formative and summative assessments directly measure the knowledge and skills outlined in learning targets.

Michael J. Maffoni

Why Meetings Miss the Mark: Diagnosing the Five Keys of Strong Teams

Most teams meet regularly, but few understand why these meetings result in inconsistent outcomes. In this session, Michael J. Maffoni introduces a diagnostic framework for leaders and teams to evaluate whether collaborative meetings support the core work of a professional learning community. Participants explore the five keys to effective teaming that are necessary for team meetings to produce clarity, action, and better learning. Using real-world examples and practical tools, participants learn how to identify problems in meeting effectiveness and take specific steps to improve them.

Participants in this session:
- Understand how to diagnose the effectiveness of collaborative team meetings using a five-key framework.
- Identify which conditions are limiting a team's progress and why.
- Examine specific tools and structures to refocus meetings on essential PLC work.

Anthony Muhammad

Does All Still Mean *All*? Balancing Professional Obligation and Populism

The first big idea of a PLC at Work is to ensure high levels of learning for all. As professionals, we are clear that all students can learn, but we are also aware that students learn differently and at different paces. How will your professionals respond when outside forces and agendas clash with

research and best practice? In this session, Anthony Muhammad addresses the challenge of navigating populism and the implementation of best practice.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the professional and moral obligation of committing to learning for *all.*
- Find ways to navigate around populist barriers to best practice.
- Learn how to shift from damaging mindsets (superiority and inferiority) to high levels of collective efficacy (liberation mindset).

Rebecca Nicolas

Moving Teams Forward With a Healthy Dose of Data

Some teams are definitely healthier than others. For some teams, data is the shot in the arm that can boost performance. In this session, Rebecca Nicolas allows participants to explore how leaders can diagnose the myriad ways in which teams engage in PLC lite, as well as the temptations of the "easy fix" for dysfunctional teams. Participants gain an understanding of the critical ways in which common data can move teams forward.

Maria Nielsen

Coming soon!

Regina Stephens Owens

Different by Design: Small, Virtual, Innovative, and Singleton PLCs

Small schools—charter, innovative, online—face big questions:

- How do we do it?
- How do we engage CTE, fine arts, PE?
- What about singletons?
- Where do we start?
- How do we sustain it?

In this session, Regina Stephens Owens demonstrates how participants can design and implement the PLC process in their school or district. Participants learn how to navigate nuances of being different, how to develop teams with meaningful work, and strategies for effective implementation.

Julie A. Schmidt

Central Office Leadership: Articulate, Protect, and Promote

Participants in this session focus on and clarify the critical role central office leadership plays in the implementation of PLC work that supports long-term sustainability. This session is designed for those who serve in any central office role and those who aspire to serve in such a role.

Participants can expect to:
- Examine the work of teams at each level of the organization.
- Explore the concept of loose-tight leadership as described by DuFour and Marzano.
- Consider some key leadership principles that support the successful implementation of PLC practices.
- Explore tools and reflect on what monitoring and support look like when you are an intentional learning leader.

Sarah Schuhl

Create Common Assessments to Use in a Culture of Learning

How do teachers, teams, and students learn from common assessments? How must they be designed and used to maximize that learning? In this session, Sarah Schuhl focuses on the intentional creation and use of common assessments as evidence of learning throughout a unit of instruction. Together, teachers on collaborative teams use common assessments to monitor learning, reveal student thinking, and inform instructional decisions.

Participants in this session:
- Learn criteria for creating high-quality common assessments.
- Identify how teacher teams can use common assessment results to learn about instructional practices and design interventions and extensions.
- Explore how to use common assessments for student reflection and action.

Bob Sonju

The Genius In The Room: Leveraging Team Strengths For Collective Learning and Growth

Unleash the collective genius in your team in this engaging, interactive session that redefines collaboration. It's not just about meeting together—it's about what you do in your collaborative meeting that impacts learning. Learn how to leverage the unique strengths of your team to tackle meaningful challenges, find innovative solutions, and focus your collaboration on what truly matters: ensuring high levels of learning for students and teachers.

Participants in this session:
- Understand how to focus team meetings on meaningful challenges and tasks that drive collective learning and improve student outcomes.
- Learn strategies to identify and utilize the unique strengths of team members to foster innovative solutions and purposeful collaboration.
- Gain strategies to transform team meetings into solution-driven discussions that inspire action and enhance student learning.

Session Descriptions—Day 3

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Erika Chapa

From Pyramid to Practice: Building an Effective Multitiered System of Supports
In this session, Erika Chapa supports campuses and districts in building an effective multitiered system of supports (MTSS) that ensures all students receive the right level of academic and behavioral support at the right time. Participants explore the roles and responsibilities of each team within the MTSS framework and develop a deeper understanding of the RTI pyramid, including how to strengthen Tier 1, structure targeted Tier 2 supports, and design intensive Tier 3 interventions. Through practical tools and collaborative discussion, educators gain greater clarity and actionable steps for creating a cohesive, responsive system that meets the needs of every learner.

Participants in this session:
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of leadership teams, collaborative teacher teams, and intervention teams within an MTSS framework.
- Identify systemic gaps and opportunities for improvement within current MTSS practices.
- Discuss and generate actionable next steps to improve coherence and alignment across a campus or district.

Michael J. Maffoni

Setting the Stage for PLC Success: Moves That Matter Before the School Year Begins
Effective PLC schools don't wait for problems to emerge before acting; they proactively set up conditions that make continuous improvement the standard rather than the exception. In this session, Michael J. Maffoni emphasizes the real conditions that effective schools intentionally focus on as they prepare for a new school year no matter how long they have been engaged in PLC work. Designed for school leaders, guiding coalitions, coaches, and collaborative teams, the session explores how careful preparation creates clarity, coherence, and shared responsibility, enabling teams to concentrate on enhancing teaching and learning from day one.

Participants in this session:
- Explore how to effectively hire for collaboration and onboard new faculty.
- Clarify the guiding coalition's role in leading and sustaining PLC implementation.
- Investigate how to use schoolwide and team data to guide action planning for continuous improvement.
- Establish awareness of conditions that maintain momentum, including collective commitments, celebration of progress, and coaching support for all 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.

Rebecca Nicolas

Busy Bees or Super Stars: Moving Teams Toward More Productive Meetings

To the casual observer, the work of teacher teams can seem purposeful, as teachers discuss teaching and learning during scheduled team meetings. However, the reality is not always what it seems. Rebecca Nicolas explores the difference between activity- and productivity-focused teams and examines the products that reflect a team's focus on the four critical questions. Participants engage with a practical data collection tool to monitor team productivity over time.

Maria Nielsen

Coming soon!

Regina Stephens Owens

Inspiring a Culture of Courage and Care

In this session, Regina Stephens Owens ignites hearts and hands to intentionally inspire a culture where courage and care grow through clear commitments and coaching. This process cultivates connection by celebrating progress in performance and constructively challenging behaviors that hold us back. Together, participants create a vibrant culture where every action aligns with shared values for continuous improvement.

Participants in this session:
- Understand the role and responsibilities of the guiding coalition.

- Develop clarity and ownership of personal and team commitments for a culture of courage and care.
- Gain practical coaching strategies to coach and clarify, celebrate wins, and address challenges with intention and respect.

Julie A. Schmidt

Windows and Mirrors: Women Who Lead

Supported by current research on women in the workplace, this session invites participants to examine leadership through both a window into systemic realities and a mirror reflecting personal identity and lived experience. Participants explore historical and contemporary challenges women face in leadership roles and engage in intentional individual and collective reflection. Through storytelling, dialogue, and guided inquiry, participants deepen self-awareness, strengthen self-efficacy, and gain clarity on their unique leadership identity—leaving better equipped to lead with purpose, confidence, and authenticity.

Participants can expect to:
- Consider research-based and historical challenges influencing women's leadership pathways.
- Reflect on personal leadership experiences to increase self-awareness and clarify leadership identity.
- Recognize individual strengths and patterns that contribute to effective leadership.

Sarah Schuhl

From Scores to Learning: Effective Grading Practices

Teachers use grades to report student learning in grade books and on report cards. Essential questions about grading include: How do grades align with student learning and provide feedback? What is the purpose of each grade? Are grades consistent across a collaborative team? Who uses this information? As instructional and assessment practices shift to meet rigorous standards, grades too often are afterthoughts that muddy accurate reports of student learning. Clarity is needed within districts, schools, and collaborative teams so that students and other stakeholders know the meaning of each grade reported and the evidence of student learning used to generate the grade.

Participants in this session:
- Examine challenges surrounding traditional grading practices.
- Explore grading practices that share accurate and useful information related to student learning.
- Investigate grading protocols to deepen collective responses to student learning.

Bob Sonju

One Degree Off: How Small Drifts in PLC Work Lead Teams Away From Student Learning

In PLCs, teams rarely lose focus all at once. More often, they drift—just one degree at a time. Participants in this session explore how well-intended shifts in focus can slowly pull teams away from the right work and dilute impact on student learning. Bob Sonju discusses how to recognize drift, course-correct collaboratively, and stay relentlessly focused on the practices that ensure learning for all.

Participants in this session:
- Identify common "one-degree drifts" in PLC work that pull teams away from a relentless focus on student learning.
- Distinguish between productive PLC practices and well-intended distractions that dilute impact and consume collaborative time.
- Apply simple course-correction strategies that keep teams aligned to essential standards, meaningful collaboration, and evidence of student learning.

KEYNOTE

Regina Stephens Owens

Courageous Capacity: Sustaining a Culture of Care and Competency

This session is a reset for educators and leaders who care deeply and are ready to move from running on empty to growing with renewed energy and hope. Participants explore how everyday choices—not perfection or heroics—can create cultures where people feel seen, supported, and equipped to sustain learning. Participants examine adult learning through the lens of competence as an act of care and discover how growing and sustaining their skills and continuous learning become powerful ways to show care for themselves, others, and their communities.

Participants learn how to:
- Design systems that support well-being and help everyone grow.
- Foster a sense of value, connection, and support for every adult.
- Encourage risk-taking to build bold capacity and transform learning.